

**PAYNE COUNTY AND THE
HOODED KLAN,
1921-1924**

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Preface

The Klan Comes to Payne County

"...they don't see why they want to hide in such robes"¹

It was the Fourth of July, 1922, the fourth Fourth to be celebrated in peace after the Great War. It was a Fourth occurring after the searing strikes of 1919, the Red Scare, and during an agricultural and petroleum depression. Fifteen thousand had thronged into the county seat on that hot day, coming from throughout the county in "thousands of automobiles" which tangled at various times in the afternoon and at night."²

The morning rang with patriotic speeches. "Popping firecrackers and squackers interfered somewhat with the address by Z.A. Harris, of Blackwell, but those who were near enough to hear said that it was excellent," reported the editor of the Stillwater Gazette. "The usual greased pole climbing, sack races, running races and other contests were attractions at the park. At intervals during the day a brass band played patriotic music." Hundreds of automobiles took people to the horse races at the fair grounds, while even more cars clustered around the College playing field where crowds watched two games of baseball. As evening came, hiding the dust hanging over the southern plains town, the crowds gathered on Main Street. There was to be something else, something new, before the fireworks of night.³

The Editor's voice carried the narrative well:

¹"News of the Neighbors," Stillwater Gazette, 14 July 1922, 7 [hereafter "SG"].

²"Celebrating Throngs Flock To Stillwater," SG, 7 July 1922, 1.

³*ibid.*

Features of the night program were the parade of the Ku Klux Klan on Main street and the fireworks display at the college athletic field.

Forty special traffic policemen were kept busy from 6 o'clock until the start of the parade, at 9 o'clock, keeping traffic on the downtown streets in order. Stillwater never saw so many automobiles as were lined along Main and side streets. As the parade, headed by two buglers on horseback, and other horsemen, turned into south Main street from the east, an unusual quiet spread over the great throng of onlookers. As the marchers passed silently, everything was still.

Many banners were carried by the marchers. Among them were two 18-foot ones, one carrying the inscription, "Vote for the School Bonds," and other, "We are for the School Bonds." Another banner read, "Three on Street to One in Parade," and still another, "1,800 Strong in Payne County."

After the parade the crowd hurried to the college grounds to see the fireworks. The big grandstand on Lewis field was filled, and hundreds of automobiles took all available parking places from which the display could be seen. For more than an hour the fireworks kept the spectators interested, frequent outbursts of cheering occurring.⁴

And so the Ku Klux Klan made its official entry into the life of Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Reports of the new Klan had been appearing in newspapers for several years. By the spring of 1921 it had been blamed by some for violence around Cushing, the largest city in Payne County.⁵ But the Klan did not actually arrive in Oklahoma until the early summer of 1921. No one has identified the month or day that the Klan actually reached Payne County, but the Klan was there by the Fall of 1921. A recruiter probably first came to Cushing, the oil center for the Cushing Field. That Kleagle could have come up the rails from Oklahoma City, but it is more likely he came through neighboring Drumright in Creek County, the actual center of drilling for the Cushing Field. The Klan then spread throughout the eastern third of the county, the oil lands, immediately going north of Cushing to another recent oil find in Yale, and then to the new oil boom town of Payne County, Ingalls. It also came to Stillwater, a town outside the Cushing Field, a town built upon institutions and agriculture.

The Klan seemed to grow in late 1921 and early 1922. Ripley, up the Cimarron River from Cushing, a town like Cushing in that it was South of the Cimarron and also a town pregnant with oil, was split over the Klan, probably by early 1922. The Ripleyites were aggressive seekers after the Klan and became itinerant Klan observers.⁶

⁴Ibid.

⁵Yale Democrat, 16 December 1921, 7 [hereafter, "YD"]. Note that the Yale newspaper did not number its pages.

⁶This chronology is the creation of the author.

There was some resistance to the Klan. Ripley, it is reported, had, after much argument, allowed the Klan supporters to put up a sign at the edge of town. The standard, Klan-erected sign said: "Charlatans, Unbelievers and Uppity Niggers -- Don't Let The Sun Go Down On You In This City." They wanted to copy it but immediately ran into two problems. Their "coloreds" weren't uppity, and none of the whites would admit to calling their coloreds "niggers". So they dropped all reference to race. Another problem was that no one quite knew what a "Charlatan" was. After much debate, they warned two groups they all knew: "Crooks and Unbelievers...."⁷

Stillwater was late in having solid evidence of the Klan. In the weeks following the Fourth the rural district reporters used by the Stillwater Gazette wrote about the events at Stillwater. From "Yost Lake and Vicinity", to the northeast of Stillwater, the correspondent reported, in a rather distinctive grammar:

The grand and glorious Fourth has passed. There were many and various gatherings, but Stillwater had the crowds. To begin with, the day was ideal. There were several good speeches and orations, lots of good musical all day, and various amusements of all kinds, but the crowning feature was the parade in the evening by the K-K-Klan, witnessed something like 15,000 people; the largest crowd ever gathered in Stillwater.⁸

The Yost Lake correspondent was someone who valued the spectacle of the Fourth, the Klan being a major part of that spectacle. The correspondent from Fair Plains, a rural community located immediately to Stillwater's northwest, had a shorter, more pragmatic, rendering of the experience. "Quite a few persons from these parts attended the K.K.Klan parade and the fireworks in Stillwater, the night of July 4, but say they don't see why they want to hide in such robes."⁹

⁷ Alvan Mitchell, with Veneta Berry Arrington. Little Tom and Fats (Stillwater, Oklahoma: Forum Press, Inc., 1983) 151-52. This, and a narrative about a Klan cross burning that went wrong, have not been confirmed by the author's examination of the usually Klan-aware Ripley Record [hereafter, "RR"]. Note that the Ripley paper did not number its pages.

⁸ "News of the Neighbors," SG, 7 July 1922, 7.

⁹ "News of the Neighbors," SG, 14 July 1922, 7.

Unknown to Payne countians then, this parade, and slightly earlier ones in Cushing and Yale, turned out to be the only parades by the hooded Ku Klux Klan in the county and the only public celebrations of a national holiday by the hooded Klan.

Viewing the events in Stillwater that July Fourth seems long ago, almost in another world. The Klan, publicly parading up Main Street while thousands gazed silently from the sidewalks, would seem to many today anachronistic and maybe unbelievable. The Klan in Stillwater that marched that hot July Fourth, 1922, moved silently except for their footfalls, a nameless mass of identical, ghostly figures marching to their own cadence, marching to some goals they alone fully perceived, with flags leading and horsemen to add stature.¹⁰ The researcher must wonder what convinced thousands to watch their silent ranks pass, and what convinced a county to accept the Klan and its strange ways. Beyond that, what was it that motivated men to join an organization which is today disdained. The second question cannot be answered at this distance in time; The motivation of those men must remain shrouded. This is a work which attempts to answer the first question: Why did Payne County foster such an organization? And there is another question which automatically follows: What effect did the Klan have upon the County, and the County upon the Klan.

Why Study the Klan?

The impetus for this study is a simple fact: I did not understand how the most conservative people in our society think. In particular, I did not understand how groups of the most conservative shadings legitimize their ideas. These ideas remain alien to me. I began the study of the Klan in the 1920s from this perspective, expecting to turn up the pathological, the aberrant. I did find something I consider a pathology, a group holding a cluster of ideas that repulse me. But I did not find an aberration.

Klan Studies of the 1920s Klan have the inherent problems of students bringing to the study assumptions about the Klan, assumptions which creep in from our knowledge of the Klan

¹⁰The description of this is from, "Celebrating Throngs Flock To Stillwater," SG, 7 July 1922, 1. The speculation about their thoughts are the author's own.

from other eras. The Klan of the 1860s was violent and backed by at least a large minority of white southerners, and the Klan of the 1950s and beyond, and their close racist kin, was violent but with a dwindling support from the mainstream population. The Klan of the 1920s had at least strong minority support among whites but with a much more benign face and probably a more benign reality than either of the other Klans. The ideas were still abhorrent to me, but the organization voicing those ideas was much more complex than the stereotypes of the Klan would suggest. And the interaction of that organization with the society in which it grew was also quite complex.

Modern Klan studies have concentrated on the locality and have shown a Klan nationally united but locally diverse.¹¹ To study the Klan, I chose the locality, Payne County, for a number of reasons. It had several Klaverns. It had complexities in its economic and social make-up. It was a county which was both rural and urban. It was a county which had a dual economic base, agricultural and industrial. It had a viable number of newspapers of differing political views, a small corpus of locally done histories to give the researcher a needed initial boost, and it was in a state noted for Klan activities.¹² It was also my home county.

The history of Payne County's Klan had one other intriguing point: It was a Klan of substantial size which did not affect the county greatly. The one act of violence I believe attributable to the Klan was largely carried out by men from neighboring Creek County. The ideas of the Klan conformed to what seemed to be broadly held ideas within the white community of the county. For most countians the greatest impact of the hooded Klan upon their lives was the spectacle provided by the Klan's public forays. Klan historians are attracted by crisis and violence, and most Klan works have been about Klans and Klan activities which feature those elements. It is a premise of this study, but one which this study alone cannot prove, that in the majority of localities around the nation the Klan was much more benign. Payne County was thus an example of one such county.

¹¹For a discussion of the historiography of the 1920s Klan, see Chapter I.

¹²For example, see, Charles C. Alexander, The Ku Klux Klan in the Southwest (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965), especially Chapter VII: "Neither Klan nor King," pp. 129-58.

The Problem of Sources

Klan studies have one immediate problem: sources. The 1920s Ku Klux Klan was assiduous in guarding its rolls. The result of this is that most Klan research being done is without the benefit of the knowledge of who the members were the Klan. This problem is mediated to some extent by the uniform verdict of those who have studied the currently known Klan rolls. Those rolls show a Klan broadly mirroring the local white protestant population with the exception of the very rich and the very poor. This removes a quick class explanation for the Klan. But the lack of rolls also means the researcher cannot readily measure the size of the Klan over time in their locality. It also means that individual members and their current relatives, their papers, their materials, cannot be pursued.

Payne County is unfortunately typical of most places which had Klan in the early 1920s because of the lack of existing Klan rosters. This presents methodological challenges for the researcher rather than unmanageable obstacles. The publication of major studies in the past twenty years which utilized Klan rolls has seemingly raised the bar for the researcher.¹³ What must be seen is that Klan rolls are desirable but not essential. Rolls may seem a necessity to some because of a belief that discovery of the class affiliations of Klan membership will expose the motivations of that membership and help to explain the direction that the Klan took. But existing studies using rolls have shown a Klan which roughly mirrored the regions' white protestant adult male society. If, as Moore states, Klan rolls generally show a Klan that was a cross-section of that

¹³For examples, see, Leonard J. Moore, Citizen Klansmen: The Ku Klux Klan in Indiana, 1921-1928 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991); Nancy MacLean, Behind the Mask of Civalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); and Robert Alan Goldberg, Hooded Empire: The Ku Klux Klan in Colorado (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981) In Goldberg's study, two of the five studies had access to rolls. Too recently to be included in this study is a transcript of the minutes of meetings from the Klavern in LaGrande Oregon, a rarity since only MacLean's work on Athens, Georgia, had had access to minutes of meetings and hers were seemingly quite limited. See, David A. Horowitz, editor, Inside the Klavern: The Secret History of a Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1999). See also his earlier article, "Order, Solidarity, and Vigilance: The Ku Klux Klan in La Grande, Oregon," in The Invisible Empire in the West: Toward a New Historical Appraisal of the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s, ed. Shawn Lay, 185-215 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992).

society, minus the richest and minus the poorest, assumptions about motivation based on class conflict become hard to sustain. Nancy MacLean's study of Athens, Georgia, which utilized Klan rolls, argues for class conflict. But her study ultimately depends more upon race and gender conflict than upon class. Her study may be the most ideologically driven of the newer studies and yet it ultimately gives a complex answer to the Klan's existence and motivations. In numerous other modern studies, what becomes prominent is not class conflict but the situation of the Klan within a pre-existing community. As an example, Goldberg's study of the Klan in five cities of Colorado demonstrated five different Klans, Klans that differed in their concerns and their approaches. For three of those cities, he had no rolls, depending heavily instead upon oral history and newspapers.¹⁴

Payne County had another problem. There are no collections of personal papers or other archival materials in the county. Local libraries do not contain such materials. The collections of the Oklahoma State University Library also lack relevant primary materials, and the Oklahoma Historical Society's archival collections were little help despite efforts by their staff, help which mirrored the willing professional help extended to me by all who work at these various repositories. Census and other available data speak to the county but not directly to the Klan. Oral interviews have produced reinforcement rather than revelation, and they are subject to the reticence so ably discussed by Kathleen Blee in regards to her massive study of women of the Klan, a study which depended heavily upon oral sources and less upon rolls.¹⁵ This lack of varied primary material meant that, like many Klan studies, this study had to be very dependent upon one primary source, local newspapers. The problems with newspapers as sources were readily apparent when this study was begun, but they were unavoidable if a study of the hooded Klan in Payne County was to be done.

¹⁴Leonard J. Moore, "Historical Interpretations of the 1920's Klan: The Traditional View and the Populist Revision," Journal of Social History 24 no. 2 (1990): 350-54. MacLean, Mask of Chivalry; Goldberg, Hooded Empire.

¹⁵On the problems of collecting oral history on the Klan, see Kathleen M. Blee, "Evidence, Empathy, and Ethics: Lessons from Oral Histories of the Klan," Journal of American History 80 (September 1993): 596-606. Clark, "Klan in Oklahoma," vi-xii. Clark graphically likens asking informants about the Klan to turning the light on in your kitchen at night and watching the cockroaches scramble for cover.

Newspapers as a source have obvious drawbacks. They were privately owned, for-profit entities and do reflect the opinions of the editors to some extent. They were obviously, ardently boosterish for their cities and for the businessmen of those cities. They needed the advertising of local businessmen and constantly editorialized about the advantages of advertising and the advantages of shopping in their town. The editors also saw themselves as of the business class, joining, for example, the service clubs, chambers of commerce, and retail merchants' associations of the business class. On top of all that, their editorial policies reflected most particularly the opinions of the editors both in the editorials they wrote and the outside articles they included. This bias is known and should not mask the wealth of information papers can provide.

The newspapers in Payne County have many redeeming qualities for the researcher. Primarily, they are the best, nay the sole, continuous record of events in the county during this period. Even if you could assemble and digest all the census data, agricultural and petroleum data, membership roles and reports and minutes of organizations in the county, they would not give the rounded, continuous, week-by-week account of the county's concerns, politics, economics, mentality, and character that the newspapers give. Even the use of language in the papers conveys meaning for the researcher, the reason why some grammatical errors and quaint speech patterns in the quotes were retained for this study.

All of the seven major newspapers in the county during the period were generally eight page papers appearing weekly or several times a week. None were dailies. Most of them did not bother to number their pages. All carried whole pages which were purchased from national sources, although they do not name these sources. Some, such as the Ripley Record, only had locally produced material on the first and last pages, the six intervening pages probably coming from a single source. In the Ripley paper, even the type face is different between the locally produced parts and the parts bought from some distributor. An editor would choose the source for these bought pages, but at a certain level the exact content of these was outside the local editor's control. These sections dealt with national, international, general interest, and other news. They give a glimpse of the broader knowledge held by county citizens.

More important for this study, all the newspapers in the county had rural correspondents. They reported on affairs in outlying rural districts on a weekly basis.¹⁶ These rural correspondents speak in their own voice. Some were probably women, though this cannot be proved, and as such they would be the only female voices consistently heard in the papers. The concerns and emphases of these rural correspondents portrayed both the peculiarities of their particular district and a uniformity of basic assumptions and ideas, particularly unspoken assumptions about the meaning of cooperation, traditional family values, and community.

The editors included these correspondents for several reasons. First, papers needed rural subscribers. Also, several of the editors were raised in rural situations. And the editors also included these correspondents because the values they exhibited fit into the over-riding set of values shared by the larger community of Payne County.

The newspapers had differing political outlooks. Several were openly Republican. The Stillwater Gazette, the county's paper of record, was a backer of Harding, a subscriber to the Republican Publicity Bureau, and an opponent of Democratic Governor Jack Walton. The Yale Democrat, despite its name, was edited by a Republican and also disliked Walton. The other Yale paper, the Record, is rather conservative, ridiculed Walton, and preferred Republicans. The Cushing Citizen, edited by the irascible Mr. Green, was the most reactionary paper in the county and also one which backed Republicans. The openly Democratic papers included the other Stillwater paper, the Advance Democrat, and the strongly agrarian, Jeffersonian, and very nicely written, Perkins Journal. It is difficult to accurately describe the little Ripley Record except to say it was very local, and it was the most intrigued of all papers by the Klan's activities.

None of the papers openly advocated the Klan although, as will be seen, some spoke positively of some of the Klan's public activities. The Ripley paper, with its constant fascination with and constant reporting on Klan activities near and far, was at least the most inquisitive about the Klan. The Yale papers reported frequently on Klan activities around the county, though the

¹⁶The Cushing Citizen was late in getting correspondents, and the Perkins Journal, the most adamantly pro-farmer paper in the county, was embedded in an agricultural town within a heavily agricultural region and hardly had need of rural correspondents.

editor of at least the Yale Democrat implicitly denied he was a Klan member. The two Stillwater papers give little effort in Klan reporting. The Cushing Citizen's editor, situated in an area rife with Klan activities, seemed to have ignored some large Klan activities in his town.¹⁷ Editor Show of the Perkins paper at one point stated he saw no use for the Klan. His paper contained almost no reportage on the Klan and stopped with his retirement in the Fall of 1922. This range of responses fits with the findings of Bradford W. Scharlott in his study of newspapers in Indiana. He found a spectrum of responses to the Klan in his sample, but he found in general papers were "more deferential than adversarial towards the Klan." In Indiana this was the case at least until the time when the leader of the Indiana Klan was arrested and convicted of the homicide of a woman he raped.¹⁸ The wide response to the Klan in the newspapers of Payne County in many ways mirrors Scharlott's findings.¹⁹

The papers of Payne County in 1921 to 1924 thus represented various interests and spoke in various identifiable voices, both politically and by locality. Their editors were allied with the business classes but had regular rural input. Their editorial pages were partisan but also spoke for the farmer and for the county. The rural correspondents spoke in authentic tones about rural cares and concerns. And the newspapers' responses to the Klan were varied and of interest. All of these factors speak in favor of newspapers as sources.

But a negative argument in favor of newspapers as sources can also be made. If you eliminated newspapers as the main source of information you would have essentially stated that the Klan in Payne County could not be studied. Hopefully this study will illustrate the usefulness of newspapers as a major source in understanding the Klan in a county and also the worth of the effort.

¹⁷There are two factors which throw ambiguity on the attitudes of the Cushing editor. First, the paper's run at the Oklahoma Historical Society has missing issues and these often fit the times when activities were happening. Second, there was a daily Citizen but the Historical Society has none of its issues. This paper folded in 1923 and editor Green concentrated his energies on the weekly which has survived.

¹⁸Bradford W. Scharlott, "The Hoosier Journalist and the Hooded Order: Indiana Press Reaction to the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s," Journalism History 15 (Winter 1988): 122-31.

¹⁹ There was also a newspaper in little Glencoe, the Mirror, which was not consulted and folded in 1922.

There is a further problem faced by the researcher who must immerse himself or herself in local sources, such as reading thousands of pages of newspapers. That immersion brings with it the possibility of subjective leaps of argument by the researcher. This problem may be harmless in some circumstances, but it may also involve claiming something as fact, such as the strong emphasis upon the individual found in the newspaper columns devoted to rural correspondents, which would take large quantities of citations to "objectively" prove. This is a tendency which is hard for the researcher to see in himself. It is one which is quite relevant to this study and one which my committee has tried valiantly to curb. The final product of my efforts undoubtedly still contains such subjective leaps, the blame for which is solely mine.

The combination of the above mentioned immersion, and stylistic ideas laid down over my lifetime, has also led to a style of writing which some on my committee deem too literary. In my revisions of the main body of this work I have tried to repress the flightier passages. Any such literary soarings which do remain are my responsibility and not my committees. As with all works of history I beg that the reader will read critically, and that the sum of the will work add to that body of knowledge which has inspired and instructed me for over four decades.

Acknowledgments and Thanks

Historical researchers must be aware that their work is dependent many people. Most evident are the many librarians and archivists who have helped. The newspapers used as the primary source in this work are collected and made available by the Oklahoma Historical Society. That organization's newspaper archives are a wondrous trove of information, a true treasure for the researcher. Mr. Delbert Aman and his fellow archivists in that collection have been very helpful. Mr. Bill Welge, archivist at the Oklahoma Historical Society, gave me help and advice with the subject and with that organization's archives, and Ms. Judith Michener of the oral history program of the O.H.S. also did yeoman work on my behalf. The library staffs of local libraries were also helpful, particularly the workers at the Stillwater Public Library. I must also thank my long-time

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The personnel of my committee at Oklahoma State University have changed during the minor millennium it has taken me to complete my studies. Dr. David Baird convinced me to try for the degree and has continued to be a friend and supporter even from his present duties at Pepperdine University. Dr. Roger Biles also gave me early encouragement in my interest in the twentieth century before his departure for Maryland. My final committee, Dr. Robert Darcy, Dr. James Huston, Dr. Michael Logan, Dr. George Jewsbury, and my chair, Dr. Ron Petrin, have all given me profitable ideas and critiques of this work. Although I did not have the opportunity of taking a course with Dr. Logan, I have appreciated his critique of my work. I thank Dr. Huston not only for an excellent course taken under him, but for coming on the committee in the latter stages and providing a thorough critique of the work. I must particularly thank Dr. Darcy and Dr. Jewsbury for both their chiding about the time spent and their constant belief that I had something to offer the profession. The Director of my committee, Dr. Ron Petrin, has been crucial to my completion. His advice has been consistently excellent, his patience supreme, and his belief in me a bulwark. If there were a Platonic Ideal of a dissertation advisor, he'd look a lot like Dr. Petrin.

My Father and Mother, Rev. Roland L. Showalter and Edna May Burkhart Showalter, ran a household which set a high store in education. My Father honed my critical senses and helped me love history and ideas, while my Mother taught me to love books, to love the poetry of words, and to love human beings, quirks and all. I only wish my Mother was alive to see me complete my degree. They got five children through college, saw four of them go into teaching, and saw one get a legitimate job. That's a fine record. To both parents I give my love and thanks.

All this would have been for naught without my own wife and children. Thomas and David have grown up with a father who was always taking one more course and trying to read one more book for a paper that was due yesterday. As they have shown patience with me, I hope I have shown love to them. My wife, Betsy Sheila Showalter, was always there. Chiding me gently by her industrious example, she was understanding of my faults. Always solid in her belief in me and gentle in her love, she was a constant aid in this project.

It is to David, Thomas and Betsy that I dedicate this work.

A Postscript:

I am aware, more so than when I began, that such an inquiry as this will never be truly concluded. Yet, as I have contemplated the process of social change, the experiences involved in it, and the responses of people to those changes, I have become impressed with the limits of analyses that assume that the whole is but the sum of the parts or that hold that by reducing life to standardized quantifiable terms and categories it is capable of being fully understood. Part of my humility thus derives from my perception of the solemn mystery of the subject. And part of it derives from my conviction that no final answers will ever be found.

But the subject is too important to ignore.²⁰

²⁰Michael Cassity, Defending a Way of Life: An American Community in the Nineteenth Century (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989): xiii.

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Chapter I

Introduction

This is a study of Payne County, Oklahoma during the era of the hooded Ku Klux Klan, 1921 to 1924.¹ Because understanding the hooded Klan entails understanding the local environment in which it thrived, the bulk of this study is a study of Payne County, socially, institutionally, economically, ideologically, and politically. The basic question asked by this study is why Payne County fostered a relatively large Klan. What conditions nurtured the Klan? What limits did the County put upon the Klan? What was the relationship of the Klan to the County? And what did that hooded Klan achieve?

It is the thesis of this work that Payne County both accepted the hooded Klan and implicitly limited its activities. Probably a majority of countians accepted the Klan as a legitimate institution, with many hundreds of countians joining and many thousands flocking to the Klan's announced public events. But Payne County in the early 1920s also put some limitations upon the Klan. On most issues the Klan's voice was redundant with the voices of other institutions and individuals. Thus, the hooded Klan in Payne County never obtained a unique ideology which would allow it to stand clearly and distinctly in the county community. The Klan's uniqueness was, rather, in the spectacular nature of its public events and its implicit message of physical action. And the county placed limits on the Klan's voice and activities through the white Protestant majority's acceptance, in a paternalistic way, of its African American and Roman Catholic

¹The term "hooded Klan" refers to the Ku Klux Klan during the period in which they wore hoods in public to maintain their anonymity. A law "de-hooding" the Klan, i.e., making the wearing of masks in public except on certain specified occasions, took effect in about May, 1924. In Payne County the period of the hooded Klan was from late 1921 until 1924.

populations, as well as through the county's generally negative attitude towards violence. As a consequence of these limiting factors, the County was able to harbor a relatively large hooded Klan without that Klan substantially changing the County socially, ideologically, politically, or economically.

The period of the hooded Klan, late 1921 to the summer of 1924, was chosen for study for three reasons. First, it was an identifiable and finite period. It thus set realizable limits on this study. Second, this period was chosen because the unhooding of the Klan changed that organization's relationship to the population and institutions of the County. And the third reason is that many historians today as well as the older, orthodox school of Klan historians, point to the violence allowed by the hood as a determining factor in the effect of the Klan. Although this anonymity did imply the possibility of violence, the history of the Klan in Payne County is essentially one without violence.

Payne County proved a valuable county to study. The other major county study of the Klan in Oklahoma, Garin Burbank's important work on Marshall County, considered a county in the southern, "Little Dixie" portion of the state, a land settled by southerners and grounded in cotton agriculture. In contrast, Payne County was settled largely by upper midwesterners, had a mixed economy based on agriculture, an industrial base in oil, and even a state institution, Oklahoma A. & M. College. Thus, Payne County could be contrasted demographically and economically with Marshall County. In addition, Payne County had within itself the basis for a contrast between its agricultural and industrial economic bases.

There was a further advantage to studying Payne County and its Klan. The county was still largely rural in extent, with a strong agricultural sector, making it similar to many counties both in Oklahoma and the nation. But demographically it was almost evenly split between the rural and the urban. Although both Burbank's study and this study found the Klan active mostly in the cities, with strong implications of support by the business elites of the towns, the situations of the two counties were actually quite different.

Payne County also had a Klan which achieved relatively large numbers but was relatively benign to the fabric of the county. Without a great number of further studies it cannot be firmly claimed that this was a common pattern, but it would seem a logical assumption.

This study conforms to the modern revisionist Klan studies in its local focus, its concern with the commonly held assumptions and institutions of the locality, and even in its reliance upon newspapers as a primary source. But this study stands apart from most Klan studies in its concentration upon a locality in which the Klan seemingly achieved very little beyond a reportedly large membership total. Most Klan studies are concentrated on localities where there was some conflict about which the Klan became involved. An assumption of this study is that the lack of conflict surrounding the growth of the Klan in Payne County was a very common pattern, one probably found in the majority of localities in the nation. The implication of this assumption is that Klan studies have generally distorted the image of the Klan of the 1920s.

Because modern Klan studies emphasize the Klan in a particular locality, this study provides a glimpse of the structures and functioning of a county in Oklahoma in the early 1920s. It was a county going through new institutionalization during this period, with a consequent flurry of joining by countians, but one in which the Protestant churches remained the most respected institutions. It was a county without the rural versus urban rancor found in Burbank's work and utilized as a motif by many studies.² People in Payne County had a general set of assumptions about community which were seemingly accepted throughout the county, an ideology of community claiming its origins in the rural communities and centered around traditional family values and cooperation, but which could also accept the competition of the business elite in the cities. And it was a county under economic stress caused by a national recession, a recession which threatened both the agricultural and petroleum bases of the county's economy.

The era of the hooded Klan in Payne County was short. In 1924, when by state law the Klan had to unmask, it was likely that the peak era of the Klan in Payne County was passed: it

²See Charles W. Eagles, "Urban-Rural Conflict in the 1920s: A Historiographical Assessment," *Historian* 49 (November 1986): 26-48. This conflict theory also impinges upon the later discussion of the county's perception of "community" in Chapter V of this work.

probably was passed by 1923. By 1926 the secretive Klan was listed in the City Directory under "fraternal organizations" and had Klan Halls in Stillwater and Cushing.³ A group implicitly violent had become a fraternal organization with a public life. A group whose rhetoric was meant to divide had become part of the common life of the county, part of the community. Did the county change, or did the Klan?

Klan Historiography

There has always been a fascination with the Klan of the 1920s. The newspapers and magazines of the 1920s had the Klan as a recurring subject, be it the Klan and violence or the Klan on trial or the Congress investigating the Klan. Although this is a study of a county in Oklahoma which had a large Klan membership, countians learned of the Klan and its doings through the new miracle of the national pages appearing in the many newspapers in the county. By 1923 they could read about their state Klan in national magazines.⁴

The fascination with the Klan of the 1920s has never let up. Although part of that fascination is due to the notoriety of the 1860s Klan, that Klan has been relatively ignored compared to the vast amount of work which has been done and is still being done on the Klan of the 1920s. The reason for this rests in part with the fact that the Klan of the 1860s was largely a delivery system for threats of violence and violence, all in defense of both an ugly system of

³Polk's Stillwater, Cushing and Yale City Directory 1926-27, (Kansas City, Missouri: R.L. Polk & Co., 1926): Stillwater, 23, Cushing, 23.

⁴Aldrich Blake, "Oklahoma's Klan-Fighting Governor," Nation, n.s. 117 (3 October 1923): 353; Bruce Bliven, "From the Oklahoma Front," New Republic 35 (17 October 1923): 202-05; Stanley Frost, "The Oklahoma Regicides Act," Outlook 135 (7 November 1923): 395-96; *Ibid.*, "Night-Riding Reformers: The Regeneration of Oklahoma," Outlook 135 (14 November 1923): 438-40; *Ibid.*, "Behind the White Hoods: The Regeneration of Oklahoma," Outlook 135 (21 November 1923): 492-95; *Ibid.*, "The Klan, the King, and a Revolution: The Regeneration of Oklahoma," Outlook 135 (28 November 1923): 530-31; *Ibid.*, "The Ku Klux Klan," Outlook 135 (12 December 1923): 622; *Ibid.*, "When the Klan Rules," Outlook 135 (19 December 1923): 674-76; *Ibid.*, "When the Klan Rules: The Giant Clears for Action," Outlook 135 (26 December 1923): 716-18; Llewellyn Nelson, "The KKK for Boredom," New Republic 41 (14 January 1925): 196-98.

servitude and a sense of lost southern white empowerment. Neither of these were particularly inspiring topics.⁵

The Klan of the 1920s was much more complex in its structure, its geography, its membership and its appeal. But it, too, had its violence, and it is the memory of that violence that still clings to the Klan of the 1920s. That taint of violence has made it more difficult for the investigator to rely on oral sources. In her excellent study of the interviews which went into her important work on women of the Klan, Katherine Blee wondered out loud how her interview subjects could be so unrepentant about belonging to groups which spread so much hate and unhappiness. "The evidence that such informants present to the oral historian is at once revelatory and unreliable." It was revelatory about the mentality of the subject, but unreliable concerning the historic facts.⁶

But the Klan of the 1920's was much more than simply a violent delivery system for reactionaries. It was begun almost as a lark in 1915 by a small-time minister and fraternal organizer, William Simmons, who saw the sensational D.W. Griffith movie, "The Birth of A Nation," a movie which glorified the original Klan, as great publicity for a new, resurrected Klan. Without clear intentions he held a dinner, burnt a cross, and was underwhelmed by the response. He persisted and built a small membership. In 1919 the organization came under the direction of Mr. Edward Young Clarke and Miss Elizabeth "Bessie" Tyler. By the summer of 1921, under their aggressive recruitment, they had built an organization of several thousand into one of an estimated 1,000,000 members and had found it to be a money-making proposition. The organization grew at the national level, the state level and local level under the guidance of rapacious men. The Klan's message was the continuation of a white, patriotic, God-fearing

⁵David Mark Chalmers, Hooded Americanism: The First Century of the Ku Klux Klan, 1865-1965 (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday, 1965): 8-21; George C. Rable, But There Was No Peace: The Role of Violence in the Politics of Reconstruction (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984), 69-74.

⁶Kathleen M. Blee, "Evidence, Empathy, and Ethics: Lessons from Oral Histories of the Klan," Journal of American History 80 (September 1993): 597-99; Women of the Klan: Racism and Gender in the 1920s (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

Protestant nation. But below that, personal greed, the desire for power, and a mix of things psychological, always showed up in the leadership of the Klan.⁷

At the local level the Klan's story was both more interesting and more complex. If it is easy to dismiss the national and state leadership of much of the Klan, with their mansions in Atlanta and their gigantic egos, that does not necessarily hold for the Klan on the local level. As the Klan leadership in Atlanta in the early 1920s expanded their organization at the top to better meet the astounding flow of memberships and to better rake in the huge profits of what was almost a pyramidal buying scheme, the Klan at the local level attracted members one by one, and reflected issues ranging from the national phobias of the day to things as mundane as school bond issues and camaraderie. If other fraternal organizations were into a long rather rapid two decades of decline and dismemberment nationally, the Klan in the early 1920s seemed to absolutely buck the trend and to grow like a weed, with stems and leaders reaching into every available space and inches added to each leader every day. Although organized like a militant fraternal organization -- its rites were lifted from the now-defunct Knights of Pythias -- and having its closest organizational kin, ironically, in the hated Catholic Knights of Columbus, the Klan grew like the newly arrived service organizations -- Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis -- and that other newcomer to the local scene, the American Legion. The Klan's attendance at meetings probably bore a much closer relationship to the less formal, very social meetings of the service organizations and the Legion than to the rite-bound fraternal. Also like the newer organizations, the Klan was an organization concerned with issues beyond itself. Whereas the common fraternal meeting of the time was largely taken up with elaborate rites and degree work aimed at the improvement of the individual member, the Klan, from the few minutes that have survived, discussed problems of the city and locality and truncated their rituals relative to the older fraternal. The Klan was also known to be active in politics, unlike the fraternal but like the American Legion and new service organizations.⁸

⁷Chalmers, Hooded Americanism, 28-38; Nancy MacLean, Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994): 4-11.

⁸On fraternalism's troubles by the 1920s, see Lynn Dumenil, Freemasonry and American Culture, 1880-1930 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984): 163; Mark Carnes, Secret

But part of the fascination with the Klan also concerns the collapse of what might be deemed the classic 1920s Klan, the hooded Klan.⁹ Even though hindered in their estimates of the Klan's power and extent by the Klan's thoroughness in hiding and destroying membership rolls, it is generally agreed, following Chalmers, that the classic early-20s Klan peaked about 1923 and was declining in membership, and probably in any power it had, by 1924 and 1925.¹⁰ Where the revisionists would disagree with Chalmers is in the national focus Chalmers uses. The most recent studies emphasize the importance of studying the Klan on a local level.¹¹

The rather abrupt trajectory followed by the membership of the Klan of the 1920s has always led to speculations by observers of the Klan, some of whom have been historians. Why did the Klan grow so quickly and then decline? Observers have pointed to the great crowds Klan events drew, to the large memberships touted by the Klan. Did this automatically convert into actual social and political strength? And did large numbers mean that the Klan's existence changed society?

This study takes an opposite tack. It argues that the Klan drew great crowds and enrolled many members, but also mirrored the mentality of its host communities so well that the Klan, with all its racism, sexism, repression, and even violence, really did not change the nature of the

Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989):153-56. On the newly emerging service clubs, see Jeffrey A. Charles, Service Clubs in American Society: Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lions (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993). The only minutes of a Klan I know of are some used by Nancy MacLean in her excellent study of Athens, Georgia. She notes that, "Leaders reminded members that their organization was 'not a lodge,' but 'an army of Protestant Americans.'" See Mask of Chivalry, 3-4, 11.

⁹De-hooding occurred in Oklahoma in 1924, but the dates were different for different states.

¹⁰MacLean noted a wide range of national membership numbers, ranging from 1,500,000 members to the Klan's claim of 5,000,000. See Mask of Chivalry, xi, 197 n.2.

¹¹This, at least, is the scenario drawn by the book which probably began modern studies of the Klan of the 1920s: Chalmers, Hooded Americanism, 1-7. The revisionist studies emphasize the local derivation of the Klan and caution against broad strokes in describing "the Klan" of the 1920s. See, for example: Charles C. Alexander, The Ku Klux Klan in the Southwest (Lexington: PhD dissertation, University of Kentucky, 1965): vii; Leonard J. Moore, Citizen Klansmen: The Ku Klux Klan in Indiana, 1921-28 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991): 11-12; David C. Boies, "The Effect of the Ku Klux Klan on the Oklahoma Gubernatorial Election of 1926," Chronicles of Oklahoma 55 (Winter, 1977-78): 424-32.

communities in which it dwelt. It became simply one of the organized foci of ideas and forces latent, and not so latent, within the pre-Klan communities.¹²

To analyze the 1920s hooded Klan, we must first ask what it was about this Klan that seemed to make it different from other organizations? The thing that set the Klan apart from organizations, organizations which shared some or most its views, was the implicit aura of violence that hung over the organization. It was assumed that the Klan would use violence without scruples if it chose. Nancy MacLean put it well:

In short, the decision about whether to use violence was for the Klan a tactical one, one answered in the affirmative most often south of the Mason-Dixon line. Yet, even in areas where it seemed to risky to try at the moment, the possibility of violence at some later date loomed. For the Klan culture generated a propensity to vigilantism like an acorn does an oak; all the seed needed to grow was nourishment from good soil.¹³

It was a secret organization, guarding its rolls and its members anonymity jealously. A person can easily understand that that anonymity, and the implicit threat of a covered face, with inhuman looking eye-holes and a mouth-hole piercing the white mask, carried an immediate threat to the observer. Their military style of organization also conveyed that message, especially so in a world which had seen so much military organization and attendant violence in its recent past. This implicit menace conveyed by the Klan likely attracted some to join, but the motivation of Klansmen is beyond the ken of this study.

The Klan also carried menace when it quietly entered a church during services, forming along the sides of the nave and standing silently, seeing but not really being seen. A leader would then step smartly forward, deliver a message of support for minister and congregation,

¹²Moore comes very close to saying this, especially in his use of the term "populist" as a substitute for "radical", and in his argument that the Klan was not an aberration. See Moore, Citizen Klansmen, 11. MacLean refers to the "very ordinariness" of Klan membership in Athens, Georgia. See Mask of Chivalry, xiv.

¹³MacLean, Mask of Chivalry, 173. MacLean reverses my ordering by emphasizing the Klan's secrecy as the element that set it apart, although she constantly emphasizes the Klan's violence. On Klan secrecy, see Chivalry, 20-21. Klan membership was secret, unlike other organizations of the day, but its rites and many of its activities were no less secret than the older fraternal organizations. In Oklahoma the secrecy in public, the hood, was given up by the Klan to escape the constant accusations of violence by the organization. See Sheldon Neuringer, "Governor Walton's War on the Ku Klux Klan: An Episode in Oklahoma History," Chronicles of Oklahoma 45 (Summer 1967): 176.

then turn with the group and silently march out of the church. The threat of violence was so great that it even managed to take a symbol which meant redemption to the overwhelmingly christian nation and make the cross into a symbol of implicit violence. To have a cross burned before your house was making the implicit threats explicit.

And wherever there was Klan, there were those who accused the Klan of violence, pure and simple. Threatening letters would arrive from the Klan accusing their recipients of adultery or moonshining. Lashings, tar and featherings, even a lynching or two, were laid at the Klan's feet and sometimes even acknowledged by a Klan letter to a newspaper or in a Klansman's hissed warnings to the victim. Even when violence did occur without a direct or admitted Klan tie, the Klan was often accused or assumed to be the perpetrators. In a period in which there was a great deal of violence, and the wide national news coverage to loudly proclaim it, the Klan stood at the apex of the national mind as the purveyors of violence. Despite years of study by historians, this constant odor of violence still clings to the Klan and is probably both the greatest draw to the popular interest in the Klan and the most distinctive thing about the Klan compared to other organizations of the period.¹⁴

Second to the air of violence was the air of hate and fear that permeated the Klan. Klan literature alternates between extolling the virtues of a moral, christian nation and declaring anathemas against lists of enemies and problems, with the problems always due to an identified enemy. Many groups and organizations of the time had things they hated. Democrats in the South hated "uppity negroes" and northern do-gooders who might interfere with the "race question", while biblical literalists hated Darwinian science. Everyone hated those who were "unamerican", even if no one could quite define what that term meant. But no national organization had an agenda as full of hated things, so tilted towards vituperation, as the Klan, and no national organization of the early 1920's was so identified as a purveyor of hate as the Klan. If the Klan of the 1860s was mostly anti-black, not holding back from carpetbaggers and

¹⁴The Klan in Oklahoma actually backed a de-hooding law in 1924 because it was so generally assumed that any act of violence by a group of men was a Klan act. See Neuringer, "Walton's War," 175-77.

other northern sympathizers, that racial concern lost priority in the 1920s Klan due largely to the thoroughness of Jim Crow and the influx of immigrants. Instead, it was the Roman Catholic Church and all its "legions" of priests and members that took pride of place nationally. Jews were not much the target of the Klan, but the black man who was "uppity" was always fair game. Hispanics in some regions were targets, and breakers of the Ten Commandments everywhere were wide-open targets for the Klan. The variety of enemies perceived is both something that separates this Klan from that of the 1860s, and a major reason the Klan of the 1920s is such an interesting and complex problem for historians.¹⁵

The Klan was also seen as a populist organization. It shared with other fraternal organizations a basically open admissions policy, unlike the service organizations and the American Legion. It had paid recruiters, unlike any other organization, and an easier entry level than the traditional fraternals: if you could pay \$10.00 and memorize a small bit, you were in. Because of its open admissions policy, excepting of course the fact that the entrant had to be an adult white protestant male, it shared with the other fraternals a much wider socio-economic range of membership than the new businessmen's service organizations. Only the American Legion, of the new organizations, could boast as diverse a membership as the Klan, though one could claim that the Legion's entry requirements were possibly the most horrendous and demanding of all. And like the Legion, the Klan formed a cross-section of white America in socio-economic terms if not in religion. The Legion was nearly all white but admitted, and defended, Catholics and Jews. It also sought to be inclusive although it was largely middle class. The Klan was all white and all protestant christian, and exclusive of others.¹⁶

¹⁵For a listing of Klan concerns in the 1920s, see Moore, Citizen Klansmen, 10-12. For a broad look at anti-semitism in America in which the 1940s rather than the 1920s are accounted the peak period, see Leonard Dinnerstein, Antisemitism in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994): 78-104, 128-149. For anti-black Klan activities, see MacLean, Mask of Chivalry, 125-48. Anti-Hispanic activities can be seen in Shawn Lay, War, Revolution and the Ku Klux Klan: A Study of Intolerance in a Border City (El Paso: Texas Western Press of the University of Texas at El Paso, 1985). And for a sampling of five distinct klaverns in five cities of Colorado, each with a different agenda and history, see Robert Alan Goldberg, Hooded Empire: The Ku Klux Klan in Colorado (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981).

¹⁶For the Klan described as "populist", see: Moore, Citizen Klansman, 11; for the difficulties of working through the rites of fraternal organizations, see Mark C. Carnes, Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989): each

But along with these things that seem to make the Klan unique and which have over the years attracted great notice and notoriety to the organization, it is instructive to also list those things about the Klan which were not that unusual. In an age of organizing, the Klan was a new outlet for the spirit of organization. Its fraternal rites may have struck the "modern" age of the early 1920s as a bit old-fashioned but definitely not unfamiliar: in Payne County there was still a diversity of fraternal organizations and having rites would not have seemed that foreign. After it achieved some success, local Klans rented or built their own halls and eventually would be listed in phone directories along with a named contact person, usually listed in the business directories as a "fraternal organization".¹⁷

The Klan also offered something found in all the fraternal as well as the new male service and servicemen's organizations: male camaraderie. If the attraction of the fraternal in the nineteenth-century depended in part on this male bonding, especially bonding for a moral purpose, then the Klan offered the same to many men of the early twentieth-century. With its emphasis on a Protestant christian religiosity, the Klan ideas and rites were less foreign to many men than the obscure, eclectic, often only sporadically christian theosophies erected by the fraternal organizations. But the essential camaraderie linked the Klan directly to both the fraternal and the newly emerged service clubs.¹⁸

The Klan, like other organizations, contributed to charity and, in its hooded years in Payne County, sometimes outdid groups such as Rotary and church congregations. Nancy

chapter begins with a detailed description of a rite; for American Legion defense of Jewish and Roman Catholic members, see William Pencak, For God and Country: The American Legion, 1919-1941 (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1989): 138; and for Legion inclusion vs. Klan exclusion, see Pencak, God and Country, 131. Penak claims that the Legion was actually disproportionately middle class and did not achieve even fifty-percent membership of veterans until after World War II: see *ibid.*, 16.

¹⁷Payne County seemed to hold onto its fraternal organizations in the 1920s better than the nation. For the national situation, see: Carnes, Secret Ritual, 151-59. For the listing of the Klan as a fraternity, see Polk's Directory, Stillwater section, p. 23. In Stillwater the address of the Klan Hall was 123¹/₂ E. 9th Ave. In Cushing the Klan Hall was at 107¹/₂ W. Broadway in 1926, and the contact person was the secretary, G.R. Lewallen. See Polk's Directory, Stillwater section, p. 23, Cushing section, p. 24.

¹⁸Carnes, Secret Ritual, 151-59. On the Service Clubs, see Charles F. Marden, Rotary and Its Brothers: An Analysis and Interpretation of the Men's Service Club (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1935): 76.

MacLean rightly warns that the extent of Klan charity can be easily overstated, but the signal it gave -- that the Klan was a good citizen -- was the same as that given by charity given by other organizations.¹⁹

The Klan often had women's' auxiliaries -- Women of the Klan, or the White Camellias -- that paralleled the other fraternal organizations' female auxiliaries, as well as the Rotary "Anns" of Stillwater or the Ladies Auxiliary of the American Legion. Kathleen Blee's work attempts to counter the generally accepted feeling among historians that these women's auxiliaries were simply an afterthought, claiming that the women, with their campaigns of whisperings and their often high-profile speakers, were actually an important element in the Klan's success. These auxiliaries were a national phenomenon, but only one mention was made of a woman's auxiliary in Payne County during the era of the hooded Klan.²⁰

The Klan constantly tried to back the most conventional and conservative Protestantism on the moral questions of its day. It fought for prohibition along with nearly every other local organization: Only the American Legion, with their experience of War and reputation for moral relaxation in France, were considered ambiguous on the question of alcohol, and locals could dismiss that by pointing to the trauma and violence servicemen had experienced, to their patriotism, and to their experience of living in unwholesome, alcohol-ridden nations such as France. The Klan also had a reputation, in Oklahoma and nationally, for attacking men, and some women, considered to be fornicators, adulterers, bad parents, prostitutes, or flim-flam men. The Klan's most frequent venue in Payne County was its appearances in Protestant churches. Doing that, and having prominent ministers in its membership, helped legitimize the Klan. It was in effect aligning itself with the institution considered to be the ultimate moral source in the county. Empowered by the legitimacy of the truth of the protestant message, the Klan attempted to be an instrument of that morality.²¹

¹⁹MacLean, Mask of Chivalry, 85-6.

²⁰Blee, Women of the Klan, 1-4; YD, 6 September 1923, 1.

²¹On the American Legion and alcohol, see: Pencak, God and Country, 131-36. On the Klan and morality, see MacLean, Mask of Chivalry, 98-112.

In short, in many ways the Klan was rather unremarkable in the local organizational establishment of America of the early 1920s. If it were not for the violence and hate attributed to the Klan, the organization might have simply slipped comfortably into the local world of the early 1920s, a nostalgic throwback in white robes. If there are markers that separate out the Klan, it is their willingness to use violence and their hate-mongering.

The first serious histories of the 1920s Klan were written at the time. John Moffatt Mecklin's 1924 work was the most important and most scholarly. These early studies created the orthodox image of the classic Klan that would persist into the 1960s and which still attracts some authors, though usually the ones who aim at a more popular clientele.²²

This orthodox treatment of the Klan was quite straightforward. The Klan was largely rural or small town and, despite the obvious example of Indiana, mostly southern. The Klan may have attracted some of the more educated and moneyed men initially, but it quickly became the haven for the illiterate or semi-literate who were largely poor or not far from it. The Klan was racist and bigoted, drawing these streams from its parochial roots in the South, and reinforcing them with white fundamentalist and Pentecostal religion. It was mainly concerned with the unamerican activities of Roman Catholics and Jews, but was as likely to target blacks and anyone who seemed interested in helping these groups. The Klan was assumed to be outside the norms of politics and proper society, a pathology or an aberration. This interpretation emphasized the violence of the 1920s Klan, a fact that put it outside the norms of normal conservatism, and it was that penchant for violence that made it an aberration rather than a traditionally conservative group. It represented a return to vigilantism and, in a distant way, a revival of the original Klan.²³

²²John Moffatt Mecklin, The Ku Klux Klan: A Study of the American Mind (New York: 1924); Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R. (New York: 1955), modified this orthodoxy by linking descendants of the Populist with reactionary ruralism that bred the Klan. Recent works of an orthodox slant are David H. Bennett, The Party of Fear: From Nativist Movement to the New Right in American History (Chapel Hill: 1988); Wyn Craig Wade, The Fiery Cross: The Ku Klux Klan in America (New York: 1987). For a fine summation of the traditional view and of the newer revisionist view, see, Leonard J. Moore, "Historical Interpretations of the 1920's Klan: The Traditional View and the Populist Revision," Journal of Social History, 24 (1990), 341-57. Moore's use of the term "populist" is generic and not a reference to the Populists of the 1890's. His groupings are basic to my interpretation.

²³For similar descriptions of the traditional view, see: Goldberg, Hooded Empire, vii-ix; Moore, Citizen Klansman, 1-6.

The assumptions about the Klan were likely due, in part, to the biases of journalists and academics more liberal than the populace. But the assumptions were also a result of the thorough way in which the Klan guarded its rolls. A secret organization could always be tied to conspiracy theories and violent acts by outsiders. Several factors combined to change Klan historiography in the 1960s. One of those was likely the influence of the times, the civil rights movement of that era not only sharpening interest in the oppressors as well as the oppressed, but also bringing the recent manifestations of the Klan more into public view. New historians got involved with the study of the 1920s Klan and they looked at it as a new problem. Jackson's work on the Klan in the cities, though it probably exaggerated the actual urban numbers, reversed the concept of the rural southern hick Klansman. Alexander's work on the Southwest emphasized regionalism and the Klan's broad appeal to white protestant America. And David Chalmers' work, which included a chapter on the Oklahoma Klan, discounted the usual victims and concerns, emphasizing a Klan which attacked mainly white Protestants for moralistic reasons. All these works discounted racism as the Klan's central concern. As Alexander stated, "In the first few years of its existence in these four states the Klan was, more than anything else, an instrument for restoring law and order and Victorian morality to the communities, towns, and cities of the region."²⁴

In the 1980s the emergence of a few studies based on discovered Klan membership rolls reinforced the revisionist ideas and seemed to raise new vistas of understanding the 1920s Klan. The Klan rolls revealed a Klan that mirrored white protestant adult male society rather well, with the top and bottom ends of the socio-economic scale underrepresented. With this new socio-economic evidence about the Klan came the final nail in the coffin of the vision of the aberrant, reactionary Klan. How can an organization be too far reactionary if it so closely reflects the

²⁴Kenneth T. Jackson, The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-1930, The Urban Life in America Series (NY.: Oxford University Press, 1967): 235-49; see chapter on Oklahoma in Chalmers, Hooded Americanism, 49-55; Charles C. Alexander, The Ku Klux Klan in the Southwest (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965): vii. For a review article, see Carl N. Degler, "A Century of the Klans: A review Article," Journal of Southern History 31 (November, 1965): 435-43.

demographics of the ruling group in that society? This not only seemed to cut out the traditional stereotype of the Klansman, but it also undercut a easy class-conflict interpretation.²⁵

The new "populist interpretation," to use Moore's words, generally saw a Klan with broader interests than were previously stressed.²⁶ Only MacLean continued to portray a Klan which was based solidly on racism, with a strong fascist tendencies, a national agenda, and emphasis on gender dominance. But even she fit the revisionists' emphasis upon the localism of the Klan.²⁷ There were also strong elements of racism in Shawn Lay's study of El Paso, but this conflict between older anglo residents and the newer anglo residents revolves not only about a racist group confronted by a more racist group, but an older establishment challenged by a newer cohort group.²⁸ Larry R. Gerlach's study of Utah presented a mixed picture. The Klan was opposed by the Mormon Church, but 26% of his limited sample of members were Mormons, about 50% unchurched "Jack Mormon", with the membership a cross-section of white Utahans. The issues were diverse, often local, but both the Church and the Klan agreed upon opposing unionism. Thus, again, it was a local Klan reflecting local issues and concerns. "The Klan did not create bigotry: It merely capitalized on existing prejudices."²⁹

²⁵For the cross-sectional nature of Klan membership, see, Goldberg, Hooded Empire, 173-76; Moore, Citizen Klansman, 9-11. Moore specifically denied there were grounds for a class conflict model. Nancy MacLean did emphasize the middling nature of Klan membership in Athens, Georgia: Her largest occupational category was small businessmen, and she found few unskilled workers and few men of wealth. She argued that class conflict was not on the Klan's agenda because the issue of race had overridden it. See, MacLean, Mask of Chivalry, 77-97. Shawn Lay directly attacked "the ethnocultural school of political analysis that has so greatly influenced the scholarly view of nineteenth-century political behavior," claiming it could not be applied to the West and that he doubted it would fit elsewhere. See, Shawn Lay, "Toward a New Historical Appraisal of the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s," in The Invisible Empire in the West: Toward a New Historical Appraisal of the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s, ed. Shawn Lay, 218 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992).

²⁶Moore, "Historical Interpretations," 341-57. For further review articles on the revisionist Klan historiography see Michael Kazin, "The Grass-Roots Right: New Histories of US Conservatism in the Twentieth Century," American Historical Review 97 (February 1992): 136-55; Stanley Coben, "Ordinary White Protestants: The KKK of the 1920s," Journal of Social History 28 (Fall 1994): 155-65; Degler, "A Century of the Klans," 435-43.

²⁷MacLean, Mask of Chivalry, 177-88.

²⁸Shawn Lay, War, Revolution.

²⁹Larry R. Gerlach, Blazing Crosses in Zion: The Ku Klux Klan in Utah (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1982): 15-22. Gerlach did not have Klan rolls for his work but did discover the names of about fifty 1920s Klansmen. Gerlach noted that his was only the second Klan study from the inter-mountain west, Goldberg's of Colorado being the other. There has also been

In fact, the distinctive mark of the newer historiography, probably its most important and lasting innovation, was its emphasis on the Klan reflecting both the local white protestant community's demography and fears. This reversed the assumption of the older position, the assumption that the Klan came in and wrought great changes in the local society. Yet, despite that point, the newer studies still put the central emphasis upon the Klan. The present study moves that emphasis more in the direction of the locality. The assumption of this study is that the Klan was reflective and responsive to the existing community, hence to understand the Klan you must first know the community.³⁰

And the new historiography showed that the 1920s Klan was spread far beyond the South. The influence of Charles Alexander's path breaking study of the Klan in the Southwest, the study of four distinct states in a region rather than a nation, was later joined with state studies and local studies of the 1920s Klan. Leonard Moore concentrated on Indiana, probably the nation's largest and best documented Klan, while Katherine Blee studied women of the Klan and carved out for them a large role in its success. Blee also emphasized the gender discrimination of the Klan, something the MacLean emphasizes along with racism. State and local works are getting more plentiful.³¹

Yet there are at least some works which go counter to the new historiography's emphasis upon the locality of the Klan. One that is national in outlook is Stanley Coben's Rebellion Against Victorianism. In it Dr. Coben identified the "victorian character," established in the mid-nineteenth century and illustrated by Louisa May Alcott and her characters. This image of a proper, striving,

surprisingly little literature on the Klan of the southern Great Plains, despite the impetus of Alexander's Klan in the Southwest.

³⁰Nancy MacLean is a historian who demonstrated this. She emphasizes the Klan reflecting the community and the need, therefore, to study that community. This she does, but she also emphasizes a national Klan agenda throughout that sometimes hides the local community. She is also willing to emphasize national bigotries even if the target group, such as Catholics, is a very small presence in the community, arguing that the lack of immediate members of a feared group in a locality did not lessen the importance of bigotry towards that group. This is close to an *a priori* argument. See MacLean, Mask of Chivalry, xvi-xvii.

³¹Alexander, Klan in the Southwest; Leonard J. Moore, Citizen Klansmen: The Ku Klux Klan in Indiana, 1921-1928 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991); Kathleen M. Blee, Women of the Klan: Racism and Gender in the 1920s (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

other-directed Victorian white Anglo Saxon America was disrupted by the rise of labor, civil rights, independent academics who undercut social Darwinism and other assumptions, and new roles for women. The last bastion of the Victorian order was the Klan of the 1920s. No more violent than other organizations, it was nativist but that was not its real focus. Instead, it was the guardian of Victorian principles of family, propriety, order. And its main adversary was the materialistic business and political elite.

Members of these elites frequently owned or, through their banks, loaned money to purchase the land or buildings in which liquor was sold and the stores in which people who came to town to drink did their shopping. They wanted rapid growth of commercial and industrial districts and low taxes. Especially in cities of 50,000 or more, a significant proportion of the top echelons of these elites were employed by national corporations whose needs often conflicted with the wishes of ordinary local citizens.³²

Although Coben was cognizant of the revisionist literature -- he was advisor to Leonard Moore -- the basically *a priori* argument of the book militates against his work's relevance in the current debate. The tendency in Klan studies has been to abandon the national ideological approach and adopt a more local and empirical approach. In Garin Burbank's study of Marshall County and in the present study of Payne County, it is exactly the group Coben says opposed the Klan, the local businessmen, which formed the leadership of their respective county Klans.³³

Oklahoma early became a subject for those interested in the hooded Klan of the 1920s. The most extensive observer of Oklahoma and its Klan in the 1920s was the journalist, Stanley Frost, who wrote a seven-part series for Outlook magazine from November, 1923, to January, 1924. Writing from Oklahoma City, he first attacked Governor Walton as the major problem. This was during the impeachment phase of Walton's term and Frost saw the Governor threatening the basis of Anglo-Saxon legal traditions by his use of the militia to silence the Legislature. Frost also claimed the Governor's regime was replete with malfeasance and corruption.³⁴

³²Stanley Coben, Rebellion Against Victorianism: The Impetus for Cultural Change in 1920s America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991): 4, 140.

³³Garin Burbank, "Agrarian Radicals and Their Opponents: Political Conflict in Southern Oklahoma, 1910-1924," Journal of American History 58 (June, 1971): 5-23; When Farmers Voted Red: The Gospel of Socialism in the Oklahoma Countryside, 1910-1924, in Contributions in American History, no. 53 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976).

³⁴Stanley Frost, "The Oklahoma Regicides Act," Outlook 135 (7 November 1923):

After the Governor's demise, Frost turned his attention towards the Klan. He noted several problems in Oklahoma: "...the farmer labor movement, the trades union in politics, the enforcement of prohibition, even the Fundamentalist movement in religion."

But above and beyond all is the Ku Klux Klan, with its appeal to the narrowest instincts of a reawakening Americanism along the lines of racial and Protestant supremacy.

The situation is particularly important [in Oklahoma] because of the intention of Klan leaders to use the record here as the basis for an intense campaign to recruit members of the better sort, particularly in the North.

He saw the Klan as potentially the dominant political force in the state. He applauded Klan self-control during the crisis in Oklahoma in the Fall of 1923, and he lauded the Klan's concern with law and order and cleaning up Oklahoma's government. Frost harshly condemned the state as corrupt, led by opportunistic Sooners and oil tycoons, a state with high illiteracy, an obsession with material advancement, great discrepancies in wealth, and "...a mixture of Indians with moral standards quite different from those of white men...." In short, he portrayed a state in crisis and a Klan with a hidden agenda poised to take full advantage of the situation. The "leisure class" was outnumbered and disdained the political cesspool, so control of the government fell to "the professional liars and spoils men."

Politics was almost entirely a matter of spoliation enriched by corrupt catering to financial interests. A political campaign was most likely to succeed if based on impossible promises to class or special interests, combined with a play upon prejudices and a discreet connivance with the criminal elements.³⁵

Frost went on to describe the Klan in Oklahoma. In his eyes it was very ambitious. Starting with lower class members, it came to boast a strong middle class leading it and its members were good citizens. It had done many good works, laid its days of vigilantism officially aside, and had, by his estimate, 60% of the "fundamentalist" ministers in the state enrolled. His alarm was both in the Klan's size and its explosive spread: He estimated as many as 80,000 new members a week in the state. Oklahoma's Klan frightened Mr. Frost because of the narrowness of the Klan's outlook and

395-96.

³⁵Stanley Frost, "Night-Riding Reformers: The Regeneration of Oklahoma," Outlook 135 (14 November 1923): 438-40.

the threat that it would spread throughout the nation in the form it took in Oklahoma.³⁶ Frost's account was repetitious but vivid. In its demographic and religious descriptions, as well as in the monolithic Klan portrayed, we have some of the seedbed for the orthodox image of the 1920s Klan.

The modern approach to the Klan in Oklahoma began with Charles Alexander's 1965 work. Studying Louisiana, Arkansas, Texas and Oklahoma, he found that "vigilantism and politics [were] the main characteristics of Klan history in the Southwest." "There, more than anywhere else, the Klan transcended the limits of a nativist and racist organization and became a device for the ruthless dictation of community morals and ethics."³⁷ Pledged to preserve the status quo of white dominance, fundamentalist morality, and capitalism, the Klan became a latter-day progressive movement for that region.³⁸ Oklahoma probably had the most violent Klan in the region, a centrally coordinated violence which drew upon older traditions and acceptance of vigilantism. Officially squelching its own violence campaign by mid-1923, the Klan turned to politics.³⁹ The Klan quickly controlled the legislatures and was a winner in the impeachment and conviction of Walton. It then sank Walton's senatorial bid in 1924, it's last political victory. Klan autocracy clashed with a more democratic public. The Oklahoma Klan's 100,000 members faded, remaining politically powerful in some counties for several more years but never again having state power.⁴⁰ Covering the national scene as well as the changing Klan fortunes in four states, Alexander's work emphasized the local, broad-ranging concerns, and the rejection of stereotyping and accusations of pathology. These are points which are central to the modern study of the Klan.

Oklahoma's Klan was more completely explored with Dr. Blue Clark's dissertation, still the most complete look at the Klan in Oklahoma statewide. Dr. Clark claimed that the Klan began

³⁶Stanley Frost, "Behind the White Hoods: The Regeneration of Oklahoma," Outlook 135 (21 November 1923): 492-95; Stanley Frost, "When the Klan Rules: The Giant in the White Hood," Outlook 135 (19 December 1923): 674-76.

³⁷Alexander, Klan in the Southwest, vii, 19.

³⁸Ibid., 21, 27.

³⁹Ibid., 60, 77.

⁴⁰Ibid., 129-58, 208.

when an organizer from Texas arrived in Oklahoma City in the summer of 1920. He estimated that, from the Klan's arrival in 1920, membership jumped from a quick 100,000 to a high of 1,000,000. His narrative of the Klan followed closely the fortunes of Governor Walton. His study performed the valuable task of pulling together many sources. It created a strong narrative and it touched on many localities, suggesting areas for further study. Dr. Clark hedged somewhat on any final answer to the attraction of the Klan in the state, but he generally saw it appealing to fundamentalists on issues concerning morals and monkeys. Another essential element was the strong reaction to social disruption from the War and the oil boom.⁴¹

Probably the most famous work on the Oklahoma Klan has been Garin Burbank's study of Marshall County in the deep south of Oklahoma. He showed that resistance to the Klan in Marshall and neighboring Pontotoc Counties was due to "the agrarian radical experience of southern Oklahoma's country people."⁴² Working out the confrontation in the county especially through the 1922 Walton election as governor and the 1924 run by ex-governor Walton for the Senate, Burbank viewed this as a classic rural-urban confrontation between embattled and radicalized farmers, who had created an unconventional mixture of fundamentalism with agrarian socialism, and the exploitive, boosterish business elite of the towns of the county who backed the Klan.⁴³ The two elections were seen as markers for this battle, with Walton the odd hero for the farmers. His account was a direct attack on the Hofstadter theory that the frustrated, parochial Populists of the late-nineteenth-century became the reactionaries, including Klansmen, of the 1920s.⁴⁴ Burbank's work was not only a rebuttal of Hofstadter's claims, but throughout it

⁴¹Carter Blue Clark, A History of the Ku Klux Klan in Oklahoma (Norman: Ph.D. diss., University of Oklahoma, 1976): 29, 36-40, 15-6.

⁴²Garin Burbank, When Farmers Voted Red: The Gospel of Socialism In the Oklahoma Countryside, 1910-1924, Contributions in American History, ed. Jon L. Wakelyn, vol. 53 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976): 162. See also his "Agrarian Radicals and Their Opponents: Political Conflict in Southern Oklahoma, 1910-1924," Journal of American History 58 (June, 1971): 5-23.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 14-39; 157-58, 176-82.

⁴⁴Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D. R. (New York: Vintage Books, 1955). Hofstadter's exact connection between Populism and the Klan was in at least two steps. First, he claimed that the Populists were wildly anti-semitic (80-81). Second, a split occurred between prosperous and poor farmers in the decades following the Populist debacle. (121-30) It was the latter who formed the Klan. "The Ku Klux Klan, another rural Protestant enthusiasm of the twenties, also seemed to mock at the old reforming energies of the pre-war

assumed that the choices made by farmers and their opponents were rational choices and not simply the bigotries of ignorant southern whites. Although his account is convincing, it is anchored tightly to the peculiar conditions of one county in southern Oklahoma. Sadly, few other focused works on the Klan in Oklahoma have been written.⁴⁵

The major study of the Oklahoma Klan since Burbank has been John Thompson's study of the closing of the frontier, focusing on Oklahoma as the last frontier. This, like Coben's work noted above, was a broad attempt at a comprehensive vision of the Klan's place within a larger period and movement. Viewing the United States' frontiers as geographic regions which were always exploited by the large capitalistic and corporationist northeast, Thompson argued that agrarian radicalism was the natural response to the rape of the people, the economy, and the environment, by these outside capitalist forces. Drawing a stark contrast between the south and east of Oklahoma, and the north central and west, he branded the south and east as pre-capitalist "losers". The region featured a rapacious ruling elite and farmers ground down by that elite and by the natural action of the "Greater Frontier". The north central and north west citizenry were moderate capitalists who understood the larger markets and more intelligently resisted the boom

period." "The Klan appealed to relatively unprosperous and uncultivated native white Protestants who had in them a vein of misty but often quite sincere idealism." (293) The idea of the reactionary Populists has been widely attacked for both the assumption of anti-semitism, anti-Catholicism, and for its endpoint in the Ku Klux Klan. See C. Van Woodward, "The Populist Heritage and the Intellectual," American Scholar 29 (Winter 1960): 55-72; Norman Pollack, "The Myth of Populist Anti-Semitism," American Historical Review 48 (October 1962): 76-80; *Ibid.*, The Populist Response to Industrial America: Midwestern Populist Thought (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962); *Ibid.*, "Fear of Man: Populism, Authoritarianism, and the Historians," Agricultural History 39 (April, 1965): 68-74; Walter T.K. Nugent, The Tolerant Populists: Kansas Populism and Nativism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963); and Michael Paul Rogin, The Intellectuals and McCarthy: The Radical Specter (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1967).

⁴⁵In the wake of Alexander's work on the Southwest there was Sheldon Neuringer, "Governor Walton's War on the Ku Klux Klan: An Episode in Oklahoma History," Chronicles of Oklahoma 45 (Summer 1967): 153-79. After Burbank's work, see David C. Boles, "The Effect of the Ku Klux Klan on the Oklahoma Gubernatorial Election of 1926," Chronicles of Oklahoma 55 (Winter, 1977-78): 424-32; Leo Kelley, "Black Brush of Hatred: The KKK on Trial in Altus," Chronicles of Oklahoma 72 (Spring, 1994): 52-65. There were also mentions of the Klan in some local studies without any investigation of the organization, such as Alvin O. Turner and Vicky L. Gailey, "The Best City in the Best County: Enid's Golden Era, 1916-1941," Chronicles of Oklahoma 76 (Summer 1998): 131.

and bust cycles, and the resultant push towards impoverishment, which were characteristic of the Greater Frontier.

In response to this exploitation he saw three radical movements successively challenging the exploitation: Populists, socialists, and neo-populists. Of concern to this study are the last two of these. Socialism was split in the state, as was everything else, by the great divide between south and east, and north and west. Southeastern socialism was radical, northwestern more moderate, and both were crushed by the Democratic Party's corruption of the voting process. The "neo-populists" were an interesting grab-bag of men, some of whom have been described as progressives by other historians. They were "appalled by post frontier" poverty, which they blamed on "capitalist exploitation." They saw the need for wealth re-distribution and also viewed socialism as sapping the state's strength. Rather than a clear-cut movement, he saw "neo-populism" as "an ideological response to the crisis of post frontier Oklahoma."⁴⁶ World War I killed the moderate wing of this movement as its leaders either dropped out of public debate or turned more conservative.⁴⁷

What emerged out of this movement were more radicalized strands: The Non-Partisan League of the War period, and the Farmer-Labor Reconstruction League formed in 1922 at a convention in Shawnee. Walton's 1922 gubernatorial victory seemed to herald the victory of these radicals. The crucial battle of the Walton's regime was over control of Oklahoma A. & M. College, and when Walton lost that battle the forces of the establishment moved in quickly and crushed him through impeachment. Throughout this, the Klan stood on the radical right, supportive of the establishment, and emerged briefly in 1924 as the power-broker in the state. But the victory of the status quo leadership in Oklahoma, which was the victory of the same corporatist-capitalist forces which always controlled the frontier and its people, also marked the end of ideology in state governance. State leadership thereafter simply wallowed in patronage and corruption, resisting even the onslaught of a new socialism in the 1930s.⁴⁸ The north and

⁴⁶John Thompson, Closing the Frontier: Radical Responses in Oklahoma, 1889-1923 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986):198-99.

⁴⁷ibid., 206.

⁴⁸ibid., 214.

west survived because they were smart and understood the forces they confronted. That region was "a microcosm of the development of the rest of the nation" because its pioneers "were dynamic, optimistic, ingenious, and determined." The south and east were devoured by the capitalist - corporatist powers.

The result was ignorance, bitterness, starvation, disease, brutality, and oppression. It was not a struggle between prideful humans and recalcitrant nature in which victorious frontiersmen lost respect for nature and thus abused it. Instead, eastern Oklahoma was settled by losers in the battle between precapitalist, preindustrial farmers and the modern corporate system. It was inhabited by displaced Indians, disenfranchised blacks hoping to escape the Deep South, and the poor whites of the Reconstruction South.⁴⁹

Throughout his work, Thompson deals in generalities that verge upon stereotypes. His revived frontier thesis reverses the positive description of the traditional frontier thesis: The frontier was a place of capitalist exploitation, not a place of character-building independence. His stereotyping of the two regions of Oklahoma is extreme. He has little to say about the Klan and little of relevance about the groups the Klan opposed. Any modern study of either left or right in Oklahoma must focus on the locality rather than broad geographic regions or the state. Thompson's work showed the failure of the grand synthetic approach to both agrarian radicalism and the Klan, and the need in Oklahoma for local Klan studies in its stead.⁵⁰

⁴⁹Ibid., 223-24.

⁵⁰For a devastating review of Thompson's work, see Peter H. Argersinger, review of Closing the Frontier, by John Thompson, American Historical Review 92 (October 1987): 1041. There are works of more precision and better interpretation available for Oklahoma historians. On Oklahoma's economy, see Douglas Hale, "The People of Oklahoma: Economics and Social Change," in Oklahoma: New Views of the Forty-Sixth State, ed. by Anne Hodges Morgan and H. Wayne Morgan, 31-93 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982). For problems of tenantry, particularly in the southeast, see Sheila Manes, "Pioneers and Survivors: Oklahoma's Landless Farmers," in Oklahoma: New Views of the Forty-Sixth State, ed. by Anne Hodges Morgan and H. Wayne Morgan, 93-132 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982). On Oklahoma politics in the era, see Danny Goble, "Oklahoma Politics and the Sooner Electorate," in Oklahoma: New Views of the Forty-Sixth State, ed. by Anne Hodges Morgan and H. Wayne Morgan, 133-74 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982); "The Southern Influence on Oklahoma," in 'An Oklahoma I Had Never Seen Before': Alternative Views of Oklahoma History, ed. Davis D. Joyce, 280-301 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994).

Payne County and the Klan

To understand Payne County in the era of the hooded Klan, we must first examine the geography of the county, followed by the history of the peopling of the county after it was opened to non-Indian settlement in 1889. Settled by people of the upper Midwest and upper South, it was a county which lacked the ethnic clustering characteristic of other areas of the Midwest due to its settlement by land runs. The later addition to the county of lands south of Cimarron River, especially the inclusion of the town of Cushing, established a rivalry between that town and the county seat of Stillwater.

The rural structure of the county, especially the structure and life of the rural communities which were located throughout the county, must be examined. By the 1920s these rural communities were defined by an isolation brought on by bad roads. At the same time their economic basis was hit by the national recession which drove down agricultural commodity prices. The rural populace reacted to that recession in a number of ways. The most important response of the rural population was to join various cooperative marketing groups, the most important being the Farmers' Union. That organization's emphasis upon cooperative marketing seemed to give some immediate remedy to the agricultural recession. The establishment of Farmers' Union locals in the rural communities also gave a new focus for the social life of these small communities.

The urban county, located in the eastern half of the county, was split between towns which were part of the large Cushing Oil Field -- Cushing, Yale, and a group of smaller towns -- and those without oil -- Stillwater and Perkins. Within these urban centers it was an organizing period with many new organizations, such as the American Legion and the businessmen's service clubs, joining the ranks of older groups such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union and fraternal organizations. The institutional framework for the towns provided by these organizations will be examined. The new businessmen's service clubs, such as Rotary, Lions, and the Chambers of Commerce, ultimately took the lead in discussing and attempting to implement the larger concerns of the towns. But these cities and towns had different histories because of the booming development of the Cushing Oil Field in the 1910s. The business and professional

groups of the oil towns had a history of conflict with labor organizers which was lacking in the non-oil towns, and this was a likely reason for the greater activity of the hooded Klan in the oil towns.

All through this organizing excitement of the early 1920s, the most respected institutions of the county were its Protestant churches. Diverse in denominations, with rural churches in many ways different from the urban churches, the Protestant churches of the county lacked the public debates over modernism, evolution, and fundamentalism which were occurring nationally within and between denominations. In the county a broad, evangelical Protestantism held sway, symbolized by union church meetings and the ecumenical spectacle of the revival. The most visible and vocal part of this Protestant establishment was the Protestant ministry, particularly the urban ministers. Better educated than their flocks, urban ministers identified with the business and professional elites of the towns and cities. These ministers stood for the goal of creating a progressive city, writing and speaking about that goal and joining the businessmen and professionals in their new service clubs. Several ministers also joined the Klan, most likely seeing that organization as a bastion for the moral renewal of society.

There was within the county a broadly accepted notion of community which was centered around the ideas of traditional family values and cooperation. Grounded in the rural experience, these ideas of community were discussed by the newspaper editors of the county as well as their rural contributors. This was an idea of community which was particularly inclusive of the white Protestant majority in the county. It also assumed traditional distinctions of gender. Challenging the white male Protestant hegemony at the top of the county community were three groups: women, Roman Catholics, and African Americans. The position of women was changing due to their recent enfranchisement and modern ideas. Roman Catholics represented an established minority in the county. And African Americans, living under Jim Crow laws, were a minority at the bottom of the economic and social ladder of the county. All these groups eventually found some position and protection within the broader community of the county.

Payne County had its fears in the early 1920s. The potential for crime and violence lead to some unease. There was also the fear of moral laxity, particularly among the youth, symbolized

particularly by the automobile and the cinema. Nativistic concerns lead to some anti-foreign feelings, and these were linked to fears of both labor and political radicalism. The history of labor unrest in the oil fields made the business and professional elites in the oil towns particularly sensitive to any perceived "radicalisms". From our present perspective it can be seen that most of these fears were overblown, but for the people of the early 1920s they seemed to be present dangers.

The emergence of the hooded Klan in this period was due to many factors. Although individual motivations for joining the Klan cannot be determined, the broad acceptance of the organization by the county can be examined. The hooded Klan, always conscious of its public image, used its public appearances to good effect. All of those occasions when the Klan appeared in public were formal, disciplined, and spectacular. Through parades, naturalizations (initiations), and church visits, the Klan cultivated an image of a disciplined, militant, Christian fraternity. Through its church visits it identified itself and attempted to legitimize itself by association with the most legitimate organization in the county, the white Protestant churches. With the spectacle of its parades and naturalizations it drew huge crowds and public support. And through its public pronouncements, although rather sparsely reported in the county press, the Klan preached a conservative ideology of traditional morals, nativism and white dominance, and its vaunted "100% Americanism."

But the hooded Klan also had some difficulties. Its secrecy severely limited the public venues for the Klan, eliminating its official participation in many public forums and works. Its doctrines tended to be divisive and run counter to the prevailing emphasis upon cooperation. Two groups which the Klan nationally focused upon, Roman Catholics and African Americans, were accepted within the county community. And its identification with violence, even if it was largely potential rather than real violence, ran counter to fears of violence in the county. There was fear of the Klan in the county, and this led to the creation of a rather loosely organized anti-Klan, centered around the one victim of Klan violence in the county.

The hooded Klan prospered in the county initially. In 1922 it claimed a membership of 1,800, but after that initial claim it never again mentioned membership numbers. It was accepted by probably a majority of countians because of the compatibility of its ideology with many of their fears and because of the spectacle of its public events. But the hooded Klan was limited in its public role by its own secrecy, and it never was able to clearly established a distinct ideological voice, one that would set it apart in the county. Its message had nothing for the farmers, struggling against a recession. And it could also be that its image and methods ultimately held little appeal to the business and professional elites, who sought to create the "progressive" city and found more useful tools in the service clubs and Chambers of Commerce.

In the early 1920s Payne County, Oklahoma, fostered a relatively large Ku Klux Klan. That secret, hooded Klan flourished for a time, attempting to find its place in the county through spectacle and a broad conservative ideology. But when the hoods came off in 1924 and the secret phase of the Ku Klux Klan in Payne County ended, it is fair to ask what achievements, what differences, that Klan had made in the county. That is the theme of this study.

Chapter II

The Rural County

After a toilsome march of some distance through a country cut up by ravines and brooks, and entangled by thickets, we emerged upon a grand prairie. Here one of the characteristic scenes of the Far West broke upon us. An immense extent of grassy, undulating, or as it is termed, rolling country, with here and there a clump of trees, dimly seen in the distance like a ship at sea; the landscape deriving sublimity from its vastness and simplicity.

Washington Irving, 1832

The hum of the binder is making music in the air while they are cutting the golden grain in the neighborhood.

Council Bluff correspondent, 1923

Not long until we hear the sound of the corn-planter, see the green blades of grass mixed with the weeds, and forget the 'hard times' for the time being which has hung like a cloud over the world for the last eighteen months.

W.L. Zuck, 1922¹

To understand Payne County you must first understand the land. Bordering the Southern Great Plains, it was a county of rolling hills blocked out by broad plains and trees in the watersheds. The land was productive for farmers and ranchers. Unknown at first, the land also harbored oil reserves, a fact that became more of a divide in the county than the Cimarron River.

The land runs which opened Payne County to non-Indian occupation also produced a county without ethnic groupings. The population was predominantly undifferentiated white, protestant farmers from the upper midwest and upper south. Stillwater immediately put itself in front of the county by getting both the county seat designation and the agricultural college. Over

¹Washington Irving, A Tour on the Prairies (Oklahoma City: Harlow Publishing, 1955): 79. This was on October 20, 1832, on a transit from camp near present-day Yale to camp near present-day Ripley, both in Payne County, Oklahoma. "Notes of the Neighbors," Stillwater Gazette, 29 June 1923, 7 [hereafter "SG"]; "Farmers' Union Notes," SG, 3 March 1922, 8.

time the area of the county grew both to the north and the southeast, the latter bringing in Cushing. When Cushing became the oil capital of America after the famous oil driller Tom Slick's 1913 strike near Cushing, the defining line in the county was created between those within the oil field and those not. The Cushing field also had a history of conflict between labor and management that left a legacy of distrust which likely helped usher in the Klan. Despite some national repression during the Great War, World War I generally left a legacy of support for patriotism rather than any established institutions of repression.

Oil towns Yale and Cushing mushroomed in the half-decade after the Cushing Field opened, Mehan, Ingalls, Ripley and Quay on a much smaller scale in the early 1920s. But the county was still predominantly rural in the era of the hooded Klan, 1921-24. The rural population was centered around small rural communities defined by their relative self-sufficiency, their isolation and their sense of community. Defined by geography, school, and church, and isolated by bad transportation, these rural communities hung on as recession and drought surged over them in 1921 and thereafter. Farmers tightened their belts, tenants circulated between leases, and all awaited relief. The Farmers' Union seemed that relief with its messages of hope and cooperation. In many rural communities and towns of Payne County the Farmers' Union not only brought cooperative buying and selling, but a reinforcement of the local community. It did things that other organizations, such as the Klan, could not.

The Land and Clime

When the Army patrol which Washington Irving accompanied in 1832 passed through the future Payne County, it camped near Yale, Mehan, and then south of Stillwater along present-day Country Club Road. All in the party relished the broad meadows and woods, the good water, and considered the future Payne County a wonderful land.

Payne County, Oklahoma, sits in north-central Oklahoma, straddling the divide between forest and plains. Creased by the Cimarron River along its southern boundary and then up through its southeastern quadrant, it averages around 1,000 feet in elevation. Ranging west

from the eastern edge of the county are forested hills which flatten out into often broad creek plains. The greatest creek valley is Stillwater Creek's which sweeps down through the county from the northwest to the southeast in a broad slash through the county's center. From the west side of Stillwater, where the creek flows out of the hills into its broad valley, it is about six miles until the land tops out and flattens, spreading westward to the borders with Garfield and Logan counties. Soils in the county range from heavy clays to more friable soils, and, in alluvial valleys often quite sandy soils.²

The county was originally covered by tall grass prairie and stands of mixed forest, part of the cross-timbers, the north-south belt of trees and grasses running from Texas to Alberta, Canada, and constituting the transition zone from the forested east to the old beginnings of the tall-grass prairie.³ Fire kept the trees in check, particularly the fast-spreading but quite volatile Virginia red cedars. Across this quite open landscape that was observed by Washington Irving, trees clustered in the creases formed by watersheds. Most the deciduous trees were rather resistant to grass fires, which move very quickly. These trees included post, burr and black jack oaks, common to the cross-timbers, as well as some native elms, hickory, black walnut, hackberry and cedars. Clustered near water runs were cottonwoods.⁴

This ecosystem changed quickly once settlers moved in. Almost as fast as the prairie was plowed and the magnificent root systems of the grasses disrupted, the land was also deforested by settlers seeking wood for heat and cooking, buildings and fence posts. Natural prairie fires were suppressed, fields marked out, and the forests, when they returned, were of greater extent,

²United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, with Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station, Soil Survey of Payne County, Oklahoma (1987): 1-3. Stillwater Creek was changed with the creation of Lake Carl Blackwell in the 1930 west-northwest of Stillwater.

³The northern cap of townships in Payne County is classified as "tall grasses" rather than cross-timbers, as well as the last districts along the western edge of the county. See John W. Morris, Charles R. Goins, and Edwin c. McReynolds, Historical Atlas of Oklahoma 2nd ed. (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976): 9. See also, Arrell Morgan Gibson, Oklahoma: A History of Five Centuries 2nd ed. (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985): 7.

⁴Interview with Dr. James Shaw, 28 November 1999; Annick Smith, Big Bluestem: Journey Into the Tall Grass (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Nature Conservancy and Council Oak Books, 1996): 20-27, 31-38; on fire in the tall-grass ecosystem, 73-84; on trees in the cross-timbers, 85-89.

variety, with more brush. Farmers aided this reforestation by planting windbreaks around their homes and barns. There are today many places in the counties where clustered islands of trees stand alone, marking the location of an earlier farmhouse, speaking not only to the desire for windbreaks but also for the loss of population in the rural regions over the course of a century. This wider variety of trees gave work to at least one sawmill in the western county.⁵

The county's land was bountiful and rather versatile for crops. It was relatively well watered. It had ample rain in most years for important crops like hay, cotton and wheat, though drought years could be severe and floods were not infrequent. The river, a source of water, later became the recognized picnicking spot and swimming hole for the southern half of the county.

In most areas the county's ground water was either near the surface or close enough for well digging.⁶ The land was attractive enough that the last, and arguably the most famous, Boomer settlement was placed in the late fall of 1884 near the confluence of Cow and Stillwater Creeks, southwest of present-day Stillwater.⁷ Opened in the first land run (1889), Payne County quickly filled.

Payne County in Territory and State

The first run was into the Unassigned Land in 1889, forming farms and also towns.⁸ After a fight with Payne Center, a small town now located along the southern border of Stillwater, Stillwater got the county seat.⁹ Stillwater then pulled its weight in the new Territory and managed

⁵Interview with Dr. James Shaw, 28 November 1999; "Farmers' Union Notes," SG, 10 February 1922, 4.

⁶Ground Water in the Cimarron River Basin: New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas, and Oklahoma, (Denver: US Geological Survey, Water Resources Division, 1966).

⁷Robert E. Cunningham, Stillwater: Where Oklahoma Began (Stillwater, Oklahoma: Arts and Humanities Council of Stillwater, Oklahoma, 1969): 1-4; on the Boomer movement, see: Arrell Morgan Gibson, Oklahoma: A History of Five Centuries, 2nd (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1981): 173-76..

⁸Michael Owen Roark, "Oklahoma Territory: Frontier Development, Migration, and Culture Areas," (Norman: Ph.D. diss., University of Oklahoma, 1979): 77. He calls these "instant cities" and notes that "...the role of mercantile speculation was significant in the frontier development of the West and of Oklahoma."

⁹D. Earl Newsom, The Story of Exciting Payne County (Stillwater, Oklahoma: New Forums Press, Inc., 1997), pp. 13-4. Newsom's account was used for this narrative. Other works on the period include, Laura Lou Wells, Young Cushing in Oklahoma Territory (Stillwater: Frontier Printers, Inc., n.d.); Robert E. Cunningham, Stillwater: Where Oklahoma Began (Stillwater: Arts

to get the land grant college designated for the county after fighting off a serious bid by Perkins.¹⁰

In 1891, due to the run into the Sac and Fox, Iowa, and Pottawatomie-Shawnee land, Payne County got a narrow, east-west laying triangular piece of land south of the Cimarron. This addition was prompted by a provision that Congress included in the bill setting up that run that required all counties of the Territory to be at least 900 square miles. Along with the site for Cushing came sites for the future towns of Ripley, across the river from the mouth of Stillwater Creek, and Vinco, across the river from Perkins.¹¹

In the Cherokee Outlet land run of 1893, a northern tier of five townships was added from the western edge of the county to within two townships of the eastern boundary. This placed Stillwater nearer the center of the county. In days of rugged transportation systems, claiming the center of the county was a distinct asset for a county seat. At statehood, the western two townships were turned over to Noble County, leaving Payne County with its distinctive hat-shape of three townships centered atop the county seat.¹²

In 1914, Cushing and the townships across the river tried to secede to create Shafer County, a county that would have encompassed the massive Cushing Oil Field found in 1913, which started between Cushing and Drumright in Creek County. At the same time, Ripley challenged Stillwater for the county seat. After some typical Oklahoma troubles with the vote, the new county's backers got less than the required 60% of the vote, and Ripley lost its bid for county seat status by even more. Payne County was secure within its present borders.¹³

and Humanities Council of Stillwater, Oklahoma, Inc., 1969); and for a sister city to Cushing, though in neighboring Creek County, D. Earl Newsom, Drumright! The Glory Days of a Boom Town (Perkins, Oklahoma: Evans Publications, Inc, 1985). The Chronicles of Oklahoma, published by the Oklahoma Historical Society, is rife with stories of the Territorial period, including some about Payne County. The Payne County Historical Review, published by the Payne County Historical Society, contains materials about early settlement days.

¹⁰Philip Reed Rulon, Oklahoma State University since 1890 (Stillwater, Ok: Oklahoma State University Press, 1975): 1-16.

¹¹Newsom, Exciting, 14-21.

¹²Newsom, Exciting, 19-21.

¹³ibid., 41-6.

The results of these early years were varied. Stillwater, largely through political finesse, got two of the plums available in Oklahoma Territory, a county seat and a territorial institution, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College. Although there were some later threats to take the College from the town as well as threats to its courthouse, the town not only overcame these threats but found its best interests largely played out in the ordering of the county.¹⁴

Although the addition of the northern tier of townships did not seriously disrupt the county, the addition of the lands south of the Cimarron created a bifurcation in the county. In part this was simply due to feelings arising when a natural boundary exists, especially one then abrogated by artfully drawn lines on a map. The natural boundary in this case was the river.

After the Cushing Field was discovered in 1913 a more serious cleavage appeared in the county between the cities with oil fields and those without. Cushing foremost, but also Yale, would for many years lubricate their economies with streams of oil, first as gushers and then through pipelines and refineries. That same oil would also draw into those towns, especially in the gusher days, a more transient work force. That transient population had greatly declined during the period of the hooded Klan since the boom days were done and the pipelines and refineries built.

In the teens there were problems between the oil owners and organized labor, particularly the Industrial Workers of the World. The labor organizers were about all that stood between the oil entrepreneurs and even more profits. Sellars described it like this:

Controlled by developers directly tied to national oil companies, the boom towns relentlessly exploited workers with high prices, illegal liquor and drugs, gambling, and prostitution. The authorities in such towns were usually corrupt and often criminals themselves, with a fierce loyalty to the oil companies. In addition, organizers found themselves dealing...with large national corporations and their subsidiaries which could draw on large financial resources to outlast strikes as well as a large pool of men willing -- and often desperate -- to perform the limited number of oil field jobs.

Fears of the "radicalism" of the I.W.W. stemming from those early years of the field combined readily with the Red Scare of 1919-1920 to almost institutionalize a fear of radicalism in the elites

¹⁴Rulon, Oklahoma State. 48-65, 137-43.

of the county, particularly in the oil areas of the county. As Sellars noted, "the mere presence of the Oil Workers Industrial Union created fear among business executives and government officials."¹⁵ The fear was actually unfounded by the 1920s because the boom had given way to steadily producing fields around Cushing, with small booms in outlying towns, booms that did not last. In particular, by the 1920s most of the infrastructure of pipelines was in place, and it was in the pipeline camps that the I.W.W. had found success. Among drillers, tank builders, and other skilled workers, an *esprit* and individualism existed that kept I.W.W. organizers from garnering members. At the pipeline camps, low skilled workers who needed jobs combined with the isolated nature of the camps to lead to both abuses of the men and opportunities for Wobbly organizers.¹⁶

Quay, Ripley, and Ingalls all had strikes in the early 1920s, but these strikes were of a shorter duration and their immediate fields were on the peripheries of the greater Cushing Field with its center in the oil fields and refineries of Yale and Cushing.¹⁷ Cushing in particular gained a self-perception as a town with more action than Stillwater, and as the natural leading town of the county. By 1920, Cushing, sitting in the far southeastern corner of the county, had more ties with Drumright, in Creek County, than with Stillwater. Cushing had mainline rail and pipeline connections with the rest of the nation, and huge refining and storage capacity. It grew larger than Stillwater by 1920 and richer because of oil.¹⁸

¹⁵Nigel Sellers, "Oil, Wheat, and Wobblies: The Industrial Workers of the World in Oklahoma, 1905-1930," (Ph.D. diss., University of Oklahoma, 1994): 163-64, 165; 169-78.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 175-78.

¹⁷Newsom, *Exciting*, 185-99.

¹⁸Newsom, *Exciting*, 94-98.

Demographics

Payne County sits just north of an imaginary line drawn through Oklahoma by Michael Owen Roark's work on the ethno-cultural origins of the early settlers of Oklahoma's twin territories. Today that line roughly follows two major highways through the state: Interstate 244 out of Missouri, through Tulsa, and on to Oklahoma City, and it then Interstate 40 westward to the Texas line.

This was the rough line of demarcation between largely northern settled areas and those settled from the deep South. This was not a divide between cotton and wheat cultures. Throughout the 1920s Payne County's wheat and cotton were close in total revenue for the county. Cotton gins were located throughout the county, and wheat, other grains, and forage crops were grown in this period. For this study, the state's dividing line was demographic, not agricultural.¹⁹

The non-Indian human stock which surged into Payne County in the Territorial period was largely lower-Midwesterners and those from the upper-South. Many of those early settlers had landed in Kansas for some years before moving down into Oklahoma Territory.²⁰ These lower-midwesterners brought with them the predominance of the Churches of Christ (Disciples) rather than the Methodist or Baptist dominance found particularly in the southeastern part of the future state.²¹ They came from areas largely without the institutionalized racial laws then forming in the southern states. They also came from areas without the nearly institutionalized land tenancy and land speculation, often called land "mining," found in the southeastern part of the Twin Territories.²²

¹⁹Roark, Migration, 352-660. As late as 1925, Payne County had 37,799 acres in cotton (14,814 bales), 22,274 in threshed oats (481,125 bushels), and 9,280 acres in wheat (136,674 bushels); see US Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, United States Census of Agriculture 1925 (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1927): 1079.

²⁰Roark, Migration, 157-58.

²¹*Ibid.*, 29-36; see especially Table 3:1, 134; for Stillwater, see Table 3:2, 148.

²²Sheila Manes, "Pioneers and Survivors: Oklahoma's Landless Farmers," in Oklahoma: News Views of the Forty-Sixth State, ed. Anne Hodges Morgan and H. Wayne Morgan (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982): 108-10.

But these early settlers were not like the populations settling in the upper- midwestern states. Studies of that northern midwest region depend upon solid ethnic clumps and the formal differences of their religions for the interpretation of politics and culture.²³ The mechanism used for the settlement of Oklahoma Territory -- runs and lotteries -- generally allowed only one group to settle in recognizable enclaves, native americans, because they got first choice on the lands.²⁴ There was only one known ethnic community in Payne County in the 1920s, a group of German Evangelical Lutherans who settled into the western part of the county and later moved their church into Stillwater.²⁵ Although many years passed between the settlement by whites, blacks, and others of the Sixth County (later called Payne County) and the original settlers often moved or died, it is probably accurate to describe Payne County in the early 1920s as upper-midwestern and upper-south in its population.

There was a divide that assuredly counted, the racial divide between whites and all others. The reality of being Black or Hispanic, Lebanese or Asian, in Payne County in the early 1920s will be discussed later. What is important here is that racism was alive and well in Payne County with it's upper-midwestern and upper-south roots. The magnet for blacks in the region was actually Logan County, directly south across the river from Payne County. Logan County had draws for African Americans, with its major black towns in Langston and Meridian, black newspapers, Republicans in power in the Territorial Capital, Guthrie, and the major black state institution, Colored Agricultural and Normal at Langston, now named Langston University. In 1920 Logan County had 6,422 blacks, or 23.3% of the population. In Payne County at that time there 1,208 blacks, only 4.0% of the county. There were almost no Hispanics in Payne County and only very small numbers of other groups. Although state law would specifically define a

²³Paul Kleppner, The Cross of Culture: A Social Analysis of Midwestern Politics, 1850-1900 (1970); Jon Gjerde, The Minds of the West: Ethnocultural Evolution in the Rural Middle West, 1830-1917 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

²⁴Roark did find some ethnic clumping by foreign-born in Oklahoma Territory, but in areas settled later than the Unassigned Lands and largely in agricultural areas. For ethnic groups, see Roark, Migration, 137. On the broader topic of settlement by Indians, foreign born and blacks, see *Ibid.*, 129-56.

²⁵Jene Friedemann, Bread for the Third Generation: An Early History of Salem Lutheran Church, Stillwater, Oklahoma (Stillwater: Western Publications, 1987).

"colored" person as a person of African blood, Hispanics and some other people of color would have found a world of prejudice in Payne County had they settled in any numbers.²⁶

In a different status were two other small groups, Jews and "Syrians", the latter likely of Lebanese descent. But they, also, were very small in number and seemingly assimilated except for the "pedlers" (likely "Syrians"). In the end, Payne County's population was overwhelmingly white and largely Protestants, with Roman Catholic whites a distant second. It is correct and viable to speak of racial politics, racial social realities, and racial cultures being a dividing line in the county that determined some of the character of the county. The dominant group was an ethnically mixed group of white Protestants.

Payne County would remain a demographically rural county until the 1950 census.²⁷ There was a large jump in urban population in the 1910s due to the development of the Cushing Oil Field. The proportions stabilized in the 1920s when the urban growth slowed. The census, done only every ten years, does not show the urban eruptions and declines surrounding oil boom

Table 2.1: Rural County Populations²⁸

year	county total	rural total	%	urban total	%
1907	22,022	19,445	88.3	2,577	11.7
1910	23,735	20,291	85.5	3,444	14.5
1920	30,180	16,552	54.8	13,628	45.2
1930	36,905	20,588	55.8	16,317	44.2

²⁶Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1920, v. III, part 2, Population Composition and Characteristics By States (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923): 820, 822.

²⁷W. Nelson Peach, Richard W. Poole, and James D. Tarver, eds., County Building Block Data For Regional Analysis: Oklahoma (Stillwater, Oklahoma: Research Foundation, Oklahoma State University, 1965): 429.

²⁸Fourteenth Census, Population, 169; Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1930, v. III, part 2, Population: Reports By States Montana-Wyoming (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1933): 568.

towns ("mushroom cities") such as Quay, Mehan, Ingalls, and Ripley. Despite those small oil boom towns, the population of Payne County in the 1920s was rather stable, growing steadily but not rushing to urbanize in the 1920s as it did in the booming 1910s.

Payne County was overwhelmingly rural in extent, and barely a rural majority in population, in the early 1920s. Living and toiling day after day on rather isolated farms throughout the county, the rural populations still had distinct identities due to the existence of rural communities. In the day-to-day order of things, the physical rural community helped center the scattered rural populations, giving them not only services but an identity.

These communities were scattered widely throughout the rural county: Newsom describes nineteen in his chapter, "The Small Settlements."²⁹ Depending upon your definition of a rural community, it can be claimed that there were actually more.³⁰ They usually grew up around a crossroads and a nearby school. In a county with ninety-nine independent school districts it is obvious not every school became a physical community, but every school gave some identity. In a rural community, along with a school there might be some sort of retail store or repair shop, possibly a free-standing church, and, if it was big enough, a post office. This basic assemblage could be compressed -- the church meeting in the school, the repair shop or retail run part-time by a farmer--or expanded. Newsom gave some examples.

Clarkson was located in southwestern Payne County near the Logan County line in what is now Clarkson township. It was three miles north and two miles west of the Cimarron River Bridge at Coyle that existed at this writing. It had a general store and post office from Jan. 1, 1890 until Feb. 28, 1903. Grant Johnson was the first postmaster. He was succeeded by Martin Walthman.

Otego was one of the first communities to be settled during the 1889 land run. It was located about five miles south of Stillwater near the intersection of Husband and 56th

²⁹Newsom, Exciting, 221; especially, see map, pp. 220-21. One of the communities included on his list is Yost, which was actually a creation of the railroads and became best known as a recreation area for people, mainly from Stillwater, who built cabins around the railroad's lake. But it also had a rural identity among the farmers of the region.

³⁰Newsom included a chapter and category of "The Small Oil Boom Towns": Clayton, Ingalls, Mehan, and Quay. During our period, at least Ingalls, Quay, and Mehan qualified as towns. For our purposes, the categorization of these oil communities is not crucial. They were, in one aspect, outriggers to the larger oil towns, Cushing and Yale. They also never achieved the organizational level of the larger towns. See Newsom, Exciting, 179-208.

Streets. It was named for a small community in Kansas that had been the previous home of one of its settlers.

A post office was established on April 19, 1894, but was discontinued on Nov. 11, 1895. However, it was re-opened on Sept. 28, 1898 and continued until Sept. 30, 1905. Otego had a blacksmith shop, a general store and several other small businesses over period of time. Its location was SE 1/4 Sec. 11 T18N R2E.³¹

By the 1920s, some people saw these towns as fading. The editor of the Cushing Citizen, a conservative man but one, like many city people, with country roots, devoted several editorials to the concept of community. He claimed there were two types of communities, "simple or minor", and "collective or major": These roughly corresponded to rural and urban communities. He then proceeded, in his distinctive phrasing, to discuss the "minor" community.

In considering how to determine these boundaries [of a community], the character of the residents will be of great help, according to our definition, like seeks like. And so long as we find people to have the same customs, habits, ideas, etc., we are quite safe in thinking it is still the community, and one district. The general appearance of the country, the character of their improvements and the condition of their surroundings, the evidence of enterprise and industry, or its absence, the very talk of the people will all help to determine this. Indeed it is not difficult.

In almost, perhaps every community, there is a common center about which the community forms.

While the center itself is a minor community, in one sense, the greater number of these are country communities. These generally center about a country church or, of [sic] there is no church about the school.

...indeed, country villages, with their churches, their country stores, which sell a little of everything, the blacksmith shop, wagon shop and post office, all these were distinctive features of a country community and they have left their mark upon our civilization.³²

His interesting mix of definitions, first by cultural, ethnic, and, it must be assumed, racial identity, and then by the more apparent geographical factors, were actually both indicative of the reality of the rural community, for it was both identity and geography. In fact, his first paragraph could also describe a county, an important point because it will be argued that there was a common definition of community held by the populace within Payne County.

³¹Newsom, Exciting Payne County, 217-19.

³²"Community Gospel: Article II," Cushing Citizen, 12 July 1923, 1 [hereafter "CC"].

But the purpose of his series of editorials on the community was to declare the "minor" community to be dying if not dead and the new, urban communities of the county to be the new leading community. The rural community was the mainstay of the county for a long time, but, claimed the editor, it was being destroyed by forces outside its control: the railroad, rural free delivery, and the mail order house.

What few [rural communities] remain are generally a straggling, ill kept stretch of houses. The post office, the store and even the blacksmith shop are gone, and they no longer play a part in the formation of opinion or in the making of civilization. To the writer, the story of these villages although sad, is interesting and we would like to say more of them but space forbids.

With the disappearance of the villages a great change has come over the life in the country communities, gradually they have lost the distinctive features of their character. Steadily the ties which held the people together in a common purpose to the same habits have been broken and community lines are scarcely distinguishable but they still retain some of the old characteristics, distinct form [sic] city life, and still they differ from each other to a degree.³³

Mr. Green, the editor, was a tremendous city booster, and this influenced his thoughts. His claim that the mail order catalogs were ruining rural communities really reflected his fear of the catalog's competition with urban merchants. It is also interesting to see what he did not mention as potentially destructive to the physical rural communities: better roads, urban merchants, and the growth of tenancy. He could not have seen the first two of these items as destructive since he was a staunch advocate of both. And the growth of land consolidation and tenancy was due, at least in part, to non-resident, i.e., urban, land-owning.

It is also interesting to note not only his confusion about how to define the rural community, but also his sense of its place: it was at one time central to the advance of "civilization". Interestingly, of the four largest papers in the county, his, until mid-1923, was the only one that did not regularly post columns on rural communities in the county with correspondents reporting from the townships.³⁴

³³ibid.

³⁴Figures on the amount of agricultural land owned by urban countians is not readily available. For an anecdotal support for this, see the group biography of the Berry family of the county: Camelia Uzzell Berry, Oklahoma Prairie Plowed Under: The Story of Berry Bros. In Indian Territory (Cortez, Colorado: Mesa Verde Press, 1988): 150. For editor Green's desire for rural correspondents, see: "Will Be Better, We Hope," CC, 10 August 1923, 3.

In fact, both Newsom and Mr. Green were probably too quick in their judgment. In the early 1920s, depending upon how you define them, there were far more rural communities than Newsom indicated in the county, and they were not going away. In truth, the basic rural community was largely defined by a sense of identity held by people in a geographically limited area: Green was closer to it with his first definition, people who "have the same customs, habits, ideas, etc." They were physically self-identified communities, usually centered around a school house, but their sense of community also incorporated values generally held.

The physical communities were in large part determined by isolation, an isolation largely brought on by the horrid shape of rural roads. Slowly, a network of state routes did come to course through the county: The 1929 road map of the state shows only one road outside the cities of the county which was designated as "High Type-Improved", parts of Route 33 between Perkins and Cushing. Besides that road, the map shows routes running north, east and south out Stillwater to the county borders, and a route north out of Cushing to Pawnee as well as Route 33, which went on to Drumright and eventually Tulsa. Most of this routing was listed as "Pavement Under Construction" or "Low Type Improved (Earth)".³⁵ There was no paved road running west out of Stillwater. There may have been state roads in the county in the early 1920s, but this did not hide the fact that Payne County had bad roads, even on its main routes. In 1925, only 3 county farms were located on hard-surface roads: there were 85 farms on gravel roads, 1,015 on improved dirt roads, and 1,628 on unimproved dirt roads.³⁶

Those dirt roads were never very good. The county was distinguished by red streaks shooting across the plains each mile. Roads swooped and fell over the rolling hills of the county: Every hilltop that offered relatively solid footing was matched by a low point at the bottom of the hill treacherous with mud long after the ridges had dried and hardened. These roads not only produced their own dust, red or brown, but became axle deep in mud during the rainy times. The

³⁵"New Agricultural and Highway Map of Oklahoma" ([Oklahoma City]: State Board of Agriculture, 1929).

³⁶US Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, United States Census of Agriculture, 1925 (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office):1056-57.

advent of motor powered vehicles put more stress on the roads, and the county was motorizing in the 1920s.³⁷

County roads were a constant source of complaint for rural people. In August, 1923, the rural correspondent from the townships of Cottonwood and Harmony wrote:

Some badly needed road work is being done in this district. The hill in front of the home of Albert Driggs is being cut down. This hill has long been a terror to teamsters and truck drivers. They will doubtless rejoice when this obstacle to traffic is out of the way. The hill in front of the Goss farm, on the Ingalls road, is also being cut down.³⁸

More to the point, the correspondent from Union Valley, the second township east of Stillwater, wrote that, "We need a road boss in this community. Some roads are impossible."³⁹

Part of the problem of roads was in their management and funding. From the Territorial period, local roads were the responsibility of townships and had awkward management systems that depended largely on unpaid oversight and unpaid labor. Despite the creation of a Good Roads Association for the Territory in 1904, the inclusion of a Department of Highways in the Oklahoma Constitution, and the creation of a Department of Highways in 1911, the state gave more encouragement than oversight or dollars to roads.⁴⁰

When the will was there to build roads and the awkward system of road management worked, the physical technologies of making good roads often conspired with the fiscal realities of impoverished county and township governments to limit improvements. The basic road was dirt when dry, mud when wet. They were used more by farmers headed for a field than by people going across country. Improvement would come slowly if at all to these often simple, ungraded

³⁷It is difficult to establish numbers of motorized vehicles used by rural residents. One type used exclusively by rural residents was the tractor. In 1925 Payne County had 93 tractors. US Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, United States Census of Agriculture, 1925 (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1927): 1056-67. By 1930, the first year for which full figures are available, farmers in Payne County had 164 tractors, 233 trucks, and 2,384 automobiles. Peach, et al, County Building Block, 433. Any motor vehicle on wheels puts more power onto fewer square inches than does horse-drawn traffic. In the case of tractors, most at this time had steel wheels with heavy steel plates projecting from them like paddles. Trucks added the wear of heavier loads on the roads.

³⁸"Local News" CC, 23 August 1923), 5.

³⁹"Notes of Neighbors," SG, 28 April 1922, 7.

⁴⁰William P. Corbett, "Men, Mud and Mules: The Good Roads Movement in Oklahoma, 1900 - 1910," Chronicles of Oklahoma, 58 (Summer, 1980): 132-37.

parallel wheel ruts, differentiated as they were from simple animal trails mainly by the relative straightness of their course down the section lines.

Grading was laborious, requiring at least a two men and a team to pull the blade. And simply grading dirt roads was an endless task. After any good rain, the traffic, even horse-drawn traffic, would tear up the roads. When the automobile, truck and tractor came in numbers, the roads were even more chewed up. "The big tractor has torn up our road and made it very disagreeable traveling through the dust," complained the Yost Lake correspondent for the Stillwater Gazette in 1921.⁴¹

The step above dirt was gravel, which in the nomenclature of the period mean rather large chunks of rough rock. Spread on the single lane of the roads, gravel created continuous jolts to travelers in wheeled vehicles but during rains helped prolong the buoyancy of the vehicle above the mud base. The next step up was chat, finer gravel spread on roads after grading. More expensive, chat gave a much smoother ride. By the early 1920s some of the major arteries in Payne County had been chatted or were in the process of being so treated.

Few county roads were blacktopped or cemented in the early 1920s. By the end of our period, roads out of Cushing were getting concrete, especially the crucial and heavily traveled road leading to sister-city Drumright in Creek Country.

It was economics probably more than organization that kept down road building. The costs were high. The Stillwater Gazette noted in 1922 that the county had just bought thirty rail cars of chat for county roads at a cost of \$90 per carload. After application, this would constitute an expense of \$1,100 per mile of road.⁴² The Hokes of Stillwater, after an 141 mile road trip to Eufalula and back in 1922, found the only dirt roads to be that from Cushing to Stillwater. Mr. Hoke estimated it would cost \$1500 per mile for good, chatted roads, but then there was continuous upkeep. A hard surfaced road, he estimated, would be \$30,000 per mile to build, but the upkeep was little or nothing and the savings were, in the long run, substantial. In addition,

⁴¹"News of the Neighbors," SG, 4 November 1921, 7.

⁴²"Thirty Carloads of Chat For Payne County Roads," SG, 24 March 1922, 1.

maintenance costs on the true "hard-surfaced" roads could be cut to nothing if the route was designated a state route: At that point the state took over the costs of maintaining the road.⁴³

The Stillwater Gazette heralded the fact that in 1922 the county was petitioning residents along fourteen miles of road -- roughly today's Route 51 east of Stillwater to Route 108 and south -- to get those roads turned over to state control.⁴⁴ But Mr. W.L. Zuck, the great advocate for farmers who wrote for over eleven years for the Stillwater Gazette, wrote in 1922:

Roads in Payne county are fine, i.e., the state roads; but what of the side roads? The only dependable fund that can be relied upon is donation. The mail carriers bear out this statement that the majority of roads when washed out and placed in rough condition remain that way for months, often, before the proper attention is given. Hence, the real necessity of dividing up road funds with the side roads.⁴⁵

Roads would be a point of contention between rural and urban Payne countians throughout the 1920s, for the former emphasized the county's internal roads while the businessman-dominated urban leadership wanted major arteries to connect with the outside world. Rural residents dealt with roads in the first stages of these improvements.

The interior parts of the county also lacked railroad connections. Railroads, always wanting the direct route to populated or commercial centers, had gone around the county during territorial and early statehood days. Ripley was built in 1900 as a railroad bridge city for a route laid to the county seat and its College, but it was not the mainline. Mainline railroads only entered the county after the 1913 strike of the Cushing Field but those rail lines had gone through Cushing and the southeast corner of the county. The center of the county was bypassed by mainlines.

In 1922 John Shartel of Oklahoma City proposed building an interurban from the existing network's north-most tip in Guthrie up to Stillwater, Yale and Cushing. Shartel estimated the cost would be about \$1,250,000 to build the line. "He argues that the line would fill a long-felt need because of the fact that the town [Stillwater] is almost isolated due to poor railroad services

⁴³"Hokes Drive Over 141 Miles of Good Roads," SG, 28 April 1922, 1.

⁴⁴"Fourteen Miles of New State Road Designated," SG, 24 February 1922, 1.

⁴⁵"Farmers' Union Notes" SG, 3 March 1922, 8.

furnished.⁴⁶ For months Shartel's interurban was the buzz of the county, but to get it he had to have Coyle, Perkins, Stillwater and Cushing sign off on it. The Stillwater Chamber of Commerce was all for the line, but Cushing basically said they did not need such a road. "What in Sam Hill do we want of an interurban with six trains a day running between Cushing, Oklahoma City, and Tulsa?" asked one prominent citizen with some warmth.⁴⁷ The route was being surveyed and would have cut northward west of Perkins. Rural people were excited about it because it would provide an easy way into Stillwater. In a rather poignant note, the correspondent for the I.X.L. area, south of Stillwater around Route 33, noted:

All want the interurban, but most of us would rather it ran on the other fellow's land, just so it comes close by. Several of the young people of our vicinity have quite a large air castle built already. They are planning to attend the college at Stillwater and return home each evening. Otherwise they cannot have the privilege of attending school any higher than the eighth grade.⁴⁸

Unfortunately for these students, Shartel's line never went through. Stillwater continued to lie in some isolation in the heart of the county.⁴⁹

It is ironic that the conditions of transportation acted to preserve the rural community. By isolating the community, it helped preserve what was left of the commercial businesses of each area. This relative isolation was also a factor in resisting statewide drives for school consolidations that would have done serious damage to the rural communities. It helped preserve the churches, though there was much coming and going of rural and urban people between churches for joint meeting of Christian Endeavor, Sunday schools, and revivals. Most of all, it helped preserve the sense of local community.

One innovation which did help break some of that isolation and also helped bind the community together was the telephone. Telephones were becoming less rare in the rural areas

⁴⁶"Shartel Says Raising Funds Is Hardest Job," SG, 10 March 1922, 1., quoting article from the Daily Oklahoman.

⁴⁷"Chamber Heartily Indorses Interurban," and "Cushing Doesn't Want It", SG, 20 January 1922, 1.

⁴⁸"News of the Neighbors," SG, 17 February 1922, 8.

⁴⁹On the isolation of Stillwater as it related to the founding of the agricultural college, see: Rulon, Oklahoma State, 5-6. Even when the train reached Stillwater in 1900, the town was far off the main line.

by the early 1920s. Some of the early installations were crude. The correspondent from Eden Center wrote the Stillwater Gazette in April, 1923:

The White Elephant Telephone company met at the school house Monday night for the purpose of electing new officers, and to change from barbed wire fences and get our wire up on posts, thinking it might help our service. We have found out the fence is a failure.

Later that month the correspondent reported success: "We have found our telephone service greatly improved since we got our wire up off the wire fences."⁵⁰

Telephones represented an expense to the rural dweller: It is unlikely that a rural tenant would have such an instrument. But they were soon found to be an important way to help bind the community. In fact, the Fair View District No. 3 correspondent for the Stillwater Gazette complained at one point that: "Our telephone line has been out of commission for the last week, and we have been unable to get much news for this week." By 1922 there was some assumption that telephones would be available in the rural areas. The correspondent from the I.X.L. region told of Dr. R.W. Holbrook's adventure. He was out on a medical call when he "...stripped the gear on his car Sunday night." The doctor walked about two miles looking for a farm with a phone. When one neighbor called after the discouraged doctor, "Is there anything that I can do?" The doctor stopped and looking back said, "Yes, put in a phone!"⁵¹

So the rural community continued to exist throughout the 1920s. It gave identity to the isolated rural inhabitants of the county, it provided a social and economic center for them, and it helped hold the rural society together during good times and rough. The era of the hooded Klan coincided with rough economic times in the county.

The County and the Recession

The entire County was under economic stress in the early 1920s. The commodity price drops that spurred this condition actually began when cotton dropped in 1919. By 1922 cotton

⁵⁰"News of the Neighbors," SG, 8 April 1923, 7; *Ibid.*, 20 April 1923, 7.

⁵¹"News of Neighbors," SG, 3 March 1922, 7.

prices were actually climbing back: that should have been a good sign for a county which still had more cotton than wheat. But countering this was a very dry and hot summer and the onslaught of the boll weevil. The latter was endemic, unlike prices and droughts, and the 1920s saw the recession of cotton culture into the south and southwest of the state. By the end of the 1920s cotton was not the major crop in Payne County that it had been early in the decade.

A further economic blow was the fall in wheat prices in the middle of 1922. The response to this was movement among tenants and a pulling back towards a more self-contained, even subsistence type, farming. The recession did nothing to slow the secular movement towards tenancy and away from broad land ownership in the county.⁵²

The local business communities had to be affected, though they generally had some other economic factors which helped them. Stillwater had a county courthouse and its trade besides a state and federally supported land grant college. Yale, Cushing, Ripley and other

Table 2.2: Assessed Personal Property Values in State (selected counties)

county	assessed value	% change
Payne	\$2,086,722	+32%
Creek	2,457,373	-16.79
Lincoln	858,--- [unclear]	-25.28
Logan	866,457	-21.54
Garfield	1,431,970	-16.0
Noble	608,032	-23.3
Kay	1,339,129	-17.36
Pawnee	494,434	-12.34
Oklahoma	7,848,180	-24.27
Tulsa	3,156,601	-11.27
Marshall	69,074	-00.03
Woodward	501,891	-19.0
Osage	268,920	-00.03 ⁵³

smaller towns had oil which represented a real pool of wealth. Oil was the factor that made Payne County the only county gaining in assessed value for the fiscal year 1922 in the entire state. In

⁵²See the discussion of trends in land ownership and tenantry below, and Table 2.4: "Payne County Agriculture Over Time."

⁵³Ibid.

September, 1922, when the figures for the state were published, Payne County had an unbelievable 32% increase in value. The assessors took note: "The largest increase in valuation was in Payne county where it amounted to \$2,086,722, a thirty-two percent increase"; But this statement was in an article headlined, "Personal Property In Oklahoma Decreases."⁵⁴ In Table 2.2 are counties selected for their proximity to Payne County, the metropolitan counties, and Marshall County, the one in Garin Burbank's work on socialism and the Klan. The figures look sensational for Payne County, but it was an aberration. Much of this was wealth stored in oil tanks in Cushing, oil being held until petroleum prices rebounded.

Yale and Glencoe lost banks, and Yale lost a wholesale grocer connected to the oil fields. All the towns likely lost small businesses, but the overall effect of this recession on the towns and their business communities, though substantial, was hardly fatal. The anecdotal information garnered from newspaper ads and editors' comments seemed to indicate that at least one sector of the town business community was thriving, automobile sales and service.⁵⁵

Census data is not precise enough to tell if there was a pause in the county population growth in the period of the recession, roughly 1921 to 1923, but the 1920s overall saw a continuing of county population growth. It was not comparable to the booming growth of the 1910s when the oil gushed and the "mushroom towns" grew and flourished. But growth there was.

The county was hurt by the recession of the early 1920s. The rural areas were hurt more than the urban, and in the rural areas the recession undoubtedly was a cause for the rapid growth of the Farmers' Union and other organizations representing farming interests. Preaching cooperation and organization, these groups not only represented farmers but offered cooperative marketing and buying, steps which gave immediate relief. In the cities, less hard hit than the countryside, various options were available to the poor and others affected by the recession. City businessmen saw their hope in organization and flocked into Chambers of

⁵⁴"Personal Property In Oklahoma Decreases," Cushing Citizen, 7 September 1922, 3.

⁵⁵All the major newspapers carried ads for automobile dealers, often for more than one brand. Without a study of automobile dealers in the county, it would seem the Ford line was the most popular.

Commerce and service clubs. But one group that never advertised itself as one having answers for the recession was the Klan.⁵⁶

The Recession and County Farmers

In 1921 farm commodity prices fell during the summer. The average farm price for wheat in Oklahoma dropped from its high in 1919 of \$2.05 per bushel to \$1.35 in 1920, then \$.86 in 1921. Prices can be followed better over time by quoting prices gotten for winter wheat in Kansas City.

Table 2.3: No. 2 Hard Winter Wheat, Kansas City, 1916-24

year	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June
1916	1.14	1.31	1.57	1.67	1.85	1.72	1.89	1.82	1.97	2.43	3.01	2.74
1917	2.68	2.61	2.12	2.12	2.12	2.12	2.12	2.12	2.12	2.12	2.12
1918	2.20	2.16	2.16	2.16	2.15	2.24	2.31	2.26	2.39	2.62	2.60	2.47
1919	2.25	2.18	2.24	2.30	2.46	2.63	2.82	2.42	2.49	2.75	2.93	2.76
1920	2.68	2.45	2.44	2.07	1.76	1.69	1.72	1.62	1.55	1.33	1.47	1.38
1921	1.18	1.15	1.22	1.10	1.09	1.09	1.13	1.29	1.34	1.35	1.34	1.17
1922	1.13	1.04	1.04	1.13	1.17	1.17	1.14	1.15	1.16	1.20	1.16	1.04
1923	.96	1.01	1.09	1.12	1.09	1.09	1.13	1.11	1.09	1.04	1.06	1.08
1924	1.20	1.19	1.20	1.37	1.43	1.62 ⁵⁷

During World War I the prices for wheat and other grains held at a high level, though the price was capped and regulated. The price sagged in 1920 and broke in 1921, not to re-emerge until 1924. In March, 1922, the Farmers' Union was quoting \$1.50 locally as a good price for wheat, a price which would give the farmer some profits. The Union also suggested a good corn price to be \$.85 a bushel. In July, 1922, the prices at Stillwater were low: wheat #1, 95¢ a bushel,

⁵⁶On the growth of business organizations, see Chapter III. None of the Klan pronouncements reported in the newspapers in Payne County from 1921 to 1924 directly address the recession or give any suggestions about how to battle or survive the hard times. See Chapter VII for discussion of the county Klan's public statements.

⁵⁷United States Department of Agriculture, Agriculture Yearbook, 1924 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1925): 581, 583.

corn, 60¢, oats, 30-35¢ per bushel. In August wheat at Perkins was 76-82¢ per bushel.⁵⁸ By September of 1923, the recession still hung on in the state as well as the county.⁵⁹

The recession opened the partisan gulf between Payne County papers over the issue of farm policy. The Republican Stillwater Gazette carried publicity releases from the Republican Publicity Association which claimed the recession was outside the control of the Harding administration, and that it was certainly not due to the Republican's high tariff policies. "It is true that deflation has been a world-wide experience, but so far as the farmer has suffered more from men of other industries [i.e., pay raises to industrial workers], his losses have been due to the inequalities resulting from government regulation during and after the war [i.e., the Wilson regime]." The Stillwater Advance Democrat would have nothing of Republican claims that this was a Wilson-made recession, and especially nothing to do with Republican insistence that high tariffs were absolutely necessary to pull the United States out of agricultural recession. In July, 1921, that paper simply noted the prices gotten in 1920 and in 1921 for three commodities: wheat dropped from \$1.50 a bushel to \$.85 to \$.95, oats from \$.75 / bushel to \$.25, and oil from \$4.00 / barrel to \$1.00 / barrel.⁶⁰

On top of the commodity price drops came bad weather. There had been some drought in 1921, but this was intensified in 1922. That summer was declared the hottest since 1902 by the US. Weather Bureau. One angry correspondent from Yost Lake vicinity replied indignantly to some optimism detected the Farmers' Union representative, Mr. Zuck. "Yes, Mr. Zuck, where you find one field of wheat making thirty bushels we can cite you to fifty that won't make ten, and lots won't make five bushels. So many crop reporters is what kept the price of grain down."⁶¹

⁵⁸"Farmers' Union Notes," SG, 10 March 1922, 4; "The Markets," SG, 21 July 1922, 8; "News of the Neighbors," SG, 18 August 1922, 7.

⁵⁹The Oklahoma City Times noted starvation in Marshall and Carter Counties, but blamed it in part on "shiftless" farmers who failed. Reprinted as, "Starving Farmers," QC, 20 September 1923, 4.

⁶⁰"Farmer's Chief Victims," SG, 7 April 1922, 8; "Stabilization," Stillwater Advance Democrat, 21 July 1921, n.p. [hereafter "SAD"].

⁶¹Oklahoma State News," SG, 1 September 1922, 1; "Retort to W.L. Zuck," SG, 30 June 1922, 7.

The next year saw no relief to the heat and drought. In June, 1923, one rural correspondent noted that, "Some of the farmers are planting their crops over for the third time this spring. It is hoped they will raise a crop yet." When that paper went to press in June, rains had come. That was a brief respite. It was a summer that dried up water supplies for Stillwater. In a mass meeting in July, attempts were made to organize for a bond election to help the water supply. Dr. J.T. Gray, a physician and developer, proposed that a dam be built to flood Stillwater Creek near the Babcock well site (approximately today's Babcock Park) and that a water reservoir be built on top of the adjacent hill with pumps and filters to get the water drinkable. By August 3, Stillwater was reporting only a twelve to fifteen day supply of drinkable water remained. After that, raw creek water would be put in the mains. "When the creek water is turned into the mains, I'm going to cut off the water from my home," Superintendent McLendon said. "I don't want it in my house. It will not be suitable even for sewage purposes."⁶²

That summer, County Agent Rathburn publicized remedies for the grasshoppers that were hurting the cotton. He also announced that wheat yields ranged from five to twenty-five bushels an acre, small crops but of good quality. But by August, even though wheat in the county was of high quality, the Stillwater Milling Company declared that so few farmers were willing to sell it due to the price that the mill was importing wheat from northwestern Oklahoma. "The poor sale of wheat this year can be attributed to the fact that wheat is the cheapest feed the farmer can use...."⁶³

In both 1922 and 1923, the assessed valuation for the county bucked state trends of decreased county valuations and was up, in 1923 the highest in the state. But this was due to oil stored in Cushing and Yale, oil stored because the price was low. In 1923 only Stillwater and Cushing had increased valuations among the towns, and nearly all the townships were down. "Although valuations of townships comprised of farming communities will be individually lower

⁶²"News of the Neighbors," SG, 8 June 1923, 7; "Start Campaign To Get Suitable Water Supply," SG, 13 July 1923, 1; "Water will Last Only About Fifteen Days," SG, 3 August 1923, 1.

⁶³"Grasshoppers Injuring Cotton, Rathbun Finds," SG, 13 July 1923, 1; "Wheat Yields Range From 5 to 25 Bushels," SG, 13 July 1923, 4; "Wheat Market Is Below Normal in Stillwater," SG, 17 August 1923, 1.

than last year, an increased amount of storage oil in the county will offset the decrease [sic].” Payne County’s agricultural community, along with its petroleum industry, was mired in recession.⁶⁴

One advantage Payne County had during this recession was a diverse cropping. There were 2,444 farms in Payne County in 1920. Of the 433,920 farm acres in the county, 165,169 were in cultivation, or 67 acres per farm. The rest was in pasture, meadows, and timber.⁶⁵ The county grew 60,000 tons of hay in 1920 and in 1921 had 30,000 acres in the classic subsistence crop, corn. Although it had livestock, including about 7,000 hogs, the county had a comfortable net surplus in corn and forage.⁶⁶

In the 1920 agricultural valuation, the county produced \$2,022,382 in grains out of a total farm production of \$4,809,852 (42%). The category that included cotton (along with several minor crops) produced \$1,316,175 (27.4%). At that time the county had 19,756 acres in wheat producing 228,386 bushels; 25,696 acres in corn (503,374 bushels); 37,518 acres in oats (914,385 bushels); and 23,436 acres in cotton producing 6,966 bales.⁶⁷ The county thus had a mixed agricultural base in 1920. County agriculture would move more and more from cotton, that great producer of tenants, as the boll weevil hit in 1922 and 1923.

In 1920 the county had 47.7% of its farms operated by owners (1,165), 52.1% by tenants (1,273). The value of land and buildings for the latter was \$7,541,460, while the smaller number of owner operated farms had \$8,135,150. Owner operated farms were thus better capitalized, but this was not an outlandish disparity, especially when it’s noted that the owner operated farms managed 186,462 acres while the tenants managed 190,383. Thus, owner operated farms

⁶⁴“Personal Property in Oklahoma Decreases,” CC, 7 September 1922, 3; “Valuation of County May Total \$46,000,000,” CC, 30 August 1923, 3; “Valuation of County Will Show Increase,” Yale Democrat, 2 August 1923, 3 [hereafter “YD”].

⁶⁵US Commerce Department, Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920, Bulletin, Agriculture: Oklahoma (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, n.d.): 18.

⁶⁶“Facts About Payne County,” SAD, 14 July 1921, 6.

⁶⁷Bureau of Census, 1920 Agriculture: Oklahoma, 32.

averaged 160 acres and \$6,982.96 in valuation, while tenants' farms averaged 149.6 acres and \$5,924.16.

Almost all farmers in 1920 were white. Tenants included 1,208 white (94.9%), 17 foreign born (1.3%), and 48 black (3.8%). Owners included 1,041 white (89.4%), 89 foreign born white (7.6%), and 35 black (3%). Although tenancy was well established in the county and would grow during the 1920s, Payne County did not have the single-crop base that hurt southern counties, and it did not have the 67.2% tenancy rate that Marshall County had in 1920, the county that was studied by Garin Burbank for his work on the Klan.⁶⁸

But the recession certainly hit rural Payne County. The percentage of tenancy increased, the percentage of ownership dropped, the value of farm crops dropped, and the value of farms dropped.

Table 2.4: Payne County Agriculture Over Time⁶⁹

Item	1925	1920	1910
Number of farms	2,810	2,444	3,170
full owners	895	900	
% full owners	31.9%	36.8%	
part owners	333	265	
% part owners	11.9%	10.8%	
tenants	1649	1273	1600
% tenancy	58.7%	52.1%	50.5%
Value of All Farm Prop.	\$14,860,590	\$19,412,035	\$15,451,022
land & bldgs.	\$12,794,609	\$15,825,610	\$12,459,006
Value of Farm Product	\$ 3,072,579*	\$ 4,204,210*	

*Values for 1924 and 1919 crops respectively.

There were several responses to this recession by the farming community of Payne County. One was simply to tighten their belts and endure. More emphasis was put upon subsistence. The US. Department of Agriculture wrote about farmers growing more household

⁶⁸Ibid., 18. The slight disparity in numbers is due to the omission of the category of managed farms, of which there were 6. The tables did not relate crops to land owning and tenantry.

⁶⁹US Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, United States Census of Agriculture, 1925, part II, The Southern States (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1927): 1044-45, 1056-57, 1078-79.

food. An unknown source complained about the "cowless, sowless, and henless farms in Oklahoma." "It is incomprehensible that men and women living on land year after year make no definite effort to supply their children with the vital food that a cow can supply. Yet there are thousands of such farm families in Oklahoma." And the Perkins Journal, in two articles, urged farmers to build granaries to escape the cost of paying to store their wheat.⁷⁰

Production by the household became much more important, and much of this was done by women. Mrs. Almira Abernathy, county home demonstration agent, reported that, in 1923, 218 farm women in eight clubs in Payne County set a record.

14,662	pounds of butter made.
6,740	pound of butter sold.
20,740	chickens raised.
3,398	chickens sold.
74,728	dozen eggs received.
63,730	dozen eggs sold.
16,465	quarts of fruits, vegetables and meats canned.
2,447	pieces of clothing made.
17	kitchens improved.
23	home conveniences installed.
19	pressure cookers bought.
18	house exteriors improved.
32	house interiors improved.

That averages out to each woman in this small sample producing 67.3 pounds of butter and selling 30.9 pounds, and each woman having 95 chickens. Note that the most perishable item, eggs, were largely sold, but the productive chickens kept. Even here, the recession hit: In 1922 it was reported that the price of eggs had dropped from 30¢ per dozen to 22¢.⁷¹

Another response to this was a steady rise in tenancy. Tenancy was understood in that time to be a mixed blessing. The optimists saw it as a stepping stone to land ownership necessary for the young farmer. But it offered no security, no compensation for improvements on the land, sometimes not even a choice of what to plant. The frequent moves made by tenants meant that

⁷⁰"Grow More Food For Family Use," Perkins Journal, 29 July 1921, 2 [hereafter "PJ"]; "A Livestock Vacuum," PJ, 29 July 1921, 5; "Build Now," PJ, 9 September 1921, 1; "It Happened In Perkins," PJ, 23 September 1921, 1.

⁷¹"Payne County Women Set Unusual Record," YD, 17 January 1924, 6; "News of the Neighbors," SG (February 24, 1922): 7.

children had sporadic education and farm communities were robbed of a more stable population.⁷²

To some degree Payne County was saved from the worst rigors of tenancy because it had a mixed agricultural economy. In 1921, the Oklahoma A. & M. Extension office noted the great amount of movement of tenants in the whole state, an indication of distress. The Extension Service blamed this on land-owners who insisted on engaging in commercial monoculture, especially in the production of cotton. "The weevil this year destroyed the money crop, and, with no homegrown food and no home-made meat to fall back on, tenants were forced to move on."⁷³

Sheila Manes noted that one of the characteristics of southern tenants during hard time was to move. This was partially in the hope of a lucky deal, a chance at what seemed better ground, or possibly to escape a rental relationship gone sour from loss.⁷⁴ Payne County's tenants probably exercised the same response, though it is difficult to substantiate such movement in Payne County in 1922. In the Stillwater Gazette of February 10, 1922, is this note from the correspondent from Pleasant Hill, a district in Eden Township.

There has been a good deal of moving about among the renters this fall and this winter. Most all have moved now and are ready to start to farming. Roscoe Emerson sold out and quit farming. He is now in Stillwater running a service truck. Elmer and Earl Clark moved on the farm that Mr. Emerson left, the old Tipton farm. It now goes by the name of Ed Clark's north place. Nelse Nottingham has rented the Widow Linkenfelter place. Cecil Rains moved from the Laymann farm to an Indian lease near Quay. [just north of Yale, a town split between Payne and Pawnee Counties] Will Isaac and family moved on this farm. Will Chandler, who farmed the Berry place last year, quit farming, had a sale, sold out and is now living in Tulsa. Horace Satterfield has moved from J.M. Graves's place to the Berry Farm. Harve Satterfield will farm with J.M. Graves this year. Dick Flick will farm Walker Holbrook north, known as the old Cleve McCall farm. George Gison, who farmed this farm last year, has moved to a farm one mile north and one-half mile west of the Paradise school house. [likely the Paradise in southwestern Payne County] Paul Vermillion, who farmed with J. M. Holbrook, quit farming and is now working in Stillwater

⁷²Tom Moore, "Farm Tenancy in Oklahoma, 1925-1935" (Stillwater, Ok.: M.A. Thesis, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1938): see particularly pp. 40-53. Looking particularly at the results of the Depression and Dustbowl of the 1930s, Mr. Moore stated, "A desirable society cannot thrive under such absentee ownership and non-owning operation of land resources." (p.25) He also noted that the greatest rises in tenancy in Oklahoma match "...periods of economic depression in agriculture," and he cites 1890-1900, and 1920-1935 as examples. (p.9)

⁷³"Food Crops Neglected: Tenants Forced To Move," SG, 2 December 1921, 5.

⁷⁴Sheila Manes, "Pioneers and Survivors: Oklahoma's Landless Farmers," in Oklahoma: New Views of the Forty-Sixth State, ed. Anne Hodges Morgan and H. Wayne Morgan, 99-104 (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982).

for the Lovell Bros., driving an oil truck. Howard Church, who farmed his mother's place, quit farming, moved to Stillwater, and is now working as a partner with Roscoe Emerson at the service truck business. George Bartram and family, Mr. and Mrs. Enoch Bartram, George's father and mother, will farm the place vacated by Mr. Church. Harry Hinkle is farming the old Thurman place, vacated by Mr. Long. Ralph Groves and Andrew Burton are farming the old Vosburgh place, vacated by Mr. Hinkle. Ed Lee moved from the McCall farm to the old McMillin place. A negro family moved on the McCall farm. Clarence Moorman will farm most of W.H. Judge's farm, part of P.A. Bostian's land, and the large field west of the Wild Horse creek of J.M. Grave's place. John Daily has moved across the road on the Davis Bros. farm.⁷⁵

This is an interesting summation of events in one area in the spring after the great price drop.

Several things stand out. Many agricultural renters had to be willing to take urban jobs. We cannot tell how many of these city jobs were temporary, with the occupant eventually moving back onto the farm. With the relative decline in farming over the whole of the 1920s and its near collapse in the 1930s, it is likely safe to say that few of these men again seriously farmed. Most men did not move far from Pleasant Hill, and, in fact, the author of this seemed to assume these people were known to a wider rural community. This speaks to the personalism of the rural community. This would also bode well for the stability of personnel within the district-wide rural community. It must be noted that the one family of tenants not named was the "negro family" farming the McCall farm. In rural as well as urban spaces of the county, whiteness dominated.

One other interesting aspect of that list: These movements likely represented a large percentage of the total acreage of the district. The Gazette already had correspondents in the surrounding districts, so it can reasonably be assumed that this movement was within the boundaries of a nine square mile area, one quarter of the thirty-six miles of Eden Township. Within that nine square miles would be thirty-six quarter sections. This report mentioned about seventeen farms in which there was either a change of ownership or, more often, one tenant replacing another. By estimating that these plots averaged between eighty and one-hundred sixty acres, or one eighth to one quarter section, then there was movement on somewhere close to 50% of the land in the district in one season.⁷⁶

⁷⁵"News of the Neighbors," SG, 10 February 1922, 7.

⁷⁶Garin Burbank notes, "In south-central and southeastern Oklahoma tenants moved so often (one study found that approximately 60 percent of the tenants in the sample moved to a new farm annually) that they could not have had the advantage of a settled social life." Another consequence of this was, "In their efforts to come out ahead, the renters mined the soil for

So the great agricultural recession hit Payne County, Oklahoma in the summer of 1921 and continued for several years, including the years of the hooded Klan. Agriculturists of the county were insulated from some of the worst ravages of this period by several factors, including their diversified agricultural base, the presence of towns where some jobs might exist, and the presence of the oil fields which, also hard hit, still represented some jobs and income for the county.⁷⁷ But the county was hit hard and the agricultural sector was probably most affected. When economies turn sour people get desperate for some relief. One response was to look to institutions for hope and relief. That institution was not the Klan.

From the newspapers it seemed clear that one reaction to the recession in the countryside was for farmers, owners and tenants, to join the Farmers' Union. It would seem logical that, with a depressed agriculture and ideas still circulating in the farm community about rapacious middlemen and easterners, the Klan could have tied into this unrest. Yet there are no known Klaverns in the rural areas. The truth is the Klan said little to rural people, for the Klan did not have a positive program to help the farmer make more profit. Moreover, from its pronouncements which have been preserved, the Klan in the county, if it represented a faction, represented the town merchants and oil business interests.⁷⁸

Although there were no known Klaverns in the rural county, it does not mean there were not some Klansmen: there undoubtedly were. But it is interesting to note that the membership fee for the Klan was \$10, a reason sometimes given for the poorer people not joining. The membership fee for the Farmer's Union was twice that of the Klan, \$20 up front, and it took at least ten farmers to make a local. It is difficult to say how many locals or members were in Payne County

cotton." See Garin Burbank, When Farmers Voted Red: The Gospel of Socialism in the Oklahoma Countryside, 1910-1924 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976): 6.

⁷⁷Nigel Anthony Sellars, "Oil, Wheat, and Wobblies: The Industrial Workers of the World in Oklahoma, 1905-1930" (Norman, Oklahoma: Ph.D. diss., University of Oklahoma, 1994): 175. Recruiters for the I.W.W. found that roustabouts were often underemployed farmers who saw their futures back on the farm, hence they were not interested in joining a labor union.

⁷⁸In the Yale Klan's visit to Rev. Mallory's Church in 1922, the Klan called for, "Full understanding between capital and labor with due consideration for dealing with foreign labor agitators." This was a clear anti-radical fit well with business interests in Cushing and Yale at least. This is the only economic statement we have from Payne County's Klansmen. See "Ku Klux Klan Visits Methodist Church," YD, 6 July 1922, 1.

in the early 1920s, but the relatively high-priced Farmers' Union was attracting large numbers of members and setting up new locals. The pitch of the Farmers' Union was always economic first of all, and it made sense to farmers in Payne County. But the Farmers' Union also represented a social element. Many, probably most, of the local's meetings included the family, unlike the regular Klan meeting which was secret and all male.⁷⁹

Another mark in favor of the Farmers' Union was that it always preached "cooperation", that very popular word of the period. That was the heart of the Farmers' Union message: the way to survive was through cooperation. Again the Klan stood apart, for the Klan stood for divisions in society.

It is likely that farmers were thinking along class lines in their period and recognizing that commodity prices hit black and white, Catholic and protestant. Many countians might also have known that the Klan in Cushing was headed by a banker, John Foster. If most the members of the Klan were citians, with a banker leading one chapter of the organization, and with the organization trying to divide people not along class lines but along racial and religious lines, the Klan had little to recommend it to a rural countian.

In the towns it is difficult to say economic pressures did not lead to some looking to the Klan and joining the organization, although it is likely that each membership represented a case of multiple causations. In the little we have in the way of proclamations in the county from the Klan, economic matters are never directly mentioned. If economic pressures increased crime, which is likely, then it did hit a matter the Klan claimed to be concerned with.

⁷⁹Both MacLean's study on the Klan in Athens, Georgia, and Blee's study on women in the Klan, mainly centered on Indiana, strongly emphasis the gender bias of the male Klan and the strong tendency to do things apart from wife and family. Kathleen M. Blee, Women of the Klan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991): 42-8, 68-9; Nancy MacLean, Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994): 114-18. This is reinforced closer to home in Newsom's account of the unmasking ceremony in Oilton, Creek County, in 1924. "Until that day, many children and some wives did not know their fathers and husbands were Klan members." D. Earl Newsom, Drumright: The Glory Days of a Boom Town (Perkins, Oklahoma: Evans Publications, 1985): 118. There was only one female auxiliary in Payne County, the White Camellias in Yale, and they show up exactly one in the newspaper record. See "Kamelia Kourt Appear Here," YD, 6 September 1923, 1.

There is another matter in which the economic recession may have helped the Klan. There was poverty in the county. In several cases, the Klan gave well publicized gifts, several times more than \$100, to town benevolence movements.⁸⁰ But if a person was truly concerned with the poor in Cushing or Stillwater, Yale or Ripley, he or she could work within virtually any organization in the county, religious and secular, and know that that group contributed to aid the poor. The major cities had broad benevolence drives around Christmas, and in the rest of the year the Red Cross, working with various individuals and groups, provided relief. For veterans, the various posts of the American Legion provided relief and actually conducted a census of all veterans early in the decade expressly to ensure veterans got benefits they were due. Legion relief could include a room for the unemployed, job searches, hospitalization, food, or enrollment in programs. Although the Klan was well represented in benevolences, especially in Yale, it was part of a crowded field of organizations that gave to the poor.

The Farmers' Union

The early 1920s was a period of organizational growth in Payne County. There was a growth in organizations that seemed to mushroom directly after World War I in both the urban and the rural areas. In the rural areas these organizations often took the form of cooperative growers associations. Locals existed for the Cotton Growers Association, the Wheat Growers Association, and various other organizations. Statewide, the Cotton Growers' Association claimed it had 45,526 members in 1923 and that its members who participated in the organization's cooperative marketing got a \$20 per bale increase over non-participants. By 1924 the same statewide organization claimed to have handled more than 115,000 bales, an increase of 50,000 over the previous year, totaling about 20% of the state's crop.⁸¹

But it was the Farmers' Union that seemed to have been the main hope of the rural people of Payne County. It was inclusive, welcoming all farmers. It offered a group of interconnected

⁸⁰The issue of benevolences by the Klan will be discussed in Chapter VII.

⁸¹"Now 45,526 Members Of Cotton Association," YD, 9 August 1923, 9; "Cotton Co-op Handles Fifth Of State Crop," YD, 24 January 1924, 7.

solutions to the problems faced by the farmers and their communities at the time. Cooperation in marketing and buying would, it was claimed, cut costs and force the middle man to take a lesser profits. Cooperation and education would help each farmer do the best work on his or her land, and the Union was always allied with and supported by the Agricultural Extension service and the County's Extension Agents. Cooperation would also help maintain the rural community: The Union would even become a new center of community activities, from singing groups and pot-luck suppers to ice cream social hosting a neighboring local.

The organization's first local in Oklahoma was founded in 1903, one year after the organizations was founded in Texas. The Union membership in Oklahoma dropped in the 1910s from 6,179 (1910) to 556 (1919). As a percentage of the total agricultural population, Farmers' Union membership in Oklahoma dropped from 3.64% to .32%.⁸² It's modern history began with the rise of John Simpson within the organization. He became the state President (from 1917) and, from 1930, the national President.

Simpson was a dynamo. A resident of Stillwater for many years, Simpson was a tremendous organizer. Simpson built the Oklahoma Union into the largest in the nation.⁸³ He had a full speaking schedule and was a fine speaker if the accounts of the day were correct.

There was quite a gathering at the Farmers' union picnic at Thorp's grove. People from several locals were present. John A. Simpson made a fine talk on cooperation. There were several talks on true Americanism and community spirit.

The Union Valley people pleaded in April, 1922: "We would like John A. Simpson to come to Union Valley and give a talk."⁸⁴ Although it is never noted in the paper, it is not unlikely that Simpson went and made that talk. When Charles S. Barrett, President of the national Farmers' Union, visited Stillwater in 1923, he lauded Simpson, who was on the platform with him and who

⁸²Commodore B. Fisher, The Farmers' Union, vol. 2, Studies in Economics and Sociology (Lexington: Publications of the University of Kentucky, 1920). The first Oklahoma local was in 1903, the same as Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana. Only Texas had an earlier one (1902).

⁸³James C. Milligan, and L. David Norris, "Organizing Wide-awake Farmers: John A. Simpson and the Oklahoma Farmer's Union," Chronicles of Oklahoma 74 (Winter 1996-97): 358, 373, 370.

⁸⁴"News of the Neighbors," SG, 28 April 1922, 7.

would ultimately fill Barrett's job for two decades, as "...the greatest organizer I ever saw -- the greatest on the American continent."⁸⁵

On top of that, Payne County had a tireless Farmers' Union organizer in W.L. Zuck, who wrote for the paper of record for the county, the Republican Stillwater Gazette, for over eleven years.⁸⁶ He traveled over at least four counties organizing new locals in the first years of the 1920s. His career in the early 1920's as publicist, organizer, and county officer of the Farmers' Union is a microcosm of the organization in the first years of the 1920s.

His weeks were busy. We can imagine him maintaining a farm and, beyond that, proselytizing for the cause.

That farmers could rule the world if they would, is an old saying, but they won't. It takes weeks sometimes to convince some of us that organization, unity and confidence, coupled with common sense is necessary before a system is gained. Therefore, leadership is essential, it is necessary; no man or group of men can be won without that real power of friendship and brotherly love.⁸⁷

The sentiment of the Farmers' union should be one of continuous advancement toward a greater and better agricultural method of living. Money isn't the only thing in the world that makes for civilization, but the real and true brotherly acts of kindness, devotion and willingness to give to the uplift of humanity at all times.⁸⁸

Notice how easily he moves from a rather hard-headed discourse on the necessity of organization for power, to the very human emphasis on the end upon "friendship and brotherly love", the ties of the rural community, and even a mission for the "uplift of humanity." The Union organized quickly in Payne County under his, and others', devoted leadership. He could boast in 1921, "Payne county is considered to be one of the leading counties of this state for Farmers' Union activities. There's a reason or two for this."⁸⁹

The message Zuck was preaching was of organization and cooperation, a theme very common in the county, both rural and urban, at this time. Organization would give the farmer the

⁸⁵"Tells Farmers to Buy, Sell, Vote Together," QC, 30 August 1923, 3; Milligan and Norris, "Wide-awake Farmers," 356-83.

⁸⁶"Farmers' Union Notes," SG, 17 March 1922, 4.

⁸⁷"Farmers' Union Notes," SG, 10 February 1922, 4.

⁸⁸"Farmers' Union Notes," SG, 31 March 1922, 8.

⁸⁹"Farmers' Union Notes," SG, 23 September 1921, 5.

power to work against those forces of world economics and middle-men that threatened the farmer, while cooperation would give more economic clout and also strengthen the rural community. These themes went hand-in-hand in Zuck's preaching in the county.

By early 1922, Zuck's report on the county's Farmers' Union Rally Day could claim 2,000 members in the county and growing, more members than the Klan ever claimed in the county. The rally was attended by 160 delegates from the county. Ironically, one of the main speakers that day was a man who would later be seen by the county as an enemy, the manager of the Farmer-Labor Reconstruction League, George Wilson.⁹⁰

The Union insisted upon the member paying up front the \$20 membership fee, and upon the rural communities having ten members before they could organize a Union local. Unlike the Agricultural Workers Industrial Union, an off-shoot of the Industrial Workers of the World and very active in Oklahoma in the post-War era, the Farmers' Union enrolled virtually all types of farm workers including tenants. The AWIU refused to give membership to farm owners, of course, since they were, in AWIU eyes, obvious oppressors. It also refused memberships to tenants because, they argued, tenants harbored *petit bourgeois* feelings and were not true laborers. In the period of the early 1920s, the AWIU was putting on a push to enroll farm laborers, but they concentrated on counties with average farm holdings larger than Payne County had, such as Garfield County to the west. Although their membership was far more affordable than the FU's membership, their policies automatically cut into their appeal to Payne County and their ability to have any real impact.

Another problem the AWIU would have had in Payne County was the inoculation the county had against the IWW. It had been active in Cushing, and that experience changed the temper of that city, making it more reactionary. The business leaders in the oil fields seemed to have sensitized the rest of the county of the dangers of this radical group, although the IWW was not the fixation elsewhere that it sometimes was in Cushing.⁹¹

⁹⁰"Farmers' Union Notes," SG, 13 January 1922, 4.

⁹¹Sellars, Wobblies, particularly Chapters 7 and 8, pp. 390-487.

This left the field open to the Farmers' Union with their not-so-radical message of cooperative buying and selling and cooperative communities. An immediate aim of the Union was cooperative selling and buying.

The day has come when the farmer must cease his downward course financially and seek a better method through cooperation that leads to prosperity. The great sentiment now prevailing is the necessity of more mutual work, less muscle, and more collective buying and selling.⁹²

The erection of cooperatives was central to this. The first in Payne County was erected in Stillwater in 1921. In December of that year, at the first annual meeting of stockholders, they could boast a net profit of \$5,573.06, not to be divided among members yet, and a president named William Dowell from the Eden Center district, two districts north from Stillwater and one that was truly rural.⁹³ By 1922, Mr. Zuck could state that that exchange had had its "ups and downs" but had generally done well. That same week he noted that the exchange had just gotten in two more rail cars of flour and fuel.⁹⁴ Even areas without formal institutions like the Stillwater Cooperative Exchange got into cooperative dealings. Zuck visited the High Hill Local, the farthest northwest district in Payne County, where he found a "progressive" bunch of farmers. They not only had "motor Trucks" to haul their kids to school, but they wanted to buy or build a cooperative elevator for their grain.⁹⁵ In the southwestern part of the county, the Fairview local, northeast of Coyle in Elm Grove Township, welcomed Mr. Zuck to their meeting in December, 1921. Despite a stormy night, the meeting drew 300 members from it and surrounding locals. Among the matters discussed was purchasing a piano for the school house where they met, and the fact they were ordering through the State Cooperative Exchange another rail car of flour and feed, plus one of sugar.⁹⁶

Organization and cooperative buying and selling constituted some power, a fact not missed by the county's urban businessmen. In 1921, the local in the Independence district west

⁹²"Farmers' Union Notes," SG, 23 September 1921, 5.

⁹³"Farmers' Union Notes," SG, 23 December 1921, 5.

⁹⁴"Farmers' Union Notes," SG, 14 April 1922, 5.

⁹⁵"Farmers' Union Notes," SG, 7 October 1921, 5.

⁹⁶"Farmers' Union Notes," SG, 2 December 1921, 8.

of Cushing, held a meeting. "There was a good attendance, even including a *banker* from Cushing, so [sic] seems greatly interested. Farmers around that oil center are hoping to see a great change for cooperation that may bring relief to the present standing conditions."⁹⁷

The Farmers' Union ideology and actions were on the limits of radical for the county. Like the rural communities, the Farmers' Union began with a labor theory of value focused, in nearly a physiocratic style, upon the producers on the land. The Union implicitly preached a doctrine of class conflict and distrust of agricultural middlemen. Although it actually wanted to see each farmer become a capitalist of sorts, there were elements in the ideology and actions that included strong doses of agrarian socialism.

Their message crossed traditional bounds to focus on the needs of all farmers of all types. The Farmers' Union enrolled women. It is unclear from the sources whether these were women who owned land or simply headed families, but, at \$20 for a membership, it is very doubtful that any family would splurge to get two memberships. There is some indication that these "memberships" in some cases were simply wives of members. But the Independence Farmers' Union local, south of the river and southwest of Cushing, had fifteen women out of their forty-two paying members.⁹⁸ At the Farmers' Union county convention in 1923, Mrs. W.E. Woodring was elected vice-president, Mrs. E.B. Shotwell elected assistant secretary, and Mrs. William Overhold put on the board, all from Stillwater.⁹⁹

And if the interests of the farmer could jump gender, it also jumped race. The Farmers' Union was really the only organization in Payne County in the early 1920s that included African Americans along with whites, and seemingly did so in an even-handed way, albeit with the separate constitutional framework required by Jim Crow laws. Starting in Logan County in 1921, Zuck helped organize five colored locals in that county's northern districts between Meridian and Langston.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷"Farmers' Union Notes," *SG*, 23 December 1921, 5; italics added.

⁹⁸"News of the Neighbors," *SG*, 8 September 1922, 7.

⁹⁹"Farmers Union Elects Women Among Officers," *CC*, 18 January 1923, 6.

¹⁰⁰John Simpson, President of the Farmers' Union, reversed the color bar in 1921 after receiving requests from African American rural communities. The first local was near Boley in August, 1921. See Milligan and Norris, "Wide-awake Farmers," 365-67.

Saturday, February 11, at Meridian, a town twelve miles southeast of Guthrie, we met a colored delegation from five locals in Logan county, for the organization of a Colored Farmers' union. It was a great meeting, a day never to be forgotten by those people in that great cotton belt. At noon the tables were spread with everything good, to overflowing. At 1 o'clock the house was called to order and business matters soon became history. H.C. Clement, of Goodnight, was elected president with S.R. Buford, of Langston, secretary-treasurer. Resolutions were passed and adopted urging every farmer to become a member and support the State Exchange in their Cooperative marketing, in buying and selling.¹⁰¹

At Vernon schoolhouse in late 1921 he organized the first colored local in Noble County, just north of Payne County. "There we found a very progressive class of people and more than willing to take up the new work."¹⁰²

By that time, Zuck had been working in southern Payne County, organizing the Frazier local. That local is the only one mentioned in the county in the early 1920s.

The first colored Farmers' union local in Payne county organized at the Frazier school house, two miles east of Coyle [probably in the Goble district of Paradise township], Thursday evening, September 15. Ben F. Holeman, who is a great leader among his people, was chosen president. Their membership now stands at thirty, with a good chahee [sic] for a greater one. The colored people have a separate constitution and by law, so are entitled to full membership in this organization.¹⁰³

Later that year he noted the tough conditions for farmers in that region, particularly due to the boll weevil.

"Most of the colored farmers are in the same condition [as whites along the river] this fall. Cotton and no feed. But we fully acknowledge surprise in finding colored farmers living in good circumstances, far above the average of white farmers; finest improvement, good farms, purebred stock, and holding the confidence of all as good citizens."¹⁰⁴

Mr. Zuck displays to modern ears some racism in these and other of his comments, but there is also obvious admiration in his words. A month later, speaking again of the Frazier local, he stated: "Every member seems more eager to do something for race betterment. They also appreciate the

¹⁰¹"Farmers' Union Notes," SG, 7 October 1921, 5; "Farmers' Union Notes," SG, 17 February 1922, 4.

¹⁰²"Farmers' Union Notes," SG, 18 November 1921, 1.

¹⁰³"Farmers' Union Notes," SG, 23 September 1921, 5. I have not been able to locate any records for the Negro Farmers' Union and thus cannot absolutely confirm this was the only black local in Payne County at that time.

¹⁰⁴"Farmers' Union Notes," SG, 30 September 1921, 5.

encouragement for a complete organization among their people.” In probably the most ironic dispatch from his organizing efforts on both sides of the Cimarron, he wrote of a visit in early 1922 to western Logan County.

The talk of Guthrie on Thursday was the parade of the Ku Klux Klan the night before. The crowd was immense, they said. That evening at Rosenwald school house, three miles southwest of Guthrie, we attended the closing day of colored school exercises. About two hundred and fifty of these people assembled in the beautiful school house and listened to real singing by the upper classes, directed by Professor George Young, of Langston. The readings were exceptionally good; well presented. Professor Floyd, of the colored school at Meridian, presented the certificates of awards. G.W. Prowdrill, their colored county agent, discussed the organization for a few minutes, the work of the Farmers' union, before introducing the organizer. They were good listeners, and are ready to join -- if they have their money. They met with the county agent Tuesday, this week.

There is no problem with the negro race when proper instruction is given. In the morning in this school, we watched their military drill, their work in arithmetic, and other work, which proves the great value of education.¹⁰⁵

At the county convention of the Union in Stillwater in January, 1922, there were delegates from Frazier.

Ben Holman, secretary of Frazier colored local near Coyle, declared he enjoyed himself at the convention. The colored folks, without question, are hard hit, on the river. No feed, to speak of, a poor cotton yield, with chances of more boll weevil next year. Say we don't need a better marketing system.

With that last turn of phrase, Mr. Zuck hit upon the fact he saw the problems not as black and white, male and female, but as problems with the present economic system. To this underlying message of class conflict was added the natural suspicions held by farm communities, communities which boasted a strong labor theory of value and almost a genetic suspicion of distant middlemen. These overt and covert messages did not go completely unchallenged in the county.

The most conservative, nay at times reactionary, paper in the County was the Cushing Citizen. In an editorial in 1923 it attacked the idea of cooperatives, arguing that cooperative type

¹⁰⁵“Farmers' Union Notes,” SG, 31 March 1922, 4. On the “Rosenwald School” he visited, see Cynthia J. Savage, “The Julius Rosenwald Fund: Northern Philanthropy in Oklahoma's Separate Schools,” Chronicles of Oklahoma, 77 (Spring, 1999), 4-21. Logan County eventually boasted five of these schools.

organizations don't work well with staples. He admitted in the editorial that the form is popular, but noted that staples go into stable, often regulated markets and there is little ability to increase demand.¹⁰⁶

In actuality, editor Green was probably still fuming at that time because the Farmers' Union was informally associated with the Farmer-Labor Reconstruction League in the 1922 election. This editorial was written at the height of the martial law period under Governor Walton, a man generally assumed to be under the thumb of the League by most the commentators in the County. Although the Cushing paper would report on things such as Farmers' Union Conventions in the county and state, the paper never showed any warmth towards the movement.

The Farmers' Union did act as a political interest group for the farmers. There were constant calls by the Union for the membership to support the "Farm Bloc" in Washington, led by 1922 by Senator Cap of Iowa, who, incidentally, owned the Oklahoma Farmer whose editor, John Fields, was likely the most respected farm voice in Oklahoma. Fields ran as Republican candidate for governor in 1914 and again, against Walton, in the crucial 1922 election.

One attempt to change the market for the farmer was to put price supports under farmers. Mr. Zuck's column exhorts the farmers to make themselves heard.

All locals should write their senator, J.W. Harreld, Washington, DC, urging him to support a measure that will guarantee to the farmer a minimum guaranteed price on his farm products. Our state president urges that we take steps in this week so that the government may know what is needed.¹⁰⁷

The most radical turn of the Union was in the 1922 election when it almost adopted the Shawnee Platform of the Reconstruction League. The Union's flirtation with the Farmer Labor Reconstruction League in 1922 was short and ended in ambiguity. Although the board of the Union ratified the Shawnee Platform of 1921, the statement of principles of the Reconstruction League, opposition to that document and alliance from within the Union threatened to split the

¹⁰⁶"Staples and Specialties," CC, 23 August 1923, 4.

¹⁰⁷"Farmers' Union Notes," SG, 24 February 1922, 5.

Farmers' Union, and it led to the organization being officially neutral in the 1922 election. In that election, Jack Walton claimed to embrace the Shawnee Platform, splitting the Democratic Party. He managed to attract many Unionist votes throughout the state, but John Simpson backed his rival, the editor John Field, and undoubtedly pulled many Unionists with him. The controversy over the Shawnee Platform was probably enough to cost Mr. Zuck his job column in the Republican Gazette, but the prestige of the Union in the County and state held.¹⁰⁸

Thus it was the Farmers' Union to which farmers flocked in the hard times of the early 1920s. Embracing the farm community and its values, the Union gave hope in times of economic depression and reinvigorated the local rural communities in which it prospered. It was the institutional expression and hope for the farmers of Payne County.

Payne County was blessed with good land which supported diverse crops. Agriculture was its first industry and, until the oil boom of 1913, its main vocation. Even after the emergence of the very valuable oil sector, agriculture was still the largest single vocation in the county if no longer the most valuable product. Thus, when the county is considered in the era of the hooded Klan, it is the rural county must be considered first.

The rural county was centered around numerous rural communities. These not only provided the service centers for their districts, but also their members identity and the focus of their social life. The blacksmith, store, and possibly post office were joined by the school, the church, and, especially in the early 1920s, the Farmers' Union local, as the foci of the community. Only the Farmers' Union bridged both the economic and social aspects of the rural communities, holding plays, dances, and pot-lucks at the same time as they spoke of changing the market place and preached forth the wonders of cooperative selling and buying.

The rural county was hit hard by the recession of 1921. Those hard times became the backdrop to rural life in the period of the hooded Klan. Despite the cushioning of diverse crops

¹⁰⁸Milligan and Norris, "Wide-awake Farmers," 370. Mr. Zuck was last heard of sporadically during the summer of 1922 from the harvest fields of Kansas. Although the differences in outlook between he and the editor had become apparent in 1922, there was never any explanation given for Mr. Zuck's column disappearing.

and potential jobs in towns and oil fields, the rural countians suffered. With droughts and insects adding to their plight, the rural countians followed the lead of their urban county counterparts and organized. The chosen organization was the Farmers' Union. With some of the old agriculturists' animus towards markets and a nearly Jeffersonian fixation on the farmer as the source of all value, the Union managed to stay within the bounds of accepted capitalist norms. Preaching cooperative selling and buying was not the same as preaching communalism and land redistribution, and the county's residents seemed to know that. And since farmers are unique businessmen in that they generally recognize that their neighbor and fellow businessman is not their competitor, the role of competitor was taken up by the anonymous "markets" beyond their district. The Farmers' Union emphasis upon cooperation fit well with the rural ideology of the county's farmers.

The Klan did not thrive in the agricultural regions of the county in large part because they had nothing to offer. Their parades provided spectacle and rural as well as urban people attended, but evidence of Klan activity in the solely agricultural districts of the county does not exist. That is understandable on two counts. The Klan did not address the economic issues so important to farmers. Also, the Klan preached division and conflict, messages that ran counter to the q ideology of the rural communities of Payne County. ¹⁰⁹

The rural community was held up throughout Payne County as an ideal, even as it was sometimes seen as a threatened reality. The cooperation and emphasis upon the individual publicly proclaimed by the rural community became the public model for the whole County, but it was an ideal that the urban business community would change even as it was invoked.

¹⁰⁹Shawn Lay notes that the Klan had appeal to rural people but that the Klan's relationship to rural populations has not been adequately studied. See, Shawn Lay, "Toward a New Historical Appraisal of the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s," in The Invisible Empire in the West: Toward a New Historical Appraisal of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s, ed. Shawn Lay, 218 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992).

Chapter III

The Urban County

In the immediate post-War period of the 1920s, the cities of Payne County achieved a dominance over the county that they have not relinquished since. This was due to a convergence of factors. Population had grown greatly in the 1910s due largely to the oil industry, and this in turn increased urban population. Oil gave the cities, particularly Cushing, wealth independent of and exceeding the agricultural base of the county. Meanwhile, Stillwater had continued a steadier growth due to its economy resting upon both state and county institution, and agriculture.

The early 1920s was an organizational period in the County, with organizations of all types and all functions seeming to thrive. It was through the organizations, as featured by the newspapers of the County, that public debate was carried on over a wide range of topics. In a male-dominated, patriarchal society, women's groups generally dealt with concerns of public welfare, morality, and aesthetics. The most frequent and authoritative voices heard through the newspapers of the County were the voice of the businessmen of the cities and towns. These men acted through service clubs, Chambers of Commerce, and Retail Merchants' Associations, and they debated the larger issues of city and County, such as roads. There was a wide range of overlapping concerns found in all these organizations. These concerns not only fit a broad sense of community shared with the rural reaches of the County, but also served to promote the image of the progressive city. Issues were thus broadly covered, often by several organizations, and this made it difficult for the Ku Klux Klan to differentiate itself, to uniquely claim issues, to say things with a new voice.

The History of Urban Payne County

There was a divide in Payne County in the early 1920s between the eastern half and the western half, the dividing line running roughly through Stillwater. The eastern half of the county had well over half the population of the county, all the cities and towns of any size, and virtually all of the oil production. The western half of the county was agricultural, the eastern agricultural and oil. Western Payne County was nearly surrounded by oil production but had none. The western half of the county had to depend upon rural communities for much of their structure, and on the nearest cities for much of the rest. Drawing a rough circle connecting Stillwater, Perry, Enid, and Guthrie in 1922 would have enclosed a large, non-urban area, the bulk of which was western Payne County.¹ To complete the picture of Payne County, the eastern part was geological and economically tied to the vast petroleum fields of the greater Tulsa region. Stillwater and Perkins were outside of the petroleum region running east to Tulsa, and just inside the purely agricultural.

Table 3.1: Urban Populations, Payne County, Oklahoma.²

City	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960
Stillwater	3,444	4,701	7,016	10,097	20,238	23,965
Cushing	1,072	6,326	9,301	7,703	8,414	8,619
Drumright*	—	6,460	4,972	4,303	5,303	4,190
Yale	685	2,601	1,734	1,407	1,359	1,369
Perkins	603	608	606	728	706	769
Ripley	368	406	487	415	292	263
Glencoe	373	354	297	337	309	284
Quay	—	—	186	104	70	51

*Drumright is included despite being in Creek County because it is closely associated with Cushing.

¹State Board of Agriculture, New Agricultural and Highway Map of Oklahoma ([Oklahoma City: State of Oklahoma], November 1, 1929). This is the earliest Oklahoma road map in the Oklahoma State University map collection.

²W. Nelson Peach; Richard W. Poole; and James D. Tarver, eds., County Building Block Data. For Regional Analysis: Oklahoma (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1965): 431. Drumright (Creek County) is included because it formed nearly a twin city with Cushing (Payne County).

In Payne County, the places that constituted towns and cities in the early 1920s included at least Stillwater, Cushing, Yale, Perkins, Ripley, Glencoe (or Glenco), Ingalls (or Signet), Quay, and possibly Clayton and Mehan. The first five had newspapers throughout the period. Ingalls, Clayton, Mehan and Quay were "mushroom cities", towns which rose and fell with a petroleum boom. The census data for these cities illustrated a hierarchy of urban places.

Census figures are not satisfying for most of these towns: They mask the surges of population of the oil towns. Quay, Mehan, Ingalls and Clayton are not even listed in 1920, and only Quay after that. Newsom noted population estimates for Yale in 1915, after the main oil boom had peaked, of 2,500, 6,000, and 10,000.³

The population gap between the large cities, Stillwater and Cushing, and the smaller ones, showed the dominance in the County of these two cities. In the Census of 1920, the populations of the five smallest towns amounts to 64% of Cushing's population, 77% of Stillwater's. In that year, the combined populations of Cushing and Stillwater constituted almost exactly 75% of the urban population of the county and 36% of the total county population. Cushing alone constituted 21% of the total county population officially, Stillwater 15.5%.

After the largely urban population spurt of the early oil discoveries in the 1910s, the county remained rather evenly divided in population between the urban areas and the rural.

Table 3.2: Payne County Rural and Urban Populations, 1910-1940⁴

Year	Population				Percent Change		
	total	urban	rural	% urban	total	urban	rural
1910	23,735	3,444	20,291	14.5			
1920	30,180	13,628	16,552	45.2%	+27.2	+295.7	-18.4
1930	36,905	16,317	20,588	44.2%	+22.3	+19.7	+24.4
1940	36,057	17,800	18,257	49.4%	-2.3	+9.1	-11.3

³D. Earl Newsom, *The Story of Exciting Payne County* (Stillwater, Oklahoma: New Forums Press, 1997): 136.

⁴Peach, *et al*, *County Building Blocks*, 429.

There was some diversity in the cities and towns of the County, but the great divide was between those with oil and those without. By 1921 Stillwater probably had the most stable economic base of any city in the county because of its position as a city with county and state institutions as well as serving as the center for an agricultural region of the county. It dominated an agricultural region in the county and had the stable institutions of courthouse and College. But Stillwater was also isolated, bypassed by the rail and road arteries between the region's greater cities.

Being a county seat meant quite a bit for early towns. First, it assured that the town so-designated was the one indispensable town in the county. Secondly, being a county seat meant that Stillwater would be assured a strong professional class whose business was in and around the courthouse. Although lawyers made up a good share of this population, there were also professionals in the county clerk's office, the assessor's office, even in the sheriff's office, and many of these workers were women working as clerks in the county system.

Stillwater also got a state institution, the land grant college. The college meant an income for the town, a new layer of professionals for the town, prestige, and the assurance that, in a territory and future state that looked to be very agricultural, Stillwater would become the agricultural capital city of the Territory and eventually the state. The College also ran the Extension Service and hosted conventions of farmers, as well as other groups. During the summer the College hosted large numbers of public school teachers for summer normal school. Thus both College and courthouse, created a more professional and middle class city and were economic assets.⁵

Stillwater thus had an agricultural and institutional base unrivaled in the county. But Stillwater also felt the lure of oil and desired to have that economic boon. Throughout 1922 and 1923, Stillwater pinned its hoped-for oil find on the development of the Babcock Field south and west of town, close to present-day Babcock Park. Stillwater did not get that final leg to its

⁵Philip Reed Rulon, Oklahoma State University Since 1890 (Stillwater, Oklahoma: Oklahoma State University Press, 1975). For the process of winning the college, see pp. 1-16; for an example of the school's educational outreach that benefited the town, see the description of the junior agricultural program, and other draws to the campus, see 133-36.

economy in the 1920s, which also meant it missed the population movements, the bustle, and the increased crime of an oil field.⁶

If Stillwater was one pole of the county, the other pole was Cushing. If Stillwater got much stability from the institutions of state and county, Cushing got its from derricks, pipelines, and oil tanks. If Stillwater was rather stable demographically, Cushing had at one time been a "mushroom" town and had a more itinerant and industrial population. Stillwater was off the major rail routes, while Cushing was one of the major petroleum production, refining and transportation centers of the nation.⁷ The Cushing Citizen editor, a man with little patience for Stillwater, once made a reference to "staid Stillwater," a comment which described something of both cities.⁸

Cushing was really born of the September 22, 1891 run into the Sac and Fox, and the Iowa lands. Cushing got a post office November 10, 1891 and a patent from President Harrison September 15, 1892. The original platted land was known later as "Old Town". In 1900, Stillwater got a railroad linkage via Perkins from Guthrie: Cushing's connection came in early 1902. In that year two businessmen bought land south of "Old Town" and began a rival business district. It was called South Addition. The Santa Fe located in South Addition and soon the Post Office and various business located there, drawing the business district southward.⁹

On March 17, 1912, Thomas Baker Slick's drilling brought in a gusher on the Frank M. Wheeler farm. The field boomed, the first really big field in Oklahoma after the Glenpool find. Drumright grew up beside the field, but Cushing dominated the field with rail lines, pipelines and refining. By early 1913, 2,000 men were employed because of the fields. The Santa Fe employment at its yard went from two to one-hundred twenty-five with a yard that could hold 750 cars. The two railroads grossed over \$500,000 a year at the peak of the boom. It is estimated 350

⁶For excitement about another potential field northeast of Stillwater, see Stillwater Gazette, 18 August 1922, 1. This field had leases sold to eleven companies and was about four miles from town limits. No word of it appeared in the newspapers after this announcement.

⁷John W. Morris, Charles R. Goins, and Edwin McReynolds, Historical Atlas of Oklahoma, 2nd (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976): 64.

⁸"Staid Stillwater Scene Of Sensational Fatal Quarrel," Cushing Citizen, 11 May 1922, 1 [hereafter "CC"].

⁹Laura Lou Wells, Young Cushing in Oklahoma Territory (Stillwater, Oklahoma: Frontier Printers, n.d.): 10-14, 145-72.

wagons serviced the field, traveling the horribly scarred roads from Cushing day and night, with gas lights along the way. In early 1913 the Shaffer Oil Company announced it would build a refinery, the first of several in Cushing. The field peaked in 1915, then began a long decline. From a peak daily yield of 280,000 barrels, it declined to a still substantial daily production of about 21,050 barrels in 1927. At its peak, though, Cushing had about 18,000 citizens. Development in the field during the 1910s and 1920s spread northward to Shaffer and Oilton in Creek County, and then to Yale and the minor boom cities of Ripley, Clayton, Ingalls, Quay, and Mehan.¹⁰

The Cushing Field was tremendously productive. It had the highest grade oil west of the Mississippi. By 1914 it was producing 21,945,000 barrels a year, peaking in 1915 at 49,090,000 barrels. The Field's production declined steadily but did slow steadily over time: In 1919 its cumulative production was 236,000,000 barrels, 17% of crude marketed that year in the United States. Between 1912 and 1919, the Field produced 3% of total world production.¹¹ The Cushing Field was not supplanted until the very productive Seminole Field was found south of Wewoka with a strike on March 16, 1923. But Cushing still had productive fields and its tremendous oil infrastructure, and it remained an active, industrial city, albeit one with a less itinerant work force, through the decades of the 1920s to the present.

Yale was founded 1893, but then migrated a mile north to meet the Eastern Oklahoma Railway, a Santa Fe subsidiary, in 1901. In 1903 the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railway Company (the "Katy") also hit Yale.¹² The agricultural town grew steadily until the 1912 discovery of the Cushing Field. By 1913 oil was flowing in the Yale Field just west of town, a new part of the Cushing Field. In 1914 some big companies were arriving and Sun Oil began building a refinery. By 1915 it had three banks, a growing population and a slowly declining field. In 1921, with some companies leaving, there were still six refineries, continued oil flow, and support services

¹⁰Newsom, Exciting Payne County, 41-47, 81-108. See also Wells, Young Cushing; D. Earl Newsom, Drumright! The Glory Days of a Boom Town (Perkins: Evans Publications, Inc., 1985); John W. Morris, ed., Drill Bits, Picks and Shovels: A History of Mineral Resources in Oklahoma (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1982): In particular see, John W. Morris, "Oklahoma's Mineral Resources: Past, Present, and Future," (pp. 3-10); Kenny A. Franks, "Oklahoma Oil," (pp. 11-48); and Paul Lambert, "Natural Gas: Fuel For The Future," (pp. 49-81).

¹¹Kenny A. Franks, "Oklahoma Oil," 30-1.

¹²Newsom, Exciting Payne County, 129-31.

centered in the town. The 1921 recession hurt the town. In 1922, the Yale State Bank failed and the Yale Wholesale Grocery Company filed for bankruptcy.¹³ During the decade of the 1920s, population would decrease but the town would still have an economic underpinning that included refining and shipping as well as agriculture.¹⁴

Ripley was founded in 1900 by the Eastern Oklahoma Railroad where it bridged the Cimarron. The town was first an agricultural center, but was affected by the Cushing Field's expansion in 1914 and had a gas field south of town developed in 1921. It served as entrepot for the fields around Ingalls, Mehan and Clayton. The town had a bustling downtown, boasting a bank, newspaper, and other amenities from nearly its earliest days. Its population likely fluctuated with petroleum's booms and busts, but the railroads and agriculture kept a steady economic base under the town.¹⁵

Ingalls, a town best known for a gunfight in 1893, began in 1889 and grew as an agricultural town. Located across the River and northwest of Ripley, the Mul-Berry Oil Company in 1920 brought in a well. More wells came up through 1922 when Mul-Berry again brought in a gusher. By then Ingalls had a small but thriving mercantile base, and three churches, Christian, Methodist (North) and Baptist.¹⁶ But by 1922, new production was moving south toward Clayton.¹⁷ In the early 1920s, Clayton boomed briefly. Nearby Mehan was a farm town, but it

¹³"Yale State Bank Closes Its Door," Yale Democrat, 12 August 1922, 1 [hereafter "YD"]; "Yale State Bank Insolvent," Yale Record, 17 August 1922, 1 [hereafter "YR"]; "News of Ingalls," Stillwater Gazette, 18 August 1922, 8 [hereafter "SG"]; "Yale Wholesale Closes," YD, 9 November 1922, 1.

¹⁴Newsom, Exciting Payne County, 129-48.

¹⁵For the general history of Ripley, see Newsom, Exciting Payne County, 161-77; see also Alvin Mitchell, Little Tom and Fats (Stillwater: New Forums Press, 1983).

¹⁶Oil was struck at Ingalls on in March, 1920. See Newsom, Exciting Payne County, 191. Ingalls was the typical oil boom town. The Stillwater Gazette had a correspondent in Ingalls. In reports on Ingalls in four of the weekly's issue from December 9, 1921, to February 10, 1922, reports on oil wells or closely related oil topics constituted almost all the "shorts" included in the section. (SG, 9 December 1921, 7; 16 December 1921, 7; 27 January 1922, 7; 10 February 1922, 8). By June, 1922, only about half of the shorts were oil, see SG, 2 June 1922, 1. In another year it was over. "Ingalls is looking quite forsaken with B.C. Morris's store, the butcher shop, the doctor's office, the restaurant closed, and lots of vacant houses." See "News of the Neighbors," SG, 6 April 1923, 7.

¹⁷Newsom, Exciting Payne County, 185-91.

pulled profits from the Clayton strike of 1924 by reason of Mehan's Post Office and rail connections. Mehan's own short boom didn't occur until 1925.¹⁸

Northeast of Yale, literally straddling the border of Payne and Pawnee Counties, was Quay, whose boom hit in 1914 as an extension of the activities in Yale. It still had life in the early 1920s including a bank, at least two churches, and a Masonic Temple. But it could not rival Yale in importance.¹⁹

Cushing and Yale would remain important as oil production, refining, railroad, and eventually pipeline centers for decades. Clayton, Ingalls, Mehan, and Quay faded back to small agricultural towns in the late 1920s and then simple rural communities. The Cushing Field, with its semi-itinerant work force, industrial economy, and labor conflicts in the 1910s, created towns that were different from Stillwater and Perkins. The latter were always more dependent upon agriculture than the oil towns of the Cushing Field. And it was into this industrial belt of cities and would-be cities, cities with fears of I.W.W. and radicals from the decade before, in which the Klan became most evident and active from 1921 to 1923.

If Stillwater and Cushing were by far the important towns in Payne County, Perkins was small and rural. It never had an oil boom: it laid its claims to fame on a business district at a river crossing that served a large agricultural hinterland. The first bridge was built to accommodate the run of 1891, and a bridge has been there since.

Since Perkins was the first major bridge into Payne County on the Cimarron River, it was a logical location for business. It also serviced the excellent farm lands along both sides of the Cimarron, spawning a minor satellite town of Vinco almost directly across the Cimarron, but never losing its dominance in the area. It became particularly noted as a center for cotton ginning. The Eastern Oklahoma Railroad built a station on the south side of the river in 1900. In 1905 a new steel bridge replaced the 1891 wooden structure. From 1911, town leaders pushed for a major north-south road, eventually getting what became Rt. 177. It would also become a way-station on

¹⁸Ibid., 184, 195-97.

¹⁹Ibid., 200-03.

the major east-west route known today as Rt. 33. By the teens it had bus service to Guthrie and beyond.

Despite its transportation links, Perkins remained predominantly an agricultural town, the only really purely agricultural town among the towns and cities of the county (with the possible exception of Glencoe). In the period from 1921-1922 its paper, the Perkins Journal, recognized the fact that Perkins was a small town and an agricultural one, in some ways a satellite to its earlier rival, Stillwater. Andrew Show, the editor of that paper until the fall of 1922, was the most agricultural of all newspaper editors in the county, an articulate, almost Quesneyan or Jeffersonian voice, among a group of editors who were strongly boosters of the business class.²⁰

The Organizational Town

Each of these towns and cities was composed of various organized groups. This was a period which seemed to have seen a great rush of joining organizations in the County. These organizations ranged from churches to groups devoted to social, moral, civic, or business concerns. Groups often straddled several issues so there was an overlap of organizations on major issues, though not a conflict. These organizations helped to martial townspeople and their concerns, and they were forums and acted as interest groups. They also promoted a sense of community.²¹

There were many reasons to join a group. This can be illustrated by the Women's Christian Temperance Union. Undoubtedly most women joined for ideological reasons. But the WCTU also promoted camaraderie. Meetings were a social occasion. It was even possible that

²⁰For the history of Perkins, see: Newsom, Exciting Payne County, 109-28; David Sasser and Mahlon Erikson, Perkins, O.T., Queen City of the Cimarron (Perkins: Evans Publications, Inc., 1989). Francois Quesnay (1694-1774) was sometimes considered the first economic theorist and was credited as the first thinker in an economic school called the "physiocrats". They argued land was the basis of all wealth, not industry.

²¹In this chapter we will consider the histories and structure of these groups nationally and locally, with some exceptions. Churches will be covered in Chapter IV, "The Protestant County". The reaction of local organizations to specific concerns will be discussed in Chapter V, "The Paternalistic County," and Chapter VI, "The Fearing County". And the Klan, one of the new organizations of the period, will be discussed in Chapter VII, "The County and the Klan".

the group marched at times, thus offering some militant show and spectacle, a factor which could have been another reason for someone to join. Although for some organizations there were clear economic reasons for joining, it would be hard to find that motivation in candidates for the Women's Christian Temperance Union. On the other hand, economics was a major component in joining the new businessmen's service organizations: Rotary was accused even in the 1920s of putting exclusive buying and selling relationships between its members in the forefront of its agenda.²²

The period directly after World War I was an organizational era in these towns. New organizations which appeared in the County after the War included Rotary, Lions Club, Retail Merchants' Associations, the American Legion, Stillwater's Business and Professional Women's Club, the League of Women Voters, and the Ku Klux Klan. These joined towns already organized by such things as city governments, chapters of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, fraternal organizations, political parties, churches and their satellite organizations, and social clubs. All this paralleled the rural growth of the Farmers' Union and the various growers associations.

Some of these organizations were purely social group and are of consequence simply as examples of the organizational urge. The majority of members of these were married females, although there were some mixed groups. Their stated aim was social: To meet, play cards often, have some social presentation and in some a business meeting, and to eat. It was an intimate form of entertainment. But they were also part of the personal interaction and recognition of the individual that was part of the sense of community held within the county. None of these social groups stated any larger ambitions within their communities.

But they did do several things. They were an outlet for joining and community participation, even if on a rather personal rather than civic level. They likely brought rather like-minded and like-classed peoples together, so they reinforced the *status quo*. All the social

²²James P. Walsh, edited by Harry Treadwell, The First Rotarian: The Life and Times of Paul Percy Harris, Founder of Rotary (Shoreham by Sea, West Sussex, Great Britain: Scan Books, 1979): 87-88.

groups listed were white, none African American. And all provided forums for personal conversations, likely often about local and national issues.

In Yale, examples of these groups included the S.O. Coterie Club, Kappi Chi Club, and the intriguingly named K.K.K. (Kill Kare Klub). The O.N.O. Club favored Bunco, the B.Y.O.G. Club and the Auction Bridge Club preferred bridge. There was also a Domestic Art Club doing needlework.²³

There were social clubs with literary or intellectual pretensions, such as *Entre Nous* and the Alpha Delphian Club. In these latter, the members, again mostly married women, discussed literature, ideas, books, and even some general questions with social implications. The *Entre Nous* often had members present papers between the opening remarks and the "dainty snacks" (everyone seemed to present these). In one meeting in 1921, the main topics were, "Growth of Mormonism," by Mrs. John Young, and "Dangers of Mormonism to Our County," by Mrs. W.A. Dempsey.²⁴ It may be argued that this shows social consciousness on the part of this organization, but it was the only negative mention of Mormonism in the newspapers of the County in the early 1920s.

Some of these groups might have contributed to beautification campaigns or benevolence drives, but none is recorded discussing roads, taxes, politics, or other substantive political, economic, or social issues of immediate concern to the town or County.

These social clubs with their matronly constituency were a reinforcement of the traditional status of women in form and the concerns. They could also be seen as a way middle class women broke from the strictures of the role of housewife, and they were clubs of women run by women.

The fraternal organizations were an ambiguous lot and their power was likely exercised more on a personal level than in any organized, public way. Each of the three major cities in Payne County had these organizations as well as most of the rural and oil towns, and fraternal were

²³The best source for these clubs in Yale is the first pages each week of the *Yale Democrat*. On December 14, 1921, ONO Club and S.O. Coterie Club are covered on page one. The first page of the January 13, 1922 edition includes mention of the Kappie Chi Club, the O.N.O. Club, and the *Entre Nous* (also spelled "Nouse"). On the first page of nearly every issue of the paper had two or three such announcements.

²⁴"*Entre Nous*", *YD*, 28 February 1921, 1.

scattered liberally throughout the rural population if the impressionistic evidence left by obituaries of farm people and the reports of the numerous rural correspondents to the papers is considered. The most prominent nationally were the Freemasons (lodges in Stillwater, Cushing, Yale, and Ingalls, with a colored group in Cushing), Odd Fellows (usually known by their initials, I.O.O.F., lodges in Stillwater, Cushing, Yale), the Knights of Pythias (a "colored" chapter in Cushing was the only one listed in 1925, but there were Pythian activities in Yale around a lodge), the Modern Woodmen of America (Stillwater, Yale, Cushing), and Moose (Cushing).²⁵ Each of these except the Moose had female auxiliaries, respectively the Eastern Star, Rebekkahs, Pythian Sisterhood, and Royal Neighbors of America.

The oldest of the modern orders and the one most influential upon the movement was the Masonic Order, which had its modern beginnings in America in the 1830s and 1840s. This largely white, middle class organization in the nineteenth-century was an "asylum" for its members in two ways. It was a male haven, drawing men both from the *ym* of the male camaraderie and heavy drinking of the tavern (lodges banned alcohol by about 1860 in part because of their reputation from the eighteenth-century as drinking clubs) and the *yang* of the feminized middle class household and the feminized church. It was also a sacred asylum from the aggressive, unforgiving world of business. In the quiet of the lodge, swathed in innumerable rites, businessmen and other men could feel fraternal brotherhood and affections. Fraternal organizations preached a broad doctrine of brotherhood and universal religiosity that was eclectic but in America most compatible with a homogenized Protestantism. To placate members wives and daughters, auxiliaries were formed in the late nineteenth-century, but these were controlled by males and never divulged the real secrets.

Fraternal organizations blossomed in membership in the last half of the nineteenth-century, reaching their peak in the years before World War I: Mark Carnes quoted figures for the end of the nineteenth-century which estimated 20% to 40% of adult males belonged to the

²⁵Polk's Stillwater, Cushing and Yale Directory 1926-27 (Kansas City, Mo.: R.L. Polk & Co., 1926): Stillwater section, p. 24; Cushing section, pp. 24-25; Yale Section, p. 3; see also Abbott's Directory [of] Stillwater, Oklahoma: City Directory, 1922 (n.p.: Abbott's [publisher], n.d.): 5. For the Yale Knights of Pythians and the Pythian Sisterhood, see issues of the Yale Democrat.

nation's 70,000 lodges. It is estimated that members spent up to \$2,000,000,000 on fraternal memberships, rituals, and insurance in the last third of the nineteenth-century.²⁶

By the 1920s there were some conflicts within Masonry. The upholders of sacred orthodoxy stressed the basic orders, decried the low attendance, and accused many new members of rushing through the standard York or Scottish orders so they could get to the auxiliary orders, particularly the very social and very popular Shriners.²⁷ Modernists complained about the time spent in ritual and gaining higher degrees. Many times the lodge would meet three or four times a week, repeating the same, or similar, initiation rituals each time, with no time at the meetings for social intercourse. The modernists wanted more social events so they could include their wives and families, and they wanted Masonry to become more visible and civic. In particular, they wanted to mimic the new service organizations, spreading rapidly, based on the model of Rotary International. The service clubs, with their lack of any pretentious rites in favor of informal social and business mingling, were much more in step with the times and seemed more exclusive.²⁸

Dumenil and others noted the decline in fraternalism that occurred from about 1900 onwards. Dumenil emphasized throughout her work the religious and fraternal draw of fraternal organizations, but she also emphasized the clubs as havens for like-minded men in the growing diversity of the last half of the nineteenth-century.²⁹ The adjustment, particularly occurring in the 1920s, de-emphasized some elements of fraternalism, such as the ban on alcohol, and emphasized instead a more civic and social fraternalism. The lessened rites and greater emphasis on relaxation, social occasions, and civic works of the auxiliaries such as the Shriners symbolized

²⁶Mark C. Carnes, "Iron John in the Gilded Age," American Heritage 44 (September 1993): 37-45, gives a brief history of fraternalism in America. Membership estimates, p. 41; for total expenditures, see 41-42.

²⁷Lynn Dumenil, Freemasonry and American Culture, 1880-1930 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984):156-61. For another view of fraternalism, see: Arthur Preuss, compiler, A Dictionary of Secret and Other Societies... (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1924; republished, Detroit: The Gale Research Company, 1966). Preuss's is a very Roman Catholic book full of Papal denunciations of these groups: It is an interesting book if obviously slanted.

²⁸Dumenil, Freemasonry, 178-80, 203-17.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 220-21.

this change.³⁰ Ultimately, the decline in fraternalism came in the 1930s. The new service clubs could claim greater exclusivity, and, more importantly, the fraternities reflected Victorian attitudes which did not fit the newer times.³¹

Mary Ann Clawson approached the fraternalism from a socio-economic and gendered angle. She claimed that the fraternities reinforced and maintained the existing class and gender structures in society. With lodges containing a cross-section of classes promoting fraternal brotherhood, it had an ameliorative effect on class conflict and even weakened labor unions. Fraternalism also maintained sexual segregation and hierarchy in society, and, by promoting moral men, raised the specter of independently moral men to challenge the genetically moral women upon whom the cult of domesticity depended.³²

Mark Carnes asked the question, "Why did men join fraternal orders?" His answer: rituals. Rituals were what took up most meetings. These were elaborately staged melodramas swathed in the sacred: each was a morality play. They were male initiation rites into a male world, a counter to the feminized upbringing and family of the middle class. Father figures took younger men through the symbolic stages of birth, growth, death, and even reprieve from death during the course of the rites. Beginning each chapter with a fictionalized presentation of parts, or the whole, of actual rituals, Carnes alternately fascinates and bores the reader. His extensive descriptions of rituals are tedious to the non-members but give critical insight into the nature of the meetings. Carnes views the rites as mediating instruments between the growing harshness of the outside world of business and the initiate. They also mediated between a feminized religion and the initiate. As marriage became more a partnership and corporations provided some assurance to the individual in business, these rites slowly ceased to be necessary.

In the 1920s, Payne County was not predominately corporationist in employment, one possible explanation for what seemed to be the continued vitality of fraternalism in the county.

Although Carnes' work was not really extended to the Klan, that organization based its rites on

³⁰Ibid., 166-68, 171-182, 185-93.

³¹Ibid., 218-21.

³²Mary Ann Clawson, Constructing Brotherhood: Class, Gender, and Fraternalism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

the fraternal organizations' rites, and the sacerdotal rites led by patriarchal figures brought initiates into a new life in the Klan.³³ This study will argue, in fact, that ritual, "occasion", and spectacle were not only a great part of the popularity and acceptance of the fraternal organizations, but also of a popular religious event, the revival, and of the Klan in Payne County. Rituals had the ability to transport the individual above the mundane, to elevate the spirit, to renew patriotism, religiosity, and corporate pride. In fraternities, revivals, and Klan occasions, this applied not only to the most active participants, but also to the audience, the observers.

Fraternal organizations seemed to be alive and well in Payne County during the period of the hooded Klan. There is enough evidence to suggest that the fraternal organizations were organizations that spanned both the rural and urban populations. Their numbers were probably large. In 1922, the Eastern Star in Stillwater held an installation of officers with about 250 people in the audience: The lodge boasted 206 members. In Yale, the Knights of Pythias lodge, inactive for an undisclosed period for undisclosed reasons, was reconstituted with a class of 27 new members in 1921: they had recently had a membership drive and upped their membership from 50 to 100 members. In Stillwater in 1921 the Odd Fellows burnt their mortgage. The lodge had been founded thirty years prior and had 203 active members. In little Ingalls the Masons had been meeting in the school house for over twenty years. In June, 1922, they bought their own building.³⁴ These are indications of a fraternalism that was holding its own in the county.

But, despite their numbers and variety, they were never cited in a county newspaper for holding a substantive discussion of a public issue such as roads, city improvements, or city government. Often they were noted because they were installing their many officers. Periodically members would travel to regional meetings: The Mason's "degree team" going to Guthrie, the Mecca for Masons in the state, or, like Mr. Will S. Hale, traveling to the I.O.O.F. Grand

³³Mark C. Carnes, Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989). Although it may be a temptation to read only the "Preface" and "Epilogue," the scholar should work through the entire book since its effect is cumulative. His Appendix B, "Degree Sequences for Major Orders," is quite helpful to the uninitiated and confused.

³⁴"Eastern Star Installation," SG, 6 January 1922, 3; "Jottings About Town," SG, 14 April 1922, 8; "Knights of Pythias Class," YD, 11 March 1921, 1; YD, 4 March 1921, 1; "Burn Up Their Mortgage," SG, 23 September 1921, 1; "News of Ingalls," SG, 9 June 1922, 8.

Encampment of Oklahoma in 1922 held in Enid.³⁵ Periodically papers noted a dinner or picnic associated with installation of officers or a joint meeting with their sister sorority. But you don't hear the content of their meetings, quite likely because the content was repetitious, ritualistic, and secret. They often did contribute to public charity drives, but that was about as public or civic an action as they ever took. Their most frequent public occasion was the conducting of rites for deceased members, followed with a formal note of sympathy in the paper. It is impossible in these organizations, or actually in any other, to tell how much informal discussion had civic, economic, political, or social content. It is possible to say that as organizations the fraternal did not attempt to influence public debate on public issues of the public moneys, morality, law enforcement, development, or politics.

A much more civic oriented group was the Women's Christian Temperance Union. Founded in the 1874, it had started the year before as an evangelical temperance movement in the middle west that prayed before saloons to pressure them to close. It became the largest women's organization in the nineteenth century with more than 200,000 members in 1890 and 344,000 in 1921. Under the dynamic leadership of the Francis Williard, from 1879 until her death in 1898, the organization developed a much more systematic, wide-ranging approach to the issue of women and alcohol. Williard insisted on women's suffrage (making the WCTU under her the largest women's suffrage organization in the nineteenth century), arguing a woman's vote was a moral vote and the scourge of alcohol could not be beaten if it depended solely on male citizens and their votes. She became concerned with working women and the issue of alcohol, and with the broader issues of women at work. She had the rather modern opinion that drink was a result of the greater problem of poverty. By 1892 she was active in the Prohibition Party, but that Party was destroyed in 1896 and Williard died in 1898.³⁶

³⁵"Degree Team to Guthrie," SG, 21 April 1922, 1; "Jottings About Town," SG, 19 May 1922, 8.

³⁶Norman H. Clark, Deliver Us From Evil (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1976): 85-88.

After Williard's death, the WCTU contracted to its original, more conservative goal of eliminating alcohol and continuing to develop an evolving area of policing public morality.³⁷ The lead in the battle against John Barleycorn was taken over by the more flexible, political and pragmatic Anti-Saloon League, nationally and in Oklahoma. The Anti-Saloon League worked on state and local laws to restrict alcohol, pushing wherever it saw the chance. By 1915, most states were to some degree legally dry. The Eighteenth Amendment was passed for varied reasons -- anti-German sentiment (most the breweries were owned by German-Americans), claims that it would save grain and food stocks for the War effort, a sweeping sense of new moral beginnings-- and the passage of the Volstead Act had a near-absolute prohibition on alcohol. Norman Clark noted that this was much more rigid than a number of temperance people wanted; They had advocated temperance, not abolition.³⁸

Clark's revisionist study argued that the saloon was a real threat to the family the nineteenth-century. It represented a much more aggressive form of alcohol marketing than today's neighborhood bar uses, and that some measures taken against it were justified. He does not argue that Prohibition was a success, but he does argue that those working for the Amendment were not a pathological fringe; They were part of a sustained drive of over a century, a response to social drunkenness which really became a problem with the advent of the powerful distilled liquors in the eighteenth-century.³⁹

³⁷Alison M. Parker, Purifying America: Women, Cultural Reform, and Pro-Censorship Activism, 1873-1933 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997): 5-6.

³⁸Clark, Deliver Us, 8-10.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 5-10, 68-77. For a compatible viewpoint, see Richard F. Hamm, Shaping the Eighteenth Amendment: Temperance, Reform, Legal Culture, and the Polity, 1880-1920 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina University Press, 1995). Hamm's work is particularly good in its discussion and contrast of the methods of the WCTU and the Anti-Saloon League. Clark counters a long tradition of bashing Prohibition as throw-back morality thrust upon a nation, the last gasp of the rural and benighted, seeing it as a movement, Amendment and law, that simply caused massive lawbreaking, begat a mafia and a massive police state in response, and failed to stop drinking. This was similar in its willingness to avoid censor and look at actions in context to the revisionist work on the Klan and, for example, Parker's work on the WCTU. For the previous interpretations of prohibition, see Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R. (New York: Vintage Books / Random House, 1955), 288-93, particularly 289-90; Andrew Sinclair, Prohibition: The Era of Excess (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1962), including an introduction by Hofstadter. Another thread of interpretations posed Prohibition as a class conflict on lesser or greater scale. This is somewhat evident in, Timberlake, Prohibition and the Progressive Movement (1963) and is expanded upon by Jack S. Blocker, Jr., Retreat from

In Oklahoma, prohibition came before the Constitution of the state. In the Oklahoma Territory a system was set up of county licensing of places selling liquor and reaping taxes from them. Dating back into to 1890, the Territory had been awash with liquor and prohibitionists. Advocates for liquor "...maintained that a direct correlation existed between saloons and prosperity."⁴⁰ The WCTU was active in the territories and state. In 1898 the Anti-Saloon League entered the fray, pledging a county-by-county fight if needed. The League not only appealed to the morality of abstinence from drink but gladly demonstrated to the leaders of the Territory their political clout. One tactic they used was to convince newspapers not to run the required ads that hopeful liquor businessmen had to post in counties with newspapers if they wished to renew their license. Judges ruled that the newspapers did not have to run the ads. Countering them were saloon owners and many businessmen, including Henry Overholser of Oklahoma City. They argued the Anti-Saloon Leaguers were outside agitators with no allegiance to the territory, and they trumpeted economic benefits to business and government through alcohol sales. But the wets' efforts did not have the effects they had hoped for.⁴¹

These battles happened in Stillwater. In January of 1906, William Ritterbusch and Ed Kesler applied for licenses, which, the dry editor of the Stillwater Gazette tells us,

...had caused them to be printed in such wicked newspaper [sic] they could persuade to publish such things; and up till the night before the time set for hearing were smiling complacently in the belief that Freeman E. Miller [a rival newspaper editor to the Gazette], after a recent 'statement' printed in his personal newspaper organ, would not appear with a remonstrance against them.

Freeman Miller, ex-college teacher, lawyer and newspaper owner, turned out to be more true to his dry leanings and filed a remonstrance. Mr. Brown in the Gazette viewed it a bit differently,

Reform: The Prohibition Movement in the United States, 1890-1913 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976). The extreme of this line of interpretation was found in John J. Rumbarger, Profits, Power, and Prohibition: Alcohol Reform and the Industrializing of America, 1800-1930 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989). Rumbarger claimed a conspiracy orchestrated by business leaders who want productivity.

⁴⁰Jimmie Lewis Franklin, Born Sober: Prohibition in Oklahoma 1907-1959 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971): 6.

⁴¹The best narrative for Oklahoma Territory is, Franklin, Born Sober, 3-16. For prohibition's history in Indian Territory see Grant Foreman, "A Century of Prohibition," Chronicles of Oklahoma, 12 (June, 1934): 133-41.

indicating the bad blood of both the issue and the newspaper rivalry: "...the temperance people it seems or at least it is so alleged, 'came through' with Freeman E.'s price." This delayed the license and effectively killed that saloon since its license application would not be acted upon before its current license died. So the doomed bar stayed open even through a Sunday, and on Monday the bar sported signs proclaiming a "Remonstrance Sale" and "Bargain Day". The other bar, owned by Ed Kesler, had a license with only two months left, a bad sign for him, "...but he also sees a good thing in the meantime, and has added an extension to his bar in anticipation of the doubled trade before his license expires in April."⁴²

The Oklahoma Constitutional fight about alcohol was not much of a fight. Indian Territory had always been dry because of assumptions about Indians and alcohol. The wet forces under the Citizen League mounted a defense for drink, but the prohibitionists dominated the field, led on the floor by Charles N. Haskell of Muskogee, the majority floor leader, aided by the Speaker, William Murray. The Convention drew up a separate bill to dry up the new state that was uniformly prohibitionist in both former territories. The resulting dual election produced 180,333 to 73,089 majority for the Constitution, and a quite surprisingly lesser number, 130,361 to 112,258, for the separate prohibition amendment.⁴³

In 1917 the legislature passed a "bone-dry law" which exempted only pharmaceutical and scientific uses of alcohol in the state. A furor developed over the enforcement of this law against sacramental wine. Catholic Bishop Meerschart and the Episcopalians, backed by other religious leaders, protested, but the dries said that the reason for the ban on sacramental wine was due to the fact Catholics and others had not taken advantage of chances to testify before the legislature. The point became moot when the State Supreme Court said that sacramental wine was, of course, not meant to be excluded under the 1917 law.⁴⁴

⁴²"Only One Is Left: Stillwater Is Getting Shy on Resorts for the Alleviation of Alcoholic Thirst," SG, 25 January 1906, 1.

⁴³Franklin, Born Sober, 17-35.

⁴⁴Thomas Elton Brown, "Oklahoma's 'Bone-Dry Law' and the Roman Catholic Church," Chronicles of Oklahoma, 52 (Fall, 1974): 316-30. For more nuanced view, see Keith Tolman, "The Sacramental Wine Case of 1917-18," Chronicles of Oklahoma 62 (Fall, 1984): 317-24.

After Prohibition, the WCTU remained quietly active in the dry state, urging strict enforcement of the law. It also took on public impurity in the media. Backed by the Comstock Law of 1873 banning the sending of obscene literature through the mail, the Union founded a Department for the Suppression of Impure Literature (later called the Department for the Promotion of Purity in Literature and Art, with a later off-spring, the Department of Motion Pictures). The WCTU began a crusade for christian morals that continues to this day. The focus was originally on the pure upbringing of youth through the control of their reading materials. In this censorship battle, the WCTU linked up with the newly founded professional organization, the American Library Association. Professional librarians felt themselves responsible to safeguard the reading material of the public. In particular, female librarians, who were often relegated to the children's section of the library, found the alliance with the WCTU to be natural. The National Police Gazette was an early target, but the concern expanded quickly.⁴⁵ Allison Parker noted that:

The department also fought against other forms of 'immoral' literature, art, theater, advertisements, prizefights, living pictures (*tableaux vivants*), the ballet, kinetoscopes, gambling, and patent medicines all in the name of protecting the innocent child. As this list of targeted forms of entertainment suggests, the middle-class WCTU worked extensively to censor both 'high' and 'low' cultural genres.⁴⁶

They later fought about Theodore Dreiser's novels, nude statuary, dime novels, and, beginning in the 1920s, motion pictures. In the latter fight they allied with the General Federation of Women's Clubs. The WCTU also pushed "Scientific Temperance", an anti-alcohol curriculum they urged on public schools. By 1903, branches of the WCTU had gotten legislation passed mandating this curriculum in all states, but teachers, individually and in organizations, strongly and rather successfully resisted the implementation of the program.⁴⁷

⁴⁵Parker, Purifying America, 56-60

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 42; see also, Jonathan Zimmerman, "The Dilemma of Miss Jolly: Scientific Temperance and Teacher Professionalism, 1882-1904," Higher Education Quarterly 34 (1994): 413-31.

⁴⁷Parker, Purifying America, 112, 140-44, 41-3.

The WCTU was loosely organized and initiatives depended on the activity of local and state chapters.⁴⁸ There were chapters in the major cities of Payne County. Their influence is hard to gauge. There seemed to be active chapters in at least Stillwater, Cushing, Perkins, and Glencoe, but in Yale the WCTU was so weak that the chapter was being reorganized in 1921 by sister chapters.⁴⁹ There are few references to the chapters in most of the papers other than advertisements of their meetings or the travels of officers to larger meetings.⁵⁰ They participated in charity drives and other such occasions. The Stillwater chapter even took the opportunity of a Mexican work gang located temporarily in the town to offer the workers English lessons.⁵¹

In their 1921 Payne County convention, the Union pushed resolutions calling for laws to keep businesses closed on Sundays and the need for the state to censor movies. It urged the Federal government to list tobacco as a health threat for "boys and girls." It established biannual "Mothers' Meetings" to teach children the "need for social purity." The Union stressed the need to have daily Bible readings in the schools to ensure the creation of a "law abiding citizenry," and they urged their Payne County members to use the ballot to elect *men* (italics added but gender correct) who would vote for WCTU principles. The Stillwater Advance Democrat's editor the following week lauded the WCTU and said the group is now working on "...subjects of Americanization, Child Welfare, Christian Citizenship, Social Morality and Law Enforcement."⁵² These concerns were well within the traditional sphere of women's concerns, but they also cover areas of personal morality and traditional values which the Klan nationally spoke about.

Another important women's organization began in the future state when, in 1898, eleven women's clubs formed the Oklahoma and Indian Territory Federation of Women's clubs.

⁴⁸Ibid., 1-19, 28.

⁴⁹For the Perkins W.C.T.U., see "Around Our Town," Stillwater Advance Democrat, 9 June 1921, 8 [hereafter "SAD"]. The sole reference to the Glencoe W.C.T.U. was a note that they met in the Methodist Church: see "Of Interest to Rural Readers," SAD, 5 April 1923, 3; YD, 11 February 1921, n.p. There was no listing in the available city directories of the W.C.T.U. in any town in the County.

⁵⁰In October of 1921, for example, Mrs. H.C. Whipple from Stillwater was journeying to Muskogee for the state convention. See "Jottings About Town," SG, 21 October 1921, 8.

⁵¹On the language lessons, see "Teaching Mexicans to Speak Our Language," and "Americanization Work," SG, 29 June 1923, 1.

⁵²"Resolutions," SAD, 7 July 1921, 7; "As Thrilling As Romance," SAD, 14 July 1921, 6.

When the Oklahoma State Federation of Woman's Clubs was founded in 1908, there were 92 clubs, with some cities having more than one.⁵³ Susan Allen argues that the territorial Federation was quite progressive. The individual clubs usually began as literary and cultural clubs for middle class women. The Federation soon became a major advocate in the territorial legislature and then in the Constitutional Convention for laws concerning child welfare (particularly in the work place), for laws concerning education (particularly compulsory attendance laws and the promotion of kindergartens), and the promotion of public libraries. On the local level they were concerned with city beautification, health, and morals.⁵⁴

There were chapters of the Federated Women's Clubs in the county during the 1920s such as the Hypatia Club and National Geographic Club (featuring reviews of current articles in that magazine as their main draw) in Cushing, or the Civic Club in Yale. They also worked for the civic good but, as with virtually all women's groups with civic improvement in mind, within areas traditionally the concern of women. The Hypatia Club in Cushing spearheaded the beautification of some land in town, drew in other groups to help, and had the resulting park named in their honor.⁵⁵ In Yale, the Lady's Civic League was headed by Mrs. R.L. Wallace, the wife of the President of the Chamber of Commerce. The Civic League worked with the Red Cross to help the deserving poor in the city and outlying areas, and at Christmas was important in the Good Fellow's campaign (which in 1921 helped 41 families, 149 people, to the tune of \$646.00).⁵⁶ In another example of their activities, they helped start Girl Scouting in Stillwater in 1922, along with representatives from the Business and Professional Women's Club (the only one in the county), the Boy Scouts, the public schools, and the wives of Rotarians, the Rotary Anns.⁵⁷

⁵³Susan L. Allen, "Progressive Spirit: The Oklahoma and Indian Territory Federation of women's Clubs," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 66 (Spring, 1988): 5-6. In 1908, both Stillwater and Cushing had two clubs (map, p. 17).

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 6-14.

⁵⁵When the Club ran a "Tag Day" to raise money for the park, they, or the editor, argued that a park would "help build a bulwark in the very souls and hearts of your children." "If it is not built there, millions of police cannot combat the evils of tomorrow." See "A Praiseworthy Enterprise," *CC*, 16 March 1922, 5.

⁵⁶"Chamber of Commerce Luncheon", *YD*, 13 January 1922, 1.

⁵⁷"Girl Scout Council Organized," *SG*, 14 July 1922, 1.

From the scope of their activities it must be concluded that none of these women's groups aimed at having any decisive power in the towns concerning business and political matters. They were filled with concerns for matters that comfortably fit a traditional view of their gender. In their general thrust into issues of morality and family they touched on areas of concern by other organizations, including the Klan. The women's groups added depth to the white majority's emphasis upon sober, evangelical Protestant public morality, but they were not involved in public finance, politics, roads, or boosterism.

The American Legion

A new organization to the country and the county was the American Legion. Founded in Paris in 1919 largely by citizen soldiers, then brought home with the soldiers, the Legion grew tremendously in the years following the war. Yet, prior to World War II, it never had more than about 20% of eligible veterans as members, and its membership tended to be more middle class and a bit wealthier than the normal veteran.⁵⁸

Few organizations in twentieth-century American History have drawn such polarized reactions as the American Legion. In the forward to Raymond Moley, Jr.'s, The American Legion Story, the first paragraph summarized one stance:

The American Legion is truly an American institution -- in origin, purpose and operation. Born from America's struggle to maintain liberty in World War I, the American Legion has become an inextricable part of the American story. Every patriotic citizen, from Anchorage to Miami, from Honolulu to Boston, salutes the brave men and women of the Legion -- men and women whose exploits in war and peace have placed their fellow countrymen eternally in their debt.

The author of that "Forward" was J. Edgar Hoover. Moley later noted that:

⁵⁸William Gellermann, The American Legion as Educator. (New York: Columbia University, PhD Dissertation, 1938): 21-7. Dr. Gellermann examined the potential membership vs. actual membership and claimed that, during the interwar period, the largest membership was in 1931 with 27% of the eligible veterans as members (1,153,909), and the lowest membership was in 1925 with 14% (809,407). Gellerman, an outspoken opponent of the Legion, correctly draws attention to the fact that the influence of the organization could not be measured by the size of its membership.

Americans enjoy an advantage which is found in very few places in the world. We live in a classless society. We are born with no inherited distinction of rank. The glory of America is that in principle it offers to all the opportunity to achieve whatever an individual's will and capacity earn for him.⁵⁹

Taking a more jaundiced view was William Gellermann. He accused the American Legion of giving lip service to freedom of speech, but in practice opposing its practice if the Legion perceived it to be a threat to the established social, political and moral order. Stereotyping and persecuting their opponents, Gellerman labeled the Legion as "fascist". "In the promotion of war and fascism in America, the American Legion has done more than its share." Gellerman was particularly angered at the "Americanism" campaign and its other educational curricula which the Legion forced on some educators and which did basically assure Americans they lived in the best of all possible worlds.⁶⁰

Upon their return from the Great War, the Legion immediately became a prime mover in the Red Scare and labor unrest, often acting as vigilantes.⁶¹ Out of these confrontations, with their attendant controversies, the Legion learned by about 1922 to concentrate on an agenda of "Americanism" and work through recognized authorities and the legislative process. It also emphasized educational outreach, although it was often accused of being intolerant and heavy-handed in its approach. Besides the grab-bag that was "Americanism", the Legion worked hard for veterans' benefits, being instrumental in such things as the creation of the Department of Veterans' Affairs, veterans' hospitals, and veterans' bonuses.⁶²

⁵⁹Raymond Moley, Jr., The American Legion Story (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1966): vii, 335.

⁶⁰Gellermann, Legion, 265-66.

⁶¹The most famous confrontation was between an American Legion parade in Centralia, Washington, and the I.W.W. in their Hall as they passed. In a battle and lynching which are still argued, the Legion lost three, the Wobblies one. For radically different accounts, read: Moley, Legion Story, 97-108; and John McClelland, Jr., Wobbly War: The Centralia Story (Tacoma: Washington State Historical Society, 1987).

⁶²William Pencak, For God and Country: The American Legion, 1919-1941 (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1989): xiii-xiv; 143. For a narrative of the Legion's first several years, see pp. 24-105. Pencak's work attempts to place the Legion in its time and to approach it critically but not as a pathological movement.

The Legion tried to keep focused on "Americanism" and upon veterans' benefits.⁶³

There were divisive issues which the Legion tried to avoid. The admission of blacks, accepted by some northern posts, was anathema in the South. It also tried to avoid partisan politics and demanded Legionnaires drop their Legion offices if they run for public office.⁶⁴

The Legion had two problem areas in the 1920s which caused division within the organization. One was Prohibition, an issue which led to some raucous national conventions in from 1927-1932. Legionnaires were one group notorious for their drinking at national conventions and were somewhat tolerated in this by the public.⁶⁵

The Klan also caused problems for the national organization. Both the Legion and the Klan pressed "100% Americanism," contributed to benevolence drives, and promoted fraternalism between members. But the Legion was democratic in structure versus the Klan's militaristic structure, and the Legion nationally had black, Jewish and Roman Catholic members. The Klan was secretive and sometimes violent: the Legion was very public and, after its first year or two, non-violent.⁶⁶ And nationally the Klan was loudly prohibitionists, while the Legion was not.⁶⁷ In 1921 and again in 1923, attempts were made at national conventions of the American Legion to condemn the Klan for divisiveness and violence, the last debate leading to near-brawls on the convention floor. Although both resolutions were defeated, the Kansas Legion chose a Catholic for State Adjutant in 1923, the same year the national convention hosted a Knights of Columbus speaker. The problem for the Legion was the often overlapping membership between it and the Klan.⁶⁸ Pencak argues that the Legion was mostly anti-Klan and anti-dry nationally, but the former contention at least seems hard to prove.⁶⁹

⁶³Ibid., 3-6. The "Americanism" campaign was carried on full tilt despite the fact that in the 1930's, after enforcing "Americanism" for over a decade, the Americanism Committee studied the term for months and decided it could not define it.

⁶⁴Ibid., 54-60, 106-09. In the reports of Legion meetings carried in the newspapers of Payne County, 1921-1924, there was no mention of a black member.

⁶⁵Pencak, *God and Country*, 131-37.

⁶⁶Between 1921 and 1924 there were no reports in Payne County newspapers of any violence associated with the Legion, nor any threat of violence. Their meetings were often carried rather fully in the newspapers.

⁶⁷Pencak, *God and Country*, 137-38.

⁶⁸For an example of this, see the analysis of the leadership of the Denver Klan in Robert A. Goldberg, "Beneath the Hood and Robe: A Socioeconomic Analysis of Ku Klux Klan

Although the national leadership of the Legion was often anti-Klan, the Legion had a tradition of states having strong powers and individual posts being rather independent. The Texas Legion was officially opposed to the Klan, for example.⁷⁰ On the dry issue, Oklahoma was one of eight delegations at the 1930 national convention to vote against a Legion proposal to put prohibition to a national referendum.⁷¹

In Payne County the local Legion posts remained quiet on both the Klan and prohibition. So did the newspapers. The only paper in the county to really cover the tumultuous Klan debate at the 1923 national convention of the Legion was the Stillwater Advance Democrat. That sheet ultimately came down for tolerance of the Klan or any other organization. In a argument made for toleration on other fronts in the Legion, such as toleration of Catholics and Jews in the organization, the Advance Democrat stated that all "races, all religions and all sects" were in the US military defending the nation. "To condemn an organization which is represented in the Legion is to invite the withdrawal of members of that organization." The editor complimented the Oklahoma delegation for staying out of the fray, and then, rather ominously, warned, "The question of religion and class bodies and class organizations is threatening the life of the Legion."⁷²

The Oklahoma Legion was counted the seventh largest in the nation in the number of posts, an indication of the size and potential clout they had.⁷³ The local Posts did support various national and state initiatives. They helped the state get a \$500,000 veterans hospital in Muskogee. They were active in state Legion affairs. They also sent many delegates and members to the national convention. In 1921 the state sent a special train to Kansas City, their

Membership in Denver, Colorado, 1921-1925," Western Historical Quarterly 11 (April, 1980): 187, 191. Of the 36 identified leaders, "Three of the five men eligible were members of either the American Alegation or the Veterans of Foreign Wars." But Golberg later noted that, "An overwhelming majority of both early and late joiners never served in America's wars." "Missing past crusades to save American freedom and democracy perhaps many saw the Klan as a means to compensate for lost opportunities to serve."

⁶⁹Ibid., 137-43.

⁷⁰Ibid., 140-41.

⁷¹Ibid., 136-37.

⁷²"Disrupting The Legion," SAD, 25 October 1923, 2.

⁷³"State Legion Seventh in Nation," YD, 13 January 1922, 5.

delegates wearing feathered headdresses with "Oklahoma" on them. From Stillwater alone, sixty-three Legionaires attended.⁷⁴

The local posts pushed for the Bonus Bill for veterans. The Stillwater Gazette, sticking more to its conservative Republican values, opposed the bill despite the usual rather unquestioning backing of the local Legion given by that paper. The paper contended that any bill that was passed would not be the cash bonus "...nor any such measure as has been impudently and imperatively demanded by [National] Commander MacNider of the American Legion." The Stillwater Advance Democrat countered its rival:

To the consternation of all who favor decent treatment of ex-soldiers the Harding administration has lain down on any bonus or compensation legislation on the most frivolous pretexts and in a shameless manner.

This is not what the boys were led to expect while they were fighting for a dollar a day while Mr. Mellon and others were reaping the rich harvest of the war.

Notice how quickly the evocation of the suffering troops emerged in the argument. And it wasn't just the Advance Democrat that backed the Legion. The Legion had statewide political clout: The entire Oklahoma congressional delegation, including its only Republican Senator and only Republican Representative, voted for the bill. Although in 1923 the National Commander, Alvin Owsley, stated that the Legion was neither political nor sectarian, the non-political aspect of this claim was transparently false on issue the Legion counted dear.⁷⁵ The Legion was an effective political interest group.

In 1922 in Payne County, there were proposals made by one James K. Hastings for the Legion to propose a slate for some county offices. "Let us ask the Legion to suggest two names at least at each election, and then we see that they have no opposition in primary or election." Upon election they could work for veterans needs. Instead, four rather prominent Legionaires ran for office, the three Legion office holders among them carefully resigning their Legion

⁷⁴"Legionnaires Have High Time At Kay-See," SG, 4 November 1921, 4.

⁷⁵SG, 13 January 1922, 1; "Soldier Bonus Postponed," SAD, 14 July 1921, 2; "Rough Weather For Bonus Bill," SG, 10 March 1922, 2; "An Infamous Record," SG, 31 March 1922, 2; "Legion Is Nonpolitical," YD, 10 May 1923, 6.

positions first.⁷⁶ Three were Republicans, one a Democrat, and all lost. It may have been a failed political effort, but the affair does indicate the esteem and sense of obligation many felt towards the veterans.

The County's Legion never publicly created a list of preferred candidates or came out in favor of one party or person, though it is probable that Legionnaires informally promoted or preferred particular candidates. Unlike the Klan, which, it is reported, did pass out lists, the Legion would not have been as interested in local office holders as the Klan. Overall, it is very hard to claim the Legion bloc voted in elections or had much sway over the results unless the candidate was egregiously liberal, anti-war, or anti-Legion. In the last category, the one relevant person whom the Legion did help toss out was George Wilson, Manager of the Farmer-Labor Reconstruction League, from the position he held briefly of president of Oklahoma A. & M. College in Stillwater.⁷⁷ Candidates undoubtedly tried to court the Legion vote, but it is difficult to perceive the Legion's effect on national, state or local elections.

What the Legion did locally varied. In 1922, Cushing's Donaldson-Walker Post No. 108 listed its achievements for the past year. They had increased membership by 75%, enumerated 150 non-Legion veterans in the area for a national survey, fielded disability claims for 29, got victory medals for 30, and its job bureau got jobs for over 200 veterans. In the job searching, they claimed no one wanting work waited more than three or four days, and the local post paid the room and board for those veterans without money. "The post's entry into the civic life of the community was marked by its cooperation with business men and other social organizations in securing a park and public play ground...."⁷⁸

⁷⁶"Has Patriotism Oozed?" SG, 2 June 1922, 8; Cushing Citizen, 16 March 1922, 4; "Legion Men Resign Office," CC, 16 March 1922, 5.

⁷⁷"Legion Responsible Says State Head," SAD, 2 August 1923, 8. Wilson was hated because he was a socialist and also because of some anti-Legion remarks attributed to him in 1923.

⁷⁸"State Happenings," CC, 17 August 1922, 1; this is an Associated Press cutline, one of the packaged columns and pages bought by all the "country" papers in the county bought from various sources. The national organization of the American Legion claimed that there were 700,000 ex-servicemen out of jobs at that time: "Legion Employment Day," CC (March 16, 1922): 8.

They constantly sought to increase the number of Legionaires in the county. One way they did this was by founding "Outposts" in smaller towns. The Cushing Post established one of its outposts in Tryon, Lincoln County. Tryon had the requisite ten candidates for membership, so the Cushing post went up in numbers and held a ceremony and get-together. As the editor of the Cushing Citizen stated:

The idea of the larger towns going out to the smaller districts and forming these outposts is expected to generate a spirit of good feeling and co-operation between town and city, and is expected to be a real force in breaking down any prejudice which may exist between the two.⁷⁹

That emphasis upon "co-operation", an operative word of the post-War period, and upon "breaking down any prejudice," meaning countering any conflict between the rural and urban areas, showed the Legion conforming to idea of the community of the County as well as achieving the more mundane task of enrolling more veterans in the organization.

The Legion also participated in the religious life of the towns and surroundings. The Legion decorated graves on Decoration Day and other holidays. They supplied the honor guards for veterans who died after lingering for years from wounds and trauma. They provided the honor guards for the bodies which still trickled back from France. Although officially not tied to any religion because those of all religions fell for their country's sake -- a remarkable value in those days but one which was likely open to prejudice on the personal level -- each post had a chaplain. All the county's known Legion chaplains were protestant.⁸⁰

One other area in which they cooperated with the other civic and religious organizations was in memorializing the War. The War was a present thing in Payne County even in 1921-23. There were many veterans, families struggling to reintegrate sons and husbands, and the dead. Towns memorialized the War and the dead in various ways. One popular way throughout the country was the lighting of main streets. When Yale lit their downtown in 1921, it was proclaimed

⁷⁹"American Legion Organizes Outpost At Tryon," CC, 12 January 1922, 1. It had two other outposts, Glencoe and Schlegal. See CC, 20 March 1922, 1.

⁸⁰For example, in Yale, the Post Chaplain was the Rev. D.C. Mallory of the Methodist Church. See "American Legion Meeting," YD, 20 January 1922, 1.

the "White Way" and dedicated on Armistice Day. The paper not only noted the dedication but listed the local dead.⁸¹

Probably the greatest thing the Legion did was provide camaraderie and social life for veterans. Activities included simply visiting, plus dinners by the Legion Auxiliary, meeting with other posts, and setting up outposts. The Cushing Post had a band, formed in 1922, which traveled extensively and played for Legion and non-Legion events.⁸² Legion post members traveled in groups to state and national conventions. They put on shows for themselves and other posts, usually including a "minstrel" segment or some boxing. They had membership competitions with nearby posts and usually crowned those with visiting and a dinner. At a scheduled meeting in Perkins, after the Legion Band from Cushing played they were going to have "an old fashioned Kentucky high-brow smoker and Dutch lunch, where the former dough-boys, gobs and leathernecks can get together and renew their bonds of friendship and be Buddie once again."⁸³

The Legion was considered a patriotic group. The Legion was a civic organization and a political pressure group. And the Legion was a social and psychological haven for at least some veterans. Through it all, the Legion had a loyal following in all the newspaper men of the county and, likely, the populace of the county.

"Commercial Bodies For Public Welfare"

Polk's Directory from 1926 describes a group of organizations in their listings under the category of "Commercial Bodies For Public Welfare"⁸⁴ These included the new businessmen's service clubs, plus Chambers of Commerce and Retail Merchants' Associations. It is in these clubs that major civic and political issues were discussed, such as roads, taxes, town promotion,

⁸¹"Proclamation," "White Way Plans in Readiness," YD, 7 November 1921, 1.

⁸²See, "American Legion Band," CC, 28 September 1922, 5; at that time the band had 18 members and a growing repertoire of popular pieces and marches.

⁸³"American Legion to Stage Boxing Contest," CC, 16 February 1922, 1; "Legion to Meet at Perkins," Ripley Record, 13 December 1923, 1 [hereafter "RR"].

⁸⁴Polk's Directory, Stillwater section, p. 23.

and laws that needed enactment.⁸⁵ The Directory included one more organization in this category, the Business and Professional Women's Clubs, but the topics that group discussed fit within the traditional concerns for women.

In 1905, Chicago attorney Paul P. Harris was struck by how many businessmen were simply concerned with piling up money. "The circumstance gave birth to the idea of founding a club wherein the members might not only become acquainted with one another, but also devise means of proving useful to the community, thereby making themselves at the same time more proficient in service toward their fellow men." In 1910 there were sixteen Rotary clubs, but by 1920, 758 clubs and 54,000 members. With Rotary as the model, Kiwanis was started in Detroit in 1915, while the Lions was officially formed in San Antonio that year when a group of unaffiliated clubs were grouped together. The clubs grew quickly in the 1920s, Rotary achieving 2,353 clubs and 115,617 members by 1930. In the 1930 to 1934 period, both Rotary and Kiwanis lost membership.⁸⁶

In Payne County there were Rotary Clubs in Cushing and Stillwater by 1921.⁸⁷ There were also Lions Clubs. The International Association of Lions Clubs, founded by insurance man Mervyn Jones in 1917, grew larger than Rotary in part because it did not follow the "classification" system of Rotary, i.e., one member per occupational classification. There were two clubs in Payne

⁸⁵In an intriguing illustration of how these groups discussed the big money and development questions of their day, there was a meeting in April, 1923, in Stillwater. "City and school officials, Chamber of Commerce, Rotary and Lions clubs all met in discussion of projects leading to the calling of a bond decision in May; but there was one well advertised organization which did not enter into the discussions at that time." That list of organizations included only government entities and businessmen's groups. The ambiguous reference at the end -- could it have been an allusion to the Klan? The Klan was not cited previously in any paper pushing bond issues, but it did carry a banner promoting the passing of a school bond in one of its three parades in the County, the parade in Stillwater on July 4, 1922. See "Gazettes," SG, 27 April 1923, 2.

⁸⁶Charles F. Marden, Rotary and Its Brothers: An Analysis and Interpretation of the Men's Service Club (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1935). Marden quoted a Rotary pamphlet, Synopsis of Rotary (n.d.): Marden, p. 6. Membership figures are on p. 10. For a rather hagiographic biography of Rotary's founder, see James P. Walsh, edited by Harry Treadwell, The First Rotarian: The Life and Times of Paul Percy Harris, Founder of Rotary (Shoreham by Sea, West Sussex, Great Britain: Scan Books, 1979).

⁸⁷The Yale Rotary Club was not founded until 1924. See "Yale Organizes Rotary Club," YD, 29 May 1924, 1.

County in the early 1920s, Stillwater and Cushing. There were no clubs in the county of the third of the businessmen's service clubs, Kiwanis International.⁸⁸

The service clubs had advantages. They were much more informal than the fraternal orders: Their meetings were light on ritual, heavily social, and relatively short, usually over a lunch. They were also exclusively professional and business men and were thus more exclusive than the fraternal orders whose membership crossed class lines. The service clubs promoted business ties between members and also promoted civic projects. Rotary was criticized in its early days for its emphasis on the economic advantages brought by members buying from each other.⁸⁹

These service clubs were all built around a set of values that formally promote patriotism, personal values such as honesty, business values, and service to their community.⁹⁰ They actively promoted the impression that they were simply good men who liked their communities. In Cushing in 1923, editor Green made this point:

Contrary to the impression that some have, Rotary is an institution which has for its prime motive the betterment of our fellow man. It is not a bunch of 'high-toned' or 'stuck-up' individuals, but an organization which is composed of just ordinary men with hearts and minds which are human just the same as all the rest. In fact it would be almost an offense in Rotary to be anything else than just a 'regular man.' The hand of sympathy and help is always extended to the unfortunate by a real Rotarian. Rotary has no room for petty jealousy. 'Service above self' is the real object of Rotary and we believe this spirit is always manifest in Cushing Rotary.⁹¹

The Rotary Club in Stillwater, organized about two years after the Cushing Club, was organized with 22 charter members February 1, 1921, and it was officially welcomed into the International Association of Rotary Clubs on March 1, the 830th club. They first met in the Allnut-McKee Restaurant but soon moved to the Presbyterian Church, their meeting place until 1946 when their wives, the Rotary Anns, decided to quit fixing their weekly luncheon. The charter

⁸⁸Walsh, First Rotarian, 130-31.

⁸⁹Ibid., 87-88.

⁹⁰Ibid., 79. "In effect, it would be a mutual help club or, as one critic later described it, a 'back-scratching club', but there was one vitally important difference, the members must be friendly men, for fellowship and friendship would be the keynote of the group. This was the foundation from which the concept would progress to good-will, understanding and service."

⁹¹"Cushing Rotary," CC, 8 February 1923, 1. The county papers carried regular columns on Rotary, Lions, the Junior Chambers of Commerce and the Chambers of Commerce.

members were either businessmen or professional men. They included the Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, and when that organization was re-organized and re-vitalized in May, 1922, its new President and Secretary were a charter Rotarian and a member brought in during the first year of the Club, Frank Haynie (owner, The Surprise Store, category "5 & 10") and Randle Perdue (Newspaper Editor). The club was allowed only two new members per month, so it grew steadily but not spectacularly. The only initial debate in membership was the slot for a minister. After some soul searching they chose Rev. Allen S. Davis of the Presbyterian Church, a man who would be President of the club in 1924-25 and a member for decades thereafter. The club's first project was a park "north of the twin bridges" between East and West Boomer Creek. This was called "Rotary Park," then "Tourist Park".⁹²

The service clubs seemed to well suit the mood of the modern elites of the towns. For example, Rotary programs were concerned with local needs, featured speakers, or were sometimes simply entertainments, often by themselves. There was an enforced camaraderie in the clubs. There were no ranks, no rites, no hierarchy other than the elected officers. There was a rough equality within the clubs due to both the selection process and the concerns of the members. These were men who had made it and had some physical stock in the town. All members went by their first names which were printed out on membership lists: The first Stillwater President was "Bill" Lahman, his Secretary "Judge" Lytton, and the club included the undertaker, "Doc" Vincent, "Mack" Dark (life insurance), and "Oto" Peck (book store proprietor) among others.⁹³ This was a camaraderie much more akin to men in young adulthood, or in the trenches of France, than it was to the serious, esoteric, formalistic camaraderie of the fraternal order.⁹⁴

⁹²On the Stillwater Rotary Club's History, information is from a file of short documents provided by current Rotarian, Dr. Roscoe Rouse, and include: "Stillwater Rotary Club History Highlights," (March 23, 1993); "Stillwater Rotary Club History Projects and Accomplishments: Prepared for the District Governor, 1965-1966; "History of Stillwater Rotary Club," (n.d.) [hereafter "Stillwater Rotary Files"]. On officers of Chamber of Commerce: "Big Attendance Greets New Chamber Officials," SG, 19 May 1922, 5.

⁹³"History of Stillwater Rotary Club," (n.d.), Stillwater Rotary Files.

⁹⁴At times the men acted like children. Coming back from the District Meeting in Ardmore in 1923, four the Stillwater members were pulling childish pranks. The rest got so tired of these that the locked the four into a train compartment. The four escaped through a window at Ripley and found their own way home. See "Rotarians Riotous On Ride Returning Home," SG, 20 April 1923, 5.

The service clubs shared with the American Legion both an informal camaraderie and a very strong emphasis upon attendance. At a time when fraternalists often suffered in attendance, these new organizations strove for 100% attendance. One of the characteristic events of the period were contests between clubs over attendance, the loser usually providing a meal for the winner.⁹⁵ They also promoted high attendance from their clubs at state and national events.

The service clubs particularly discussed matters of an economic and political nature, like the Chambers of Commerce, the Retail Merchants, and the city and county governments. In Cushing, Rotary and Lions clubs together put up twenty signs "...warning motorists of bad curves and dangerous crossings on every road leading into that city." The Cushing Rotarians also participated in another outreach program dear to the business communities of these cities: they hosted a series of picnics for farmers.⁹⁶ And always there was talk of roads, the most discussed subject in the service clubs. What united all these concerns, all these organizations, all these men and some women, was an image of the progressive city after which they strove.⁹⁷

These service clubs became powerful because they provided an organized forum for the concerns of the local business elites where they could discuss local needs and priorities. In none of these towns was there one primary individual whose name emerged whenever a matter of civic importance is discussed. But in all the papers in towns with service clubs, their news appeared on the front page and was consistently given more space than any other group except possibly the Chambers of Commerce, the Retail Merchants' Associations, and some churches. In

⁹⁵ In September of 1922, the Stillwater Rotarians lost such a battle to the Cushing Rotary Club and had to host a banquet for the winners. See "Stillwater Rotarians Lose," SG, 8 September 1922, 1. For the American Legion, the Cushing and Bartlesville Posts won state recognition in 1922 for being the first in the state to achieve 100% employment of members within their respective cities, a different twist on membership. See: "Cushing American Legion Winner Of Contest," CC, 20 April 1922, 8. .

⁹⁶"Rotary and Lions have....," SG, 8 September 1922, 1; "Rotarians To Entertain Farmers At Picnic," CC, 22 June 1922, 1.

⁹⁷For a good description of the idea of the progressive city at this time, see, George B. Tindall, "Business Progressivism: Southern Politics in the Twenties," South Atlantic Quarterly 62 (Winter, 1963): 92-106.

no paper was city government or county government given the space, consistent coverage, or thoroughness of coverage, of the groups associated with businessmen.⁹⁸

Stillwater, and possibly Cushing, had a distaff service organization between 1921 and 1924.⁹⁹ In Stillwater, a Business and Professional Women's Club was organized in about 1921. The B.P.W.C. chapters were the only organizations for women in the county which consistently had numerous unmarried women in leadership roles.¹⁰⁰ The reports carried by the newspapers of the Stillwater club's meetings showed it cooperating with other women's organizations for rather traditional women's civic projects, but not debating the issues that would often end up in the City Council the way the male service clubs did.¹⁰¹ Although the B. P.W.C. may have had a differing membership from other women's organizations and a form mimicking the male service clubs, the groups did traditional things for women's groups. The broader power resided with the male clubs.

The comprehensive organizations for the business community were the Retail Merchants' Associations and, most of all, the Chambers of Commerce. In the early 1920s Cushing had a Retail Merchants' Association and obtained a Chamber. Yale had a Chamber of Commerce, and the merchants in early 1922 organized a Retail Merchants' Credit Association. Stillwater had a Chamber of Commerce. Ripley's editor urged such an organization but it appeared after the early 1920s, and Perkins seemed not to have any service clubs or other businessmen's associations. The rationale for such groups was the need for businessmen to cooperate and promote their

⁹⁸The Cushing Citizen rarely covered city government and rarely mentioned the name of the mayor.

⁹⁹In 1926, the city directory noted Business and Professional Women's Clubs in Stillwater and Cushing, but there is no newspaper record of the club in Cushing in the period of the hooded Klan. See Polk's Stillwater, Cushing and Yale City Directory, 1926-27 (Kansas City, Mo.: R.L. Polk & Co., 1926): Stillwater 23, Cushing 23.

¹⁰⁰The Stillwater delegation to the state convention in Okmulgee in 1922 was four unmarried women. Miss Emma Chandler of Stillwater was elected President for the state at that convention, and Miss Emma Bassler, the Payne County School Superintendent, was elected Corresponding Secretary. See "Delegates to Okmulgee," SG, 17 March 1922, 1; "Two Stillwater Women Honored at Okmulgee," SG, 24 March 1922, 1.

¹⁰¹In an example noted before, in 1922 the Business and Professional Women were in the process of founding a Girl Scout Troop, working with the Rotary Anns, the Federated Women's Clubs, the public schools, and the Boy Scout Council. "Business and Professional Women's Club," SG, 16 June 1922, 1.

needs. The Perkins editor, Andrew Show, a man who spoke mostly from the farmers' perspective, chastised Perkins businessmen for not cooperating enough and, implicitly, for needing to get a Chamber. To make Perkins grow, he said, "The mercantile interests come first." Citizens must buy locally to help their town. But the merchants must cooperate and do their part.

Another thing that Perkins is sadly in need of, is united action interests. When every business man in town is pulling solely for his own affairs, giving no attention or interest to his town or his fellow businessmen, he is digging his own eyes out by blinding his neighbor. 'So I get the dollar I don't care what happens to my neighbor,' is a precept that will anywhere make an angel reach for a brickbat."¹⁰²

At a certain level, Chambers of Commerce and Retail Merchants' Associations promoted the same things as the service clubs, but they were less exclusive than Rotary and more directly acted as interest groups for the business class. There was some competition for membership between all these organizations. In Yale the attendance at the Retail Merchants' meetings was falling even as the Chamber of Commerce was having "an exceptional attendance."¹⁰³ And in Stillwater, the Republican, pro-business Gazette, lamented the fact that the Chamber had been in a slump the past two years: They put most the blame on competition for members' attention by the service clubs. Editor Brown argued that the first loyalty in Stillwater should be to the Chamber.

Let him belong to a Rotary club, too, if he wants to and can do so. Each organization should have and does have its own field, and should cultivate that field. But every man, everywhere, who belongs to a Rotary club or a Lions club or a Kiwanis club, or any similar organization of whatever ilk, should belong to his local chamber of commerce, too. His primary obligation is there. He owes it not only to himself and his own business, but to his fellow men to do so.

There is as much use for the Stillwater Chamber of Commerce as ever there was, and more than ever before, for never before has the city of Stillwater grown so rapidly as in the last two years, and there is nothing to indicate that the growth is likely to cease if ordinary intelligent efforts are made to foster it and to meet it a little more than half way.

¹⁰²"Stay With Home Interests," Perkins Journal, 22 July 1921, 1 [hereafter "PJ"].

¹⁰³"The Retail Merchants' Association," and, "Chamber of Commerce," YD, 21 June 1923, 1. The Retail Merchants' Association in Yale and, most likely, in Cushing, were largely concerned with stopping bad check writers and protecting firms from bad credit risks: See "Retail Merchants' Credit Association, Inc.," YR, 10 February 1922, 4.

Later that same month the Chamber elected new officers. Frank Haynie, the President, and Randle Perdue, the Secretary, were Rotarians.¹⁰⁴

The Chamber of Commerce movement was a national one. An article by Herbert Hoover, Secretary of Commerce, appeared in the Yale Democrat in 1922, paralleling what the local editors were saying and going a step beyond. Mr. Hoover not only noted that Chambers of Commerce promote local business interests, "but have justified our confidence in American business men by the increasing breadth of vision and public spirit which make them see all the community's problems as their own." And, through their connection with the national Chamber of Commerce, "they are rendering the Nation a service as great as they rendered their local communities." The national government desired their input, one of the reasons President Taft helped found the national organization.¹⁰⁵ Clothed in patriotism, the progressive businessman is thus given his charge, nationally and locally, to lead for the betterment of community and, of course, for the betterment of himself.

When service clubs, Retail Merchants' Associations and Chambers of Commerce are examined in Payne County in the early 1920s, not only was there an interchangeability of membership but there was an interchangeability of concerns, concerns which were often later acted on by local governments. The newspapers reflected the initiative these non-governmental organizations took by always giving good column space to them and often treating the city council meetings shortly and almost as an aside. The focus was always upon the construction of the progressive city. This belief in the progressive city may have been as much a mythos as "100% Americanism", but myths are measured by their resulting effects on the believers, not by their veracity.

These groups discussed issues dealing especially with business and things affecting business. In February, 1922, the Cushing Retailers were discussing closing on Armistice Day, plans for a farmers' banquet, a report of the better roads committee, and a "trade at home

¹⁰⁴"Stillwater Chamber of Commerce," SG, 5 May 1922, 2; "Big Attendance Greet New Chamber Officials," SG, 19 May 1922, 5.

¹⁰⁵"The Chamber of Commerce," YD, 13 January 1922, 4.

campaign". The Yale Chamber in June, 1923, considered new roads, road upkeep, and stimulating business in town. At the Stillwater Chamber of Commerce in early June, 1922, they hosted H.P. Brunaugh, secretary of the Oklahoma Automobile Association, who was pushing a road between Kansas City and Oklahoma City that would be routed through the county via Stillwater and Perkins. At the same meeting, R.A. Singletary, secretary of the Oklahoma Good Roads Association, spoke about legislation concerning the "building and establishing of a system of highways in Oklahoma." One other concern of the meeting was the proposal for a tourist park in Stillwater with twelve to eighteen places to serve the travelers on those roads and bring business to Stillwater. The Retail Merchants' Association of Cushing pressured the Phoenix Iron Works, building oil tanks in the city, to only hire local men. Later that same year, they had a meeting where they discussed roads (a near obsession) and suggested the city buy a rock crusher to speed up road repairs leading into the city. Plans were afoot for the state Retail Merchants' Association meeting to be held in Cushing that year. They also decided to continue hiring a night watchman, (in effect the town's night policeman), invited the American Legion to a joint meeting to hear a state Legion official speak, and discussed organizing a town baseball team.¹⁰⁶

Newspapers

There was another force in the county, tied to the business community, but yet at a certain level separate from that community: the newspapers. The newspaper provided constant boosterism for their businessmen, reported extensively on businessmen's organizations, promoted businessmen's issues in editorials, and belonged to their organizations. The papers were the voice of the town business community.

¹⁰⁶"Retail Merchants Prepare For Strenuous Years Campaign," CC, 16 February 1922, 1; "Chamber of Commerce," YD, 7 June 1923, 1; "Fine New Auto Road To The State Metropolis," SG, 2 June 1922, 1; "Retail Merchants Elect New Officials For Ensuing Year," CC, 19 January 1922, 1; "Retailers Arranging For Convention," CC, 9 March 1922, 1. Notice how these reports appear consistently on the first page of the respective papers.

Although there were several papers which stopped publication or changed editors, or both, in this period, the newspaper population of the county was relatively stable.¹⁰⁷ The leading paper of the county was the Stillwater Gazette, a Republican paper and the official paper of record for the county. It was owned by John P. Hinkle and Edwin H. Brown, with Brown the editor. Brown had come out of Kansas and for a while was editor of the Perkins paper. His paper was the best edited paper and always contained page numbers, a habit nearly unique in the County. Hinkle and Brown were defenders of the Harding regime and its farm policy during the recession starting in 1921, running stories from the Republican Publicity Bureau in Washington, DC. Although his paper's column on the Farmer's Union by W.L. Zuck is a superb source on that group, the paper seemed to cut off Zuck in the middle of 1922 after eleven years as a correspondent, probably because of Zuck's support for the Shawnee Platform and the idea of a farmer-labor political front. Adamantly anti-Walton in the 1922 race and even more in favor of the Republican, John Fields, a Republican and a former Stillwater man, the Gazette had about the most complete coverage of any paper in the county of the political imbroglio leading to the impeachment and conviction of Jack Walton in the late fall of 1923.

The Gazette's town rival was the Stillwater Advance Democrat, a paper whose editor changed periodically. From 1921 to 1924 the editor was G.R. Gould, who owned the paper from 1920 - 1922, then sold it to Jesse Hoke but retained the editorship for several years more.¹⁰⁸ Gould was a Democrat, a mild supporter of Walton in 1922 but one who, with the rest of the county, washed his hands of the Governor in 1923 after he inserted George Wilson, Secretary of the Farmer-Labor Reconstruction League, as President of Oklahoma A. & M. College in Stillwater. Gould bought columns supportive of labor unionism and attacked the Harding administration's claim that the farms were having problems because domestic demand was down, not because of

¹⁰⁷The Glencoe Mirror stopped publication in September, 1922. It had served the smallest urban area in the County which had a paper. The Perkins Journal may have published but stopped sending the papers to the Oklahoma Historical Society a few months later when Andrew Show, the long-time editor, sold the paper and retired. Another paper for which no copies seem to exist was the Cushing Daily Citizen, a paper about which the editor of the weekly edition constantly alluded, claiming he was losing money with the daily. For the Cushing Daily Citizen see "Will Be Better, We Hope," CC, 10 August 1923, 3.

¹⁰⁸SG, 13 January 1922, 2.

the Republican tariffs that stifled international trade.¹⁰⁹ His paper did less business boosterism, though it did its share. Like the Perkins Journal, the Advance Democrat at times spoke as a latter-day Jeffersonian. For example, the editor favorably commented on a speech by William Jennings Bryan in 1921, then quoted the man: "It is the farmer's surplus material that clothes the world-- suppose that surplus fails?"

'Will the middlemen continue to lord it over the producers of wealth, or will they learn that they must service if they would live and save for a reasonable toll? The flower that blooms in beauty on the stem should not despise the roots that do their work in dirt. The root will live when the flower fades -- not only live but furnish the sustenance for new flowers, season after season.'¹¹⁰

The paper also boosted the WCTU, attacked prohibition, and backed the Bonus Bill pushed by the American Legion.

Yale had two papers. The Record, edited by Ira Minnick, was a moderately conservative paper that backed Fields in 1922. Minnick was at times very satirical about the "Ku Klux Clams" and about the flamboyant Rev. D.C. Mallory of the Methodist Tabernacle. He was a staunch supporter of the Chamber of Commerce and Retail Merchants' Association, giving those organizations prime space on his front page.

The Yale Democrat was edited during this period by George Gelder who was actually a Republican. Like the Republican Stillwater Gazette, his was a rather moderate Republicanism. He had been an editor only a few years and seemed to be losing interest in the profession by 1924, the year he ran for the Republican nomination for county office, a race in which he came in last.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹The Stillwater Advance Democrat subscribed to a news service out of Washington, D.C., that sounds like an arm of the Democratic Party, though it is not so labeled. In one issue, the section headings included: "Embalming the Bonus Bill," "Double Dodging on Soldiers' Bill," and two articles about Democrats fighting back: "Democrat Senate Leader Would Finance Crops," and "The Heart of the Agricultural Problem." See: Special Correspondent, "Weekly Washington News Letter," SAD, 28 July 1921, 3.

¹¹⁰"Yes, Why Not," SAD, 28 July 1921, 2.

¹¹¹"A Political Misfit," YD, 7 August 1924, 3.

The Cushing Citizen was probably the most conservative paper in the county. E.M. Green had become the editor in 1908.¹¹² Until 1923 his paper had no rural correspondents and little rural news, concentrating instead on promoting his city. His was a strange voice in the county, alternating between brusque attacks on women, businessmen who wouldn't advertise (his paper ranted the most about this of all the county's papers), labor unions, vituperative attacks on individuals (most notably the lawyer Walter Matthews), and apologetic pieces on the problems his paper was having and how much better the paper would soon be. His editorials were much more suggestive than substantive, sometimes maddeningly oblique such as his pieces on the political contest for city council in 1922. Yet he also was the most open commentator on the immanent demise of the rural community and the urban community that was the new dominant force. His city had the most Klan activity and he almost never mentioned the group.

The Ripley Record was edited by C.N. Van Pelt. It was the most crudely constructed paper in the county usually comprising outer pages made up of local and rural shorts, some editorial work, and a center of purchased national and international news. The local news pages were plastered with borders comprising local ads, making the paper look thrown-together. Ripley was the smallest place in the county to have a surviving paper by 1923, and Ripley prospered during the early 1920s as Ripley and the immediate regions blossomed with oil and gas fields. Although Ripley was on a main rail line it did not grow tremendously. The townspeople showed themselves very interested in the Klan and were constantly traveling to hear Klan speakers and witness Klan "naturalizations", i.e., initiations. Even though the paper came from a small town, it was a strong business booster and by the end of our period was pushing for the establishment of a Chamber of Commerce for Ripley.¹¹³

The Perkins Journal was in many ways the most satisfying paper in the county. It was well edited by Andrew Show until he retired in late 1922. Then the paper disappeared from view.

¹¹²"Citizen Office Keeping Up With The Printing Process," CC, 5 January 1922, 1.

¹¹³The interest in the Klan was shown by the number of reports of their citizens, or those near Ripley, travelling to a distant Klan event. See Appendix I, "Chronology of the Klan in Payne County," and note the references citing the Ripley paper. On the need for a businessmen's service club, see "A Commercial Club Needed," RR, 16 August 1923, 1.

Show was a fine wordsmith, sometimes even breaking into poetry in the midst of a page. Show was a booster of Perkins and its businesses, especially of Mr. Platt's Ford agency. But Mr. Show's was also the voice of Jeffersonian agriculture. He and Mr. Zuck of the Farmers' Union were probably the most authentic agricultural voices in the county newspapers, showing some suspicion of middlemen, backing the Reconstruction League's ideas, and generally supporting the farmers throughout. Show was also the only editor to publicly come out against the Klan, and he carried almost no news reports on the Klan.

These papers shared certain characteristics. They were all advocates rather than forums. They generally hued to a particular slant or political party line. They featured almost no letters to the editor. Although they would often feature wire stories or material from local correspondents, these were usually sympathetic to the editor's stance. The exception to this was the forum these papers gave to air the doings of the rural parts of the county through their district correspondents. Yet these rural correspondents did not raise any issue of party or philosophy. Finally, the papers were always town boosters, especially boosting the business sector.

These papers were usually built on an eight page format, even in the case of the relatively un-sophisticated Ripley Record. The inner four pages were bought and shipped to the papers each week from some central jobbers, though none of these sources was identified by the papers.¹¹⁴ These bought pages contained national and international news, often a serialized story, sometimes columns, and many national ads. Thus you can open a Payne County paper and see an article about a prince in Japan, Bolsheviks in Russia, Rocky Mountain National Park's Fall River Road being constructed, and the status of strikes in Illinois, often with an accompanying photograph. Several of the larger papers, particularly the two in Stillwater and the Cushing paper, used some stories from the Associated Press and the United Press. Several also used a column from the state capitol by a Mr. Bickford that mainly covered the doings of the legislature. These bought columns not only expanded the size of the papers but also provided the readers with a

¹¹⁴The Ripley Record bought six of their pages or ran ads. It's own work was consistently on pages one and eight.

widening in their worlds.¹¹⁵ The articles were generally rather neutral on issues, although there were some designed to produce wonder and amazement in the readers and some were clearly partisan, such as those from the national Republican Publicity Bureau.

The effect of these state-wide, regional, national and international news sources on the relatively isolated people of the county is difficult to gauge. It could have heightened isolationism and nativism: "They're doing *what* in New York?!" But there were other factors working to open the world view of the countians. World War I not only produced a minority of males who had seen part of the world, but families and friends who heard them talk. The automobile also broadened peoples' perspectives, probably even more than the train, for with the automobile you don't ride through a country, you dealt with it, ruts, blow-outs, gas-stations, hotels, restaurants and all. And some countians traveled far as was illustrated by the numerous reports in county papers from 1921-23 of people traveling by car to Colorado, particularly Colorado Springs. The telephone now reached across the country and a certain percentage of countians had talked to real people in New York or Chicago, Denver or Dallas. The radio, still largely a novelty, allowed instantaneous communications. There were club meetings where the highlight, or at least a draw, was someone bringing his home built radio set, often taking hours to set it up, to hear a talk from Kansas City or a band playing in Dallas.¹¹⁶ The exposure to the news and spectacle of the world beyond Payne County, by newspapers and by other means, probably created more curiosity than paranoia and in the long term had to work to broaden countians' world views.

Another broadening effect was the rural correspondents used eventually by all papers in the County. They spoke of individuals, implicitly preaching personalism, cooperation, and

¹¹⁵For information on the newspaper inserts, informal discussion with Mr. Lawrence Gibbs, in October, 1999. Mr. Gibbs is a current editor of the Stillwater News Press. Note that when editor Green of Cushing ceased publication of his Daily Citizen, he not only promised rural peoples to get rural correspondents and carry their news, but that he would also continue the bought pages on national and international news so they could stay informed. See "Will Be Better We Hope," CC, 10 August 1923, 3.

¹¹³For example, the Stillwater Gazette had an article about three local men who each built a radio. See "Radio Fan's Increase, Amateurs Build Sets," SG, 18 August 1922, 5. At that time the Kansas City Star had set up a station with a 2,000 mile range. See SG, 7 April 1922, 2. For the radio as an attraction at a meeting, see "Rotarians To Entertain Farmers At Picnic," CC, 22 June 1922, 1.

traditional family values. The fact that they never seriously contradicted the editor's positions points both to the rural correspondents' focus on the valuational rather than the political, and to the broad acceptance of the ideas of community which were carried in the rural reports.¹¹⁷

The rural correspondents did several things. They provided the reader then and the historian now with a very interesting summary of the doings and concerns of rural Payne County. They indirectly promoted newspaper subscriptions in the rural areas of the County. They also helped connect the rural and urban parts of the County.

Newspaper editors were connected to town businessmen not only because they were businessmen, but because they depended upon the revenues of local business ads. Of course, all the newspaper men in the county continually argued they were not getting enough revenue from the local merchants.¹¹⁸ The newspapers in turn publicized the businessmen and what they perceived to be the needs of the businessman. Considering an editor's location in the business district of a town, his identity with business interests was thus a rather natural outcome.

Newspapers spoke positively of businesses and businessmen. They publicized and editorialized in favor of the business organizations such as the service clubs, Retail Merchants Associations, and Chambers of Commerce. They publicized the concerns of those groups, making both the public and the local governments more aware of them. And they publicized a concept of community that helped legitimize the businessman.

These papers all complimented their own businessmen. Sometimes this took on a personal aspect. For example, automobiles were enjoying great popularity, and from the way in which the editors of the Stillwater Advance Democrat, the Perkins Journal, and the Yale Democrat wrote, it is likely they all drove Fords and were proud of auto sales as another sign of urban progressivism.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷For a fuller discussion of the emphasis upon persons in the news, both from within the towns and cities and from rural correspondents, see Chapter V, "Community".

¹¹⁸See, for example, the editorial by the Yale Democrat arguing that Yale businessmen won't advance until they get smart and advertise, just like their hated foes, the mail order catalog companies, do. Until the locals advertise they'll always face the threat of bankruptcies. See "The Sales Day," YD, 4 January 1922, 6.

¹¹⁹See for example, "The Seaton Motor Co. disposed of five new Fords last Tuesday as follows," and the editor then named the purchasers. See YD, 19 April 1923, 6.

The Cushing editor put his boosting of the businessman on a more general plane. He rather shamelessly borrowed from the emotions of the recent War effort: Notice how he perverted the idea of "loyalty" and even refers to the "sinews of war."

As stated in the last week's Citizen a loyalty campaign is being considered. The object of this is the inculcation of loyalty to the home town, the home man, into the minds of the whole community, and if possible, persuade them to manifest their loyalty by purchasing their necessities -- and luxuries -- in the home town in this instance, Cushing.

Such loyalty was needed: "It has never been more needed than in this time of both general and local depression." He attacked those who shopped abroad and elevated the businessman to a position of absolute leadership in the community.

The business men, the merchants are the ones to whom the whole community look to keep up the community, pay the bills, subscribe and put up the money for any public enterprise or to bring new enterprises to the city, keep up the Chamber of Commerce and like organizations which are formed for and which do the work which pushes public enterprises and community progresses.

But it still is true that, generally, the business men pay the expenses. Therefore by purchasing elsewhere you lessen the ability of the home merchant to furnish them money to carry on the public work and, if outside buying is indulged in freely and generally it effectively stops all progress and all attempts at progress simply because the 'sinews of war' are lacking and eventually the town is 'dead', killed by the act of its own people, or at least, part of them, but the Citizen has discussed this on numerous occasions and feels that more need not be said.

Noting that if local merchants bought their chickens from other than local farmers, those farmers would hurt, yet the farmers think nothing of buying in places other than Cushing, the editor continues.

We should like to speak more fully on this last and upon other forms of loyalty, loyalty of speech [i.e., don't bad mouth your own town, don't complain] and thought, loyalty that lifts up, loyalty that is true, friendship, a neighbor's loyalty, etc., but our article is too long already.¹²⁰

¹²⁰"The Loyalty Campaign," CC, 22 November 1923, 6. This quote also gives a glimpse of the bad grammar and convoluted style of this editor.

Mr. Green may be the most vocal -- and repetitious -- of the editors on this, but they all boosted with the same rationale: The businessman was the leader of the community and it is the obligation of good citizens thereby to buy from the local store.¹²¹

This boosterism by papers took some other turns. There was constant sniping by newspapers at mail order catalogs, seen as distant parasites on the local economy. In the same category were peddlers. In virtually all the papers, every comment about "peddlers" was negative. In Yale, the recently formed Retail Merchant's Association took up the question of imposing an "occupation tax ordinance," i.e., an anti-peddler law. No decisions were reached at that time.¹²²

Another issue dear to the business interests which the papers heavily promoted was good roads, the issue which likely occupied more space than any other in reports on the service clubs, Chambers of Commerce, and city councils. From a practical point of view, the tremendous spread of automobiles in the early 1920s put extraordinary stress on the infrastructure, from roads to parking. Editor Green in Cushing mused about cars in 1922.

Fifteen years ago there were three, possibly four, 'buzz wagons' in Cushing -- we think they were Fords, except one, which, as we remember, was nameless, being parts of two or three makes. In 1912 the Citizen announced in glowing language and with great enthusiasm, glorying in wonderfully rapid growth, that Cushing had nine -- just think of it, nine, big town and going some -- automobiles, owned and controlled -- that is controlled -- occasionally -- by citizens of Cushing."

Editor Green said he could not estimate the number of cars in Cushing in 1922. But he saw the great rise in their numbers as a certain sign of prosperity, a good, progressive virtue.

¹²¹Even the Perkins Journal boosted merchants. "It's the 'old reliable' home merchant who is the real strengthening power of trade. His prices may seem a little high in comparison, but remember he is your friend; he is your neighbor. He is the man you appeal to when cash is a little short; he is the man who has known you for years, and has backed your schools, churches, and home institutions. He is the man who stood with you during hard times and rejoiced with you when times were better.

The old home merchant is like unto the 'Old oaken bucket,' battered, scratched and somewhat disfigured, mayhap, but when the crucial times shall have reached normalcy again, you'll find him at the old stand with the same old smile and the old readiness to help." See "He's Old Reliable," PJ, 14 October 1921, 1.

¹²²"Retail Merchants' Meeting," YD, 12 April 1923, 1. In a case of assault by a peddler on a girl in Cushing, the editor first noted that the suspect, a peddler, "one of the class...that takes your money out of circulation here and puts it into the storehouse of some foreign corporation." See "Peddler Arrested For Attempted Assault," CC, 8 February 1923, 1.

Indeed the number of such in Cushing, owned by Cushing people, arouses comment and is concrete evidence of the wealth represented here. They are a strong denial of any pessimistic assertion as to conditions in Cushing. No community can justly complain of 'hard times' that has such an array of the most luxurious, most expensive, in fact, of the very best autos, and we doubt if many cities of like size, etc., can present as great an array of them. Cushing is surely prosperous.¹²³

This meant there was pressure to build paved streets in town. In 1921, Stillwater boasted about four miles of paved streets, with thirteen more blocks let to bid. In 1920, one-and-one half miles, or twenty-two blocks, were done.¹²⁴ Good streets were a symbol of a progressive city.

Perhaps there is no feature more out standing [sic] to a stranger in a strange city than the condition of the streets, and Cushing can be justly proud of the progress she had made in this direction.¹²⁵

Good streets meant orderliness, and that was felt to be one element denoting a stable and growing business environment.

The other big part of the roads question was roads outside the towns, and again the paper's pushed their improvement from a businessman's perspective. This issue brought town and country into a collision that probably killed one road bond vote in the county during the early 1920s.¹²⁶ The rural people wanted better roads within the County while the urban boosters wanted long-distance roads to greater cities and markets. In fact, this issue also pitted the eastern half of the county against Stillwater and the western part. Mr. Gelder of the Yale Democrat stated this case in 1921.

The hard surfaced road proposition is a most important step forward by the citizens of this county. Everywhere in the world the question of transportation and travel has become a serious one. The coming of the motor truck has made it imperative that roadways such as will withstand the wear and tear of heavy traffic be built; and the more progressive communities of the entire country have recognized this necessity and are building accordingly.

Ninety miles of hard surfaced roads will place the county among the leading good roads counties of the state.

¹²³"And Still More Come," CC, 19 January 1922, 1.

¹²⁴SG, 2 September 1921, 1.

¹²⁵"Cushing Has Many Miles Of Paving," CC (January 25, 1923): 1.

¹²⁶Editor Green in Cushing argued that roads benefit all parts of the "community." "There should be full and hearty co-operation between the urban and rural citizenship and we are glad to tell that such a spirit exists in this section." See "The Road Question," CC, 1 February 1922, 4.

He argued that the oil industry and the town businessmen would be helped, farmers would see farm values increase as marketing costs lessen, and laborers would have several years of paid labor building the roads.

The proposition and the routing as now planned is not a sectional matter. The east side of the county gets a little the most number of miles, [sic] but this section has the greatest demand for hard surfaced roads to take care of the heavy hauling which must go over the roads, and certainly that portion of the county which has over 75 per cent of the entire valuation should have little the advantage.¹²⁷

And there were always more roads needing to be built. In 1923, after admitting that the road situation leading into Cushing had improved, editor Green still pushed for more concrete roads, and particularly for a good road from the eastern edge of the county to Cushing.¹²⁸

There were several larger schemes afoot, all somewhat half-baked, to create named cross-country roads. The Albert Pike Highway was one that entered the county through Yale, went to Stillwater, and then turned north and out of the county. The Ozark Trail bisected the county, on the level of contemporary Rt. 33, entering from the south into Perkins, then leaving for Logan County around Coyle. All the cities had Good Roads Committees, most often combining service clubs and Chambers or Retail Merchants' Associations, and there was a county Good Roads Committee which included editor Gelder from Yale.¹²⁹ One of the desires of these movements was to pave a road and then turn it over to the state, a process that rather quickly could save the county in maintenance costs more than the cost of up-grading the road.¹³⁰

The roads issue was not only a constant, but showed how closely the newspapers reflected the desires of the business community. The fact that this was discussed almost

¹²⁷"The Hard Surfaced Roads," YD (February 14, 1921): np.

¹²⁸"More Good Roads In Sight, More Chat Road Bed To Be Used," CC (January 20, 1922):1; "The Road Question," CC (February 2, 1922): 4; "Good Roads Contagious," CC (November 22, 1923): 4.

¹²⁹"All Clubs In Cushing Working For Good System of Highways," CC (January 19, 1922): 1; "Committee on Good roads Project to Meet in Stillwater Today," YD (February 14, 1921): 1.

¹³⁰"State Highways Still Discussed," CC (August 10, 1922): 2. Editor Green includes some figures on the potential savings to the county in this report.

exclusively in businessman-dominated organizations shows again their power over County planning and County moneys.

Another thing progressive businessmen pushed was beautifying the town, and this was one area in which there were junctures with women's organizations. A clean town with good parks made a good impression and was sign of a good progressive city. Ira Minnick of the Yale Record expressed this in 1922.

Beautiful surroundings are more or less indispensable to beautiful living. Did you ever know a dowdy, slovenly, ill-kept town inhabited by clean, upright, refined, and self-respecting citizens? Character is not a matter of outward appearances, to be sure, but the old proverb is not far wrong, which declares, 'Manners maketh man.'¹³¹

In 1923, after much effort by the club, the Hypatia Club of Cushing had not only overseen the clean-up and re-making of a park by them and, among others, service clubs, but the park had been named for this chapter of the Federated Women's Clubs. Editor Green rose to the occasion in a paean of praise.

As a citizen there is nothing more important for you to do than through such means as this to help build a bulwark in the very souls and hearts of your children. If not built there, millions of police cannot combat the evils of tomorrow. Let wholesome recreation be as much a part of their day's routine as eating, reading or working.¹³²

Beautification was declared to be an expression of civilization, but it could also mean simply cleaning up the city. Yale's official proclamation of a clean-up day stated, "Ambition in its highest conception is to dream big dreams and make them come true. The splendid ambition to have a city clean and beautiful is soon to become a reality by the cooperation of all the people."¹³³

Despite the rather high-sounding language, often the ills were as prosaic as tobacco slop and free-running chickens.¹³⁴

¹³¹"The City Beautiful," Yale Record, 31 March 1922, 4 [hereafter "YR"]. Note that the advent of the automobile also led to the demise of horses in towns. The correlation between increased auto use and decreased manure on city streets probably spurred the beautifiers with greater hopes of success.

¹³²"A Praiseworthy Enterprise," CC (March 16, 1922): 5.

¹³³"Proclamation -- Hear This, Ye People -- Think! Act!" YD (April 12, 1923): 3; For a similar campaign, see: "Time To Clean Up," PJ (August 5, 1921): 1.

¹³⁴"Tobacco chewers in Yale took the notice of intention to enforce the anti-spitting ordinance seriously. You see the individual now break away from the crowd, edge over to the

Beautification could also mean paving streets, which has been discussed, and lighting streets. In Yale, the "White Way" was dedicated to the veterans of World War I: "...what could be more fitting than the White Way down our Main Street to constantly remind us it was erected in memory of those that paid the price that we might live on in a land of light, peace and plenty." Ripley was more mundane. They had big gas field being developed and they needed lighting, so they stepped back from the electric lights being installed everywhere else and erected gas lamps for their streets.¹³⁵

Lighting, clean-ups, parks, were all symbols of the modern city, the progressive city. And rising to the challenge of heralding this was Editor Green of Cushing:

"The City Beautiful" has become a prominent feature of community thought and life. Every program community is directing much effort, and spending considerable money on this feature of community life. The progress made and results achieved furnish a good index of the progressivism, the public spirit, intelligence, and even the moral standard of the citizenship. It really is a most important matter, one, the effect of which, is far reaching

In no way does the effort to make our surroundings beautiful have a greater, and more elevating effect than upon the character and conduct of the younger people of the population, the coming citizens. The well kept lawn, the presence of roses and flowers, cleanly and well kept premises, the buildings well painted, all are constant examples for the boy and girl, always reminding them that they themselves must harmonize with such if they would hold their places in the community. The love of the beautiful is essential to the higher manhood and womanhood.¹³⁶

Such effusiveness obscured something that the businessmen thought about: What was the initial impression of their town by that customer driving into it, or that sales representative or business man from afar stepping off that train? A clean town, a town with parks and lighting, meant a modern town, a progressive town, and a town worth spending time and money in. Editor Gelder in Yale, meditating on how Yale almost became a has-been oil town when the boom

curb and splatter out a quart -- more or less." See "Tabacco Chewers," YD, 21 February 1924. Earlier the editor had complained, "You know the person who deliberately allows his chickens to run at large rather a selfish person." See "Keep 'Em Up," YD, 1 March 1923, 6. A year later the city of Ripley passed an ordinance about city chickens: "Put Up Your Chickens," Ripley Record, 6 March 1924, 1 [hereafter "RR"].

¹³⁵"The White Way," YD (February 25, 1921): 1; "Local and Personal," RR, 15 March 1923, 1.

¹³⁶"Town Topics," CC (June 1, 1922): c.5.

dropped away, applauded the efforts of the citizenry and leadership to chart a progressive course.

Instead of following the general rule of oil towns and dropping back to a dilapidated village when the oil industry and other industries began to slip, Yale reached out and began doing something. A modern light and water system, up-to-date fire fighting equipment, paved streets, modern schools and churches, a wonderful white way, miles of sidewalks and street crossings, hundreds of new modern beautiful homes were the result, showing that there was a general spirit of progressiveness.¹³⁷

A clean town meant a progressive town, a town where organizations and citizenry cooperated, and that meant a better business future. The clean town created a better citizenry. And the work to make a clean town was one that involved both the male and the female organizations.

Loyalty to the town merchants, the promotion of roads, the beautification of the town, these were all policies pushed by the town business elites through their organizations and publicized by town papers. These were the ingredients to the progressive city.

Conclusions

The organizational frenzy of the early 1920s in Payne County affected the Klan in at least two ways. First, it is quite likely that many joined the Klan simply because joining an organization was a popular thing to do. The frequent note in obituaries that the person had belonged to multiple organizations reinforces the idea that belonging to organizations, though maybe not new, was certainly something popular. Those who belonged to the Klan could well have split their loyalties with one or more other organizations. They could also simply have joined the Klan because it was available, or, as H.F. Donnelley said, "It was the thing to do."¹³⁸ These were not the ideological motives upon which a successful Klavern was built.

¹³⁷"Clean Up -- Paint Up" *YD* (April 12, 1923): 4.

¹³⁸Interview with H.F. Donnelley, 7 July 1998. He said he'd been approached to join the Klan but had not. When asked why people joined, Mr. Donnelley stated, "...if you didn't belong to the Klan you weren't anybody." More particularly, he said that "...fear, negatives seem to predominate in human nature..." Why did the Klan decline? Because "...somebody recognized that it was a lot of damn foolery..." Mr. Donnelley, a much respected man in Stillwater, died in October, 2000, weeks before his one hundredth birthday.

Secondly, the Klan had trouble making its voice heard. Part of this was due to its own secrecy: its meetings were not reported, its speakers not named, and it publicly appeared only in circumstances tightly structured by itself so as to preserve the anonymity of the hooded Klan. This was very different from the front-page coverage given to Rotary, the American Legion, or other active, public groups at the time. Moreover, the Klan had trouble being a unique voice. Every organization with any civic pretensions could, and often did, discuss "Americanism," the greatest exponents being the American Legion and the Women's Christian Temperance Union. Multiple organizations, lead by the churches, spoke about public and private morality in traditional tones. Jim Crow was law and the white majority assumed that they had found the solution for the "race question": there was no debate among whites, with voices raised only upon reports of lynchings and other violent acts. What was the Klan to talk about?

Just as the farmer had found his favored organization in the Farmers' Union, so the urban business man found his in the organizations dominated by his class. With the businessman who was the editor of the newspaper as an ally, the ideas, concerns, and proposals of the urban business class in the cities of Payne County dominated public discussion. Given the prominence of full coverage on page one, the service clubs, the Chambers and the Retail Merchants' Associations were able to make their debates, their concerns heard.

What could the Klan do for this class of men that these other organizations could not? How could the Klan sound and look distinctive in this County of organizations?

Chapter IV

The Protestant County

“There will be the usual monthly preaching services Sunday, March 5, morning and evening. Every one come out and hear a real good gospel sermon.”
Correspondent from Vinco, March, 1922

“The thing that ought to be done in Yale is to hold a great Union meeting. If this could be done, and it can be, five hundred souls ought to be saved. Such a meeting would make Yale an ideal Christian City.

Rev. O.V. Beal, Methodist Church, Yale, June, 1923

“The Church stands for sanitation, morality, law enforcement, civilization of the highest type, and as an education factor it is unparalleled.

Rev. Olen Cornelius, First Baptist, Yale, November, 1921¹

The white Protestant Church was the most generally respected institution in the County. Concerned with neither denominational nor theological conflicts on the local level, the County's white Protestant churches practiced a pan-denominational evangelical Protestantism. Like the County, the major Protestant denominations in the County emphasized community through shared services, personalism within the congregations, and cooperation rather than conflict. As the arbiters of public values in the County, the church did not simply speak to traditional values but was traditional values in the concrete.

Probably the biggest gulf between these white Protestant congregations was that between rural and urban. The rural churches could claim an important role in the identity and integrity of the rural community which the urban churches could not match, but rural churches also had smaller congregations and shared ministers. Urban churches did provide for

¹“News of the Neighbors,” Stillwater Gazette, 3 March 1922, 7 [hereafter “SG”]; “Methodist Mention,” Yale Democrat, 28 June 1923, 8 [hereafter “YD”]; “Churches of Yale,” YD, 11 November 1921, c.3.

personalism within the congregation while they also got the benefits of scale: more extensive physical plant, more activities, and a more educated and professionalized clergy.

The position of minister in a Protestant church has always been ambiguous and evolving. Using the model of southern Baptists, it can be assumed that the ministry in the county was becoming more educated and more professional. As professionals, Protestant ministers, particularly in the larger urban congregations, identified themselves with businessmen and with the business progressivism they practiced. The good of the progressive city was still intimately bound up with notions of the it being the religious city, traditionally moral. The professionalizing ministry was the link associating business progressivism with the legitimacy of religion.

But just as the presence of ministers helped give the legitimacy of their position, and indirectly the Church, to the persons and concerns of the businessmen, the identification of several ministers with the Klan potentially gave similar legitimacy to the Klan.²

The County's Religious

The United States Department of Commerce conducted a religious census for many years. The religious census was taken decennially in the years named and was not a compilation from the decadal census. The census of 1926 shall be used most for this study.

In examining that data for Payne County, some things must be noted. In some cases the figures given were for a small number of congregations. Two congregations of the Latter Day Saints Reorganized are known (Yale and Stillwater), one Episcopalian (Stillwater), two Roman Catholic (Stillwater, Cushing), three Presbyterian. Some denominations had several large city congregations as well as smaller rural congregations, such as the Disciples of Christ and the Methodists. The United Brethren numbers are likely all rather small churches, mostly rural, with a circuit run out of Stillwater picking up most of them.³

²Ministers belonging to the Klan are identified in Appendix II, "Known Klansmen of Payne County." They shall also be discussed in Chapter VII, "The County and the Klan." See also Appendix I: "Chronology of Klan Activities in Payne County."

³City church congregations were identified from church listings in the county's papers, as well as from Abbott's Directory: Stillwater, Oklahoma City Directory, 1922.... (n.c.: Abbott's [publishing], 1922): 3; Polk's Stillwater, Cushing and Yale City Directory, 1926-27 (Kansas City,

Table 4.1: Religious census of Payne County, 1906 - 1936

Denomination	1906	1916	1926	1936
Disciples of Christ	897	1,320	2,232	1,445
Methodist Episcopal (North)	947	1,350	1,989	2,060
Southern Baptist	569	685	1,668	2,278
Presbyterian U.S.A. (North)	162	469	785	1,005
Churches of Christ	80	212	411	209
United Brethren	417	472	325	—
Methodist (South)	—	114	233	—
Nazarene	—	19	108	290
Lutheran (all synods)	44	36	83	267
Episcopal	15	40	60	136
Free Will Baptist	—	—	25	—
Adventist	56	29	—	—
Conser've Dunker Brethren	—	105	—	—
Congregationalist	122	73	—	—
Latter Day Saints, Reorg'd	30	97	—	—
Baptist (black, all)	<i>in S'n Bapt</i>	127	695	398
Methodist (black, all)	31	19	45	116
Free Methodist	39	—	—	—
Cumberland Presbyterian	100	—	—	—
Assembly of God	—	—	—	114
Roman Catholic	432	359	791	710
All Other Religious	593	80	525	1,160
Total Religious County	4,534	5,633	9,975	10,188
Estimated County Popul. ⁴	22,022	26,958	33,542	
Relig. County as percentage of total estimated popul.	20.6%	20.9%	29.7% ⁵	
Estimated County Adult Population ⁶			18,042	
Relig. Cty., as % of adult pop.			55.3%	

Mo.: R.L. Polk & Co., 1926): Stillwater 22-3, Cushing 21-2, Yale 2 [the directory numbering is by city].

⁴Estimate is necessary because population census are taken on the decade, while religious census are taken six years later. A simple mean was gotten from the combination of two consecutive population figures for the county. Thus: $[23,735 (1910) + 30,180 (1920) = 53,915] / 2 = 26,958$, etc. Note that Oklahoma had a census in 1906 and that figure was used. Actual census figures are: 1906 = 22,022; 1910 = 23,735; 1920 = 30,180; 1930 = 36,905.

⁵Denominational figures from: US Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Religious Bodies: 1906, v. 1, Summary and General Tables (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1910): 348-49; Religious Bodies: 1916, v. I (1919): 300-01; Religious Bodies: 1926, v. I (1930): 661-63; Religious Bodies: 1936, v. I (1941): 805-06. The volumes do not break numbers down further than the county level except for cities larger than 2,500. Some denominational categories change between volumes, but not enough to affect the ranking seriously. No definition is clearly given for the age of a "member". For census: Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910, v. III, Population, 1910 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1913): 476-77; Ibid., Fourteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1920, v. III, Population, 1920 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923): 822; Ibid., Fifteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1930, v. III, Population, 1930 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1933): 562.

⁶Numbers for female adult were hard to obtain prior to female suffrage, so numbers only used from 1920 and 1930 census. These numbers are: 1920: male = 8,550, female = 7,323 (tot. = 15,873); 1930: male = 10,358, female = 9,853 (tot. = 20,211). These figures were then used to determine a mean of adults, c.1925 (18,042).

There is also some question of what constituted a member. Some denominations made it a point of doctrine to admit only those who had reached an age at which they could consciously declare their membership in the church, but that was not usually pegged at a number of years the way citizenship was. In general it should be assumed that members were at least in their teens. This makes the total membership in relationship to the adult population of the county probably more accurate as a gauge of strength than a comparison with the entire population of Payne County. The Census figures also do not quantify countians who were sporadic or even regular attendees at a church but never bothered to join. This was the case of Ephraim Walls' Quaker parents who attended the Methodist Church in Perkins without joining.⁷

These numbers also don't mention some groups which were either too small in numbers or amorphous. There were at least a few Jewish families in the county, both the known ones being the families of businessmen: the Katz's and Arkey's of Stillwater and Cushing respectively.⁸ Pentecostals seemed to have been in their formative stages in the county in the early 1920s and lacked an identified institutional base until the 1936 Census (i.e., the Assemblies of God).⁹ Periodically a pentecostal meeting is reported in county newspapers, such as one at Yale in 1922.¹⁰ Pentecostals may also have been mixed in with or confused with a holiness group. At least twice there are reported holiness meetings near Vinco ("The Holiness people are having meetings near Vinco, and a lot of folks are attending," and "A big crowd is attending the Holiness meetings which have been going on for two weeks."). Some Adventists activity was reported. "The adventists who are holding a protracted meeting at Council Valley baptized ten new converts in the Cimarron river Sunday." In another report, a husband and wife from the I.X.L. district west of Perkins went to the week-long encampment for Seventh Day Adventists held near

⁷Interview with Mr. Ephraim Wall, January 15, 2000.

⁸Peggy McCormick, Making a Home Inn Stillwater (Perkins: Evans Publications, 1989): 25-6. They attended synagogue at Oklahoma City, though Jake Katz of Stillwater, who's business still resides on Main Street, not only contributed to the building projects of the congregations in town but also held Jewish services in his home.

⁹There were "Pentecostal" congregations listed for Yale and Cushing in Polk's Directory, Yale 22, Cushing 2.

¹⁰"News of Neighbors," SG, 18 August 1922, 7; "News of Neighbors," SG, 25 August 1922, 7; "All Around News," YD, 20 January 1922, 5.

Enid.¹¹ The sole Christian Science congregation was in Stillwater.¹² There might also have been some Moslems among the "syrians" (Lebanese) who included some peddlers and at least one merchant in the county.¹³

There were also African-American ("colored") congregations, although the black population was small and the newspapers almost never mention any black institutions. Stillwater had a Holiness Church and Mount Zion Baptist (National). Cushing had two Baptist Churches (with 87 and 208 members), a Church of God and Christ (pentecostal, with 12 members), and both an African Methodist Episcopal Church and a Methodist Episcopal Church (22 members). Yale showed no organized black congregation.¹⁴ Although also evangelical Protestants, these churches were always separated from the white majority Protestants in the public record, either by the use of "colored" in the city directories, or in the silence about African American churches in the newspapers. They stand outside our view both because of the relative powerlessness of African Americans in the County and because of the lack of information about them at this time.

Since 1889 the county has been largely Protestant and largely churched. Of the churched during the period from 1921-1923, about 75% were in the top seven Protestant bodies of the County: Disciples of Christ, Methodist (north), Southern Baptist, Presbyterian, Churches of Christ, United Brethren, and Methodist (south). If only the top five are considered, they account for about 70% of the churched in our period. At that time these Protestant bodies were relatively awash with members and quite evangelical.

These figures point to a rather diverse religious population. Contrary to the state as a whole wherein the Southern Baptist Convention was largest denomination, Payne County fit with the model of a county settled largely by upper midwesterners and upper southern. The Disciples of Christ, deriving from the Campbellite break from Calvinism in the Second Great Awakening,

¹¹"All Around News," YD, 6 January 1922, 5; "News of Neighbors," SG, 18 August 1922, 7; "News of Neighbors," SG, 1 September 1922, 7.

¹²Polk's Directory, Stillwater 22.

¹³See exhibit on "Syrians" at the Museum of Texas Cultures, San Antonio, Texas. These could also have been Maronite Christian, a group which recognized the Pope in Roman as head.

¹⁴Polk's Directory, Stillwater 22-3, Cushing 21-2, Yale 2. Membership numbers are from the directory when given.

was the largest denomination. It had major churches in each city and many towns, plus some rural circuit churches. True to their northern heritage, the countians made the Methodist Episcopal, North, the second denomination, again with major churches and rural circuits. In the 1936 census the main Methodist body eventually passed the Disciples in County membership. With their peculiar emphasis upon "method" and sanctification, their arminianism, their strong Bishops and ecclesia, and their often arbitrary rotation of ministers, the Methodists always stand apart somewhat. They were an evangelical church that accepted modernism, a high church ecclesia running a church loaded with rather common people.¹⁵

Southern Baptists came in third in numbers in the county, having churches in at least Stillwater, Yale and Cushing. There were some rural churches associated with the Convention. The strong congregationalism of the Baptist movement meant each Southern Convention Church was voluntarily associated, owned its own physical plant and absolutely chose its own ministers.

The fourth denomination, the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America (northern) also had churches in Stillwater, Yale and Cushing, with none identified in newspapers in the rural areas. The denomination had both an elaborated hierarchy of councils, with strong lay participation at all levels, and a congregationalism regarding the ownership of the physical plant and the selection of ministers. By this time they were the most "modernist" of the major County denominations, but they had also abandoned all vestiges of Calvinism for an Arminianism similar to the Methodists.¹⁶

¹⁵Sydney E. Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972): 775, 777. For descriptions of the national denominations, see respective parts of Ahlstrom. See also United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Religious Bodies: 1926, vol. II, Separate Denominations: Statistics, History, Doctrine Organization, and Work (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1929). For the religious demography of Oklahoma Territory, see Michael Owen Roark, "Oklahoma Territory: Frontier Development, Migration, and Culture Areas," (Syracuse, NY: Ph.D. dissertation, Syracuse University, 1979): 310-22. See particularly the series of maps, Figures 8:2-11, pp. 312-21.

¹⁶For Northern Presbyterianism, the form found in Oklahoma, see Sydney E. Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1972): 814-15, 844-45. The small Episcopal congregation in Stillwater represented the Protestant denomination most at ease with modernism and least tainted with fundamentalism.

The Churches of Christ, another creation of the Second Great Awakening, was in the long Protestant tradition which sought to mimic the primitive church. Radically congregational in polity, they adopted such "high church" things as weekly communion, but without the ecclesia that accompanied such regular observance in the Roman Church. They also generally eschewed instrumental music and hymns, favoring the acappela singing of psalms.¹⁷

The United Brethren were actually a Methodist off-shoot of the nineteenth-century and, in 1968, they re-joined with Methodism. They formed due to the influence of Methodism upon German Reformed and Mennonite churchmen, becoming clearly separate in 1815 with their first general conference.¹⁸ In Payne County this denomination had a church in Stillwater but the majority of their congregations were in the rural reaches of the county. Another Methodist group, the Southern Methodist, derived from the splintering of Methodism before the Civil War. They were, for our concerns, the same as their much larger northern counterparts in polity and in basic theology. The north and south divisions in Methodism would last until the 1950s. In the county they had at least one church, Trinity Methodist in Stillwater.

In the reality of Payne County in the early 1920s, though, it is better to speak of a rather homogenized evangelical Protestantism than to focus on denominations. This was an era in which the pan-protestant Christian Endeavor movement was quite prominent, ministers urged all Protestants to come to revivals, ministerial associations existed, and even some union church services were held. And evangelicalism was in the air. It was a time when even the relatively reserved Presbyterians sponsored revivals. Also, all the major denominations followed a similar

¹⁷The Churches of Christ were the culmination of the Campbellite ideas of the Second Great Awakening. They appeared when a loose grouping asked to be counted separate from the Disciples of Christ in the 1906 Religious Census. They were radically congregational and to a certain extent reflected a socio-economic split from the more mainstream and middle class Disciples of Christ, the Churches of Christ spreading more among the rural and less economically secure. "Conservatives were most numerous in the poor rural areas of the South where rustic forms of church life remained, and where a piano was a snobbish luxury," Ahlstrom, Religious History, 822-23.

¹⁸The United Brethren were not related to the pietistic Dunkard Brethren who had arrived in the 18th-century, settling among and becoming identified with the Anabaptist Mennonite and Amish, the so-called Pennsylvania Dutch. See Ahlstrom, Religious History, 439-41.

crowded weekly schedules of church services and meetings. Protestant Christianity demanded more time of its adherents in those days than in ours.

The great national debates were not discussed by the ministers in the county's papers. The silence on these matters seems to further emphasize the pan-Protestantism of the County. Modernism was still raging in some denominations nationally, but no minister was recorded making a reference to evolution or Biblical criticism in the period of the hooded Klan. "The Fundamentals" had been published in 1913, giving a word to our language which encompasses several streams of conservative thinking including the inerrancy of scriptures. Again, in the newspaper coverage of churches and in the pronouncements made by ministers in County newspapers, there is no overt discussion of inerrancy, nor any mention of "fundamentalism". There were claims that a minister was preaching "old time religion", but no minister was recorded in the papers mentioning Dispensational Premillennialism.¹⁹

How did this religious population and these religious institutions, this dominant Protestantness, fit and function in the county in the early 1920s? Structurally, it is easiest to consider first rural and then urban churches. What will be found is that structures were different between rural and urban, but the evangelical pan-Protestantism remained.

Rural Churches

Rural congregations were both an essential element of the rural communities and the natural outgrowth of those communities. They formed part of the nucleus of institutions and geography that created the self-identity of the rural community, and their numbers and form reflect those communities.

Although the rural congregations of Payne County varied in their structure and size, they shared many characteristics. Most importantly, they were all Protestant: there was no report of a Roman Catholic chapel in the rural communities. There were undoubtedly a few Catholics out in the rural county but they likely had to travel to worship and observe the sacraments.

¹⁹For Dispensational Premillennialism, see Ahlstrom, Religious History, 808-12.

The rural congregations were of a limited number of Protestant denominations. No complete record of the County's rural churches exists, but church was one thing almost always mentioned by the rural correspondents to the newspapers of the time, with the minister's name almost always included if he had appeared or was due to appear. The higher church Protestants, Episcopalians and, for this matter, Presbyterians, had no rural congregations. There was one German-American Evangelical Lutheran congregation, a congregation which later re-located to Stillwater and became Salem Lutheran Church. The rural congregations were overwhelmingly Disciples of Christ, Christian Church, Methodist, and the Evangelical United Brethren. There likely were also a few Southern Baptists congregations. The best documented and possibly most numerous were the United Brethren. Proportionally, the United Brethren likely had the highest percentage of rural members of any large county denomination.

There were some others. Pentecostals, Adventists and "holiness" groups seemed to have existed in the rural setting or in the smaller towns, though in this period it cannot be confirmed any formed a congregation.²⁰ There were no Quaker meetings identified.²¹ The white denominations mentioned in the rural county, then, were all Protestant evangelicals.

In the districts with black schools there were likely black congregations. The rural black churches are hard to identify through newspaper correspondents, and since the rural correspondents for the newspapers were as chary at mentioning black people as were the newspaper editors, it is difficult to identify how many small gatherings of African-Americans there were. As with all things black, the newspapers rarely mentioned black churches and there are no directories to the County at the time which list rural churches, white or black.

Another generality about rural congregations is that they were nearly as numerous as schoolhouses. This was a product of several factors. Transportation was something that helped keep numerous little un-ministered meetings going: roads frequently got so bad because of rain that even the local "Sunday school" had to be canceled.

²⁰The "holiness" groups sometimes mentioned by rural correspondents were likely either pentecostals or some off-shoot from Methodism. They likely represented a small congregation around a compelling minister rather than any organized denomination.

²¹Interview with Mr. Ephraim Wall, January 15, 2000.

Probably most of these congregations relied on monthly or bimonthly visits by ministers. Generally the minister would stay all day and conduct the Sunday evening services. Often they would arrive the night before and stay with a family in the congregation, and rural correspondents sometimes even listed the name of the family which fed the minister on Sunday.²² But Protestantism as practiced in this county did not need a minister every Sunday to flourish. Often a Sunday school meeting was the heart of the Sabbath, led by an elder or other lay person.

These congregations also served many non-religious functions. They were part of the self-identity of the community. They were a social gathering with much visiting and discussion going on in breaks between Sunday school and church. Dinners occurred with some frequency after services, another social binder and social occasion. And the preaching and periodic revivals helped provide removal from the everyday cares and some spectacle for rural residents who worked hard and long hours during the week.

Since many of these churches were the religious focus of a district and the local people were rather limited in their choices, it is likely that few of these congregations were denominationally pure.²³ It was rare that a rural correspondent to the county papers mentioned the denomination of their local congregation. An example of this pan-Protestantism was in the I.X.L district, west of Perkins. In August, 1922, the correspondent with the Gazette noted that "Preacher Isaac", a Baptist from east of Perkins, would be preaching Saturday evening. Then at the Sunday evening services, A. Burton would give the Bible study on, "Will There Ever Be Another Universal (a great monarch) Kingdom Rule the World According to Prophecy?" Mr. Burton and his wife were about to leave for the Seventh Day Adventist encampment near Enid.²⁴

²²"Mr. Gilliam preached a very interesting sermon Sunday morning," reported the Cottonwood correspondent, and then Mr. Gilliam had lunch at Mack Hams' home in Mound Valley. ("News of the Neighbors," SG, 14 April 1922, 7.

²³Ted Ownby, Subduing Satan: Religion, Recreation, and Manhood in the Rural South, 1865-1920, Fred W. Morrison Series in Southern Studies (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990): 128-9. Ownby argued that this again showed the common moral ground and emotional religion shared by most the protestant denominations of the time.

²⁴"News of the Neighbors," SG, 4 August 1922, 7; "News of the Neighbors," SG, 18 August 1922, 7.

It is likely that denomination didn't matter as much as zeal, and that proximity to a meeting was as strong an incentive to attend as the denominational label.

There were many school house congregations, groups which were pure assemblies of believers, not burdened with the material trappings of a church physical plant and parsonage. Most rural congregations, even the ones with churches in the early 1920s, began in school houses. They always got ministers on circuit, an event frequently noted by the rural correspondents.²⁵

The congregations met more frequently than Sunday morning and participated in more church events than the Sabbath morning church. The nucleus of the Sunday activities was often Sunday school. Sunday school could be held even if no preacher was scheduled or the roads made it impossible for him to attend. Frequently the rural correspondents to county newspapers noted not only that Sunday school occurred but gave the attendance figures. Rarer still, they would give a glimpse of what was discussed, such as in Mr. Burton's lesson noted above. This brevity about the content of these meetings underscores the fact that to rural (and urban) people, religious meetings were an event, social and spectacle, as well as a time for religious thought and feeling.

As with most churches in the county, these small congregations usually had meetings during Sunday evening and a further service Wednesday night. They might sport a youth meeting or a Christian Endeavor group before the Sunday evening services. These congregations usually sponsored some women's groups which were often built around support of missions. These women's "circles" would also provide a significant, gender specific social occasion.

²⁵There will be the usual monthly preaching services Sunday, March 5, morning and evening. Everyone come out and hear a real good gospel sermon." See "News of the Neighbors," SG, 3 March 1922, 7. "Next Sunday will be the usual monthly preaching by pastor Forbes, both morning and evening." ("Vinco Items," Perkins Journal, 30 September 1921, 4 [hereafter "P.J."]). This changed later, for the correspondent from Vinco for the Stillwater Gazette noted about a year later that Mr. Forbes of Guthrie was at Vinco the first and third Sunday of each month. ("News of the Neighbors," SG, 18 August 1922, 7). The Ingalls Methodist Church was supplied by J.C. Henderson who have one-quarter of his time there and three-quarter at Ripley. ("News of the Neighbors," SG, 6 January 1922, 3).

One of the groups setting up churches in the county were the United Brethren. In 1894 at a log schoolhouse, the Glenwood School, a group of United Brethren formed a church under Rev. W.M. Tillberry. Later, in 1895, the Rev. Frank C. Eden gave a revival. Barbara Wells Soliman, the historian of the church, noted that:

There were thirty conversions and many people were reclaimed. Forty-nine persons united with the church and regular members were greatly strengthened. The schoolhouse was packed beyond capacity for Reverend Eden's revival. In fact, Reverend Eden had to enter through a window for the closing service because the entry was jammed with standing people....²⁶

In 1896 they built a church with lumber hauled from Guthrie and the congregation got a charter. The church building was not finished until 1898 but was in use before then. At its dedication in 1898 it hosted the conference meeting which organized the Oklahoma Conference of the United Brethren. The Church was organized in productive farmland in what became the High Prairie District No. 40, immediately northeast of Perkins. In 1908, the Chapel was valued at \$800.00 and the parsonage at \$370.00. In that year, a group living west of the chapel decided to cut the inconvenience of distance and form their own congregation. The split was very amicable and the Lost Creek Church was formed. At various times the two congregations shared ministers and always maintained many connections. In about 1910, these two churches were joined into a "circuit" along with the Mehan Church. They did not all get separate pastors until 1934. In 1932 the membership of Eden Chapel was 42, Lost Creek 91, and nearby Mehan, with a Union church of several denominations, 62.²⁷

Although it is somewhat ambiguous, during the period of this study Eden Chapel was part of the Stillwater Circuit, which included Stillwater, Eden Chapel, Lost Creek, Mehan, Payne Center, Elm Grove, Clayton, Beulah, and Glencoe churches.²⁸ The conference had many small

²⁶Barbara Wells Soliman, 1894-1984. Ninety Years of Country Faith: History of Eden Chapel (Perkins: Barbara Wells Soliman, 1985): 2. See also: Paul L. Davis, Marvin M. Polson, *et al*, 80 Years In Oklahoma and Texas: A History of The Oklahoma-Texas Conference of The Evangelical United Brethren Church (Shawnee, Ok.: American Printing Company, 1968): 246-48.

²⁷Soliman, Eden Chapel, 4-11.

²⁸Davis, 80 Years, 411.

churches and expanded steadily until the 26th Annual Conference with met in Stillwater in 1922, the first held after the recession really hit the County.

There were no new churches built during this year. This was the first year since the beginning of the Conference that a new church building had not been constructed. There are several reasons for this condition. In many sections there had been crop failures; some churches reported industrial difficulties; and the high cost of materials hindered church erection. The Conference again reported a large loss in membership.

At that conference the total membership was 3,047, down 72 from the previous year despite over 500 "accessions" (new members). That decline reversed the next year when 3,242 members, a gain of 195, was reported for the conference.²⁹

Eden Chapel happened to be the best documented of the rural churches in the county and the United Brethren circuit was the best documented rural circuit. Eden Chapel showed several characteristics of the typical rural church. They were scattered. They depended upon a local community but also upon circuit ministers. Revivals were important in their history: The Eden Chapel had the 1895 one with Rev. Eden, for whom the church was ultimately names, and another of great importance occurred in 1911. It likely had a revival at least once a year.³⁰ And the prosperity of the churches reflected the agricultural prosperity of the surroundings. The loss of membership for the United Brethren in Oklahoma noted in 1922 was probably due to the movement of farmers brought on by the agricultural depression in the state that year.

There was a Lutheran circuit in Payne County. It had a very complex history due to it having several churches which were torn by the theological conflicts between its branches found in German Lutheranism. The denominational fighting was exacerbated by the emergence of several strong, extended families and the resulting familial rivalries of the various parishes. Eventually some of these German Lutherans founded the Evangelical Lutheran Friedens congregation, Lutheran General Synod of Nebraska, locating the church in Stillwater. Today this

²⁹Ibid., 183-87. The quotation was taken from a thesis by Rev. Fred W. Gaston, "History of the United Brethren Church in Oklahoma," (1946: no publisher or date given). At least the I.X.L. congregation was also added at times to the Mehan circuit, though it likely met in the school house that still stands on US Rt. 33 about five miles west of Perkins. Parts of the western county may have been handled by circuits out of Guthrie and Perry.

³⁰On the annual nature of revivals, see Ownby, Subduing Satan, 144. In Payne County some congregations seemed to have held revivals more frequently.

church is Salem Lutheran Church, part of the more liberal Evangelical Lutheran denomination. These rural Lutheran congregations, allied with the strict Missouri, the Ohio, and the Evangelical Synods, were rather uniquely ethnic in the county and are ecclesiastically the "highest" churches found in rural Payne County. In the period of 1918 to 1924, the Salem minister was Wilhelm Krauleidis who also filled pulpits in Perry and Garber.³¹ The Lutheran Friedens congregation was the most different Protestant church in the rural or urban County in terms of worship, ecclesia, and doctrinal strictness as well as ethnicity.

The rural congregations faced some difficulties which the urban congregations did not face, particularly bad transportation and small size. But in their full weekly schedules, the social and spectacle elements of their meetings, and their pan-Protestant evangelicalism, they matched their fellow urban congregations. In their day the churches helped hold the human soil of the rural communities in place.

Urban Churches

Urban churches tended to be wealthier and substantially larger than their rural counterparts.³² They usually had a church building and, in fact, this was a period with some rather large churches. And these churches seemed to be prospering. In Stillwater in the early 1920s both the Methodists and the Presbyterians built new sanctuaries, and the Disciples of Christ church built a large addition.³³ The Catholic Church not only had the church plant but also a

³¹Jean Friedemann, Bread for the Third Generation: An Early History of Salem Lutheran Church, Stillwater, Oklahoma (Stillwater: Western Publications, 1987): 109-20. Her history indicated the Missouri Synod St. Johns Church and the Ohio Synod church were located in Lovell and Marena, former rural towns located on or near Coyle Road in southwestern Payne County. Newsom claimed the Marena Church was a Methodist Church. See D. Earl Newsom, The Story of Exciting Payne County (Stillwater, Oklahoma: New Forums Press, 1997): 214-15. The difference may be due to the demise of the Lutheran church by about 1920.

³²Without extensive work on the files of many churches, the wealth of the urban churches versus rural churches must be assumed rather than proven. The Religious Census gives averages for each denomination state-wide. The wealth of local churches is not listed in the printed volumes. Urban churches had more members and that alone would make urban churches generally richer.

³³"Large Crowd Attends Cornerstone Ceremony," SG, 2 February 1923, 1; for Presbyterian fund raising for church, see "Chest of Joash Series," SG, 13 July 1923, 7; for fund raising for the Disciples of Christ Church, spurred by a revival, see "Proposed Addition to Christian Church Adopted," SG, 9 December 1921, 1.

rectory and a school which they re-started.³⁴ Most city churches seem to have had parsonages as well as church buildings. Urban churches also boasted a membership that was occupationally more diverse than the farmers of the rural church. The urban church had more types of activities occurring within its walls than its rural counterpart, especially meetings by outside groups. When service clubs came into existence it was common for them to meet in a church where there was space designed for meetings and a kitchen large enough to feed a crowd.³⁵ Outside groups visiting a town were also feted in churches and Boys Scouts and Girls Scouts met in them. This was simply a difference in scale, though, for the rural church also served as a local meeting place.

The urban churches were bigger than their rural cousins. They were denominationally more diverse. Stillwater in 1926, for example, featured Disciples of Christ, Southern Baptist, Methodist Episcopal Church (north), Trinity Methodist (south), Presbyterian (north), United Brethren, Episcopal, Roman Catholic, Church of Christ Scientist, and Lutheran. There was probably a Church of Jesus Christ, Latter Day Saints, Reorganized, and a small meeting of Nazarenes.³⁶ The diverse populations serviced, the more diverse functions served, and the diversity of the religious populations in towns, promoted a certain pan-Protestantism on these churches the way proximity and rural community identity worked in the rural churches.

The white urban churches practiced a pan-Protestantism which diminished denominational differences. This urban Protestantism was symbolized in a way by the existence of ministerial associations and a certain pan-denominational Protestantism practiced in the towns. For example, in Stillwater the Methodist (north) and Trinity Methodist (South), plus the Presbyterians and United Brethren, held combined services during the months of July and August, 1921.³⁷ This may have been because of vacations by parishioners or ministers, but it indicated the rather easy way churches of the mainline Protestant denominations cooperated.

³⁴Polk's Directory, Stillwater 23-4.

³⁵See the files of the Stillwater Rotary Club, which met in the Presbyterian Church. Files provided by Dr. Roscoe Rouse.

³⁶Polk's Directory, Stillwater 22-3.

³⁷"Union Church Services," Stillwater Advance Democrat, 30 June 1921, 1 [hereafter "SAD"].

Although there are reminders by ministers that through it all they must remain true to their own congregations, there was virtually no denominational invective in the papers during these years, this at a time when Presbyterians were fighting each other, and the fighting between backers of the Fundamentals and those of modernism had split several denominations at the national level.³⁸

Religious Exercises

Most Protestant churches followed about the same schedule of services each week. Sunday mornings would start with Sunday school, followed by a church service identified frequently as "preaching" in the rural churches. With some frequency there would be a picnic or activity Sunday afternoon, but the regular schedule began again in the evening with a service. This could feature, first, a meeting of various fellowship groups or meetings of the pan-denominational Christian Endeavor movement, then a meeting that often involved a talk by the minister. The congregations would meet again in mid-week for a Wednesday evening service, often including Christian Endeavor and prayer service. This type of schedule is, today, the purview of the more evangelical, fundamentalist or pentecostal churches, but in the early 1920s even the relatively high church Presbyterians followed this schedule.³⁹

Sunday school had considerable prominence in church announcements.⁴⁰ In 1920s Payne County the Sunday school movement was alive and well. Our friends at Eden Center

³⁸Ahlstrom, Religious History, 813-15, 815-16, for Presbyterians, and for "The Fundamentals"; for contemporary fights over the modernism and fundamentalist controversies within the Presbyterian Church over the liberal Northern Baptist Rev. Harry Emerson Fosdick's call to the First Presbyterian Church of New York City in 1922, see pp. 910-12.

³⁹All newspapers carried weekly sections on churches in the community listing the main white protestant churches' schedules, often with sermon titles. Catholic and black churches are the most prominent of the many churches not mentioned. In addition, several papers featured columns written by ministers or very complete coverage of one or two denominations. In Yale, Mr. Gerber's Democrat gave great space to Mallory's preachments from the Methodist "Tabernacle", while Mr. Minnick not only featured the Baptist's Olen Cornelius but featured several "letters" to the editor which took humorous advantage of the rather bombastic Rev. Mallory. For an example of the latter, see "To The Editor Of The Yale Record," Yale Record, 6 January 1922, 1.

⁴⁰Ahlstrom, Religious History, 425. The Sunday school movement began first in England in the 1780's, part of a general movement of the times to increase christian education. It spread first to Philadelphia, then gained general currency during that tremendous religious spurt in the United States known as the Second Great Awakening. The American Sunday School Union was organized in 1824 to help coordinate and supply literature for what was naturally a local

church did not have one in 1922, so Brother Gilliam urged the members to come together and organize Sunday schools. "It's something you owe to the community and the children therein." Another example of the importance placed on Sunday Schools was the independent action of Lyman Platt.

Lyman Platt, a former Stillwater garage man who is farming in Center View District [just west of Perkins], had no Sunday School to send his children to, and not wanting to go into town for service, made two trips with his bus one Sunday lately and had plenty of children for a good school at the school house.⁴¹

Note that the reasons for this were both the desire for Sunday school and the distance to town.

Sunday school numbers were quite frequently touted. The Lost Creek people noted that they had 24 attend Sunday school one Sabbath in July, 1922, "Pretty good for the way it was raining." The Cottonwood Sunday school set a record of 102 in April, 1922: Their previous record was 101. Two weeks later they reached 146 in attendance. In Yale, the Baptists set out to reach 300 attendance before Christmas in 1921. They got 328 the week before Christmas, falling back to 262 on Christmas. A year later in early December they boasted attendance of 383. The Yale Methodists in the first quarter of 1923 were complimented by their District Superintendent for having the highest average attendance as a percentage of their membership in the district: 210. In Stillwater, a letter from a minister, Walter H. Gilliam, promoted Sunday school attendance and asked any churches outside Stillwater which have 101 or more in Sunday school to tell him. In a response to their growing Sunday school numbers, the Disciples of Christ in Stillwater added to their already large structure in 1921. Their main building had been completed only four years previously but was already too small. Their 1921 addition was 26' by 56', two stories, adding another 220 seats, and was specifically built to better house their Sunday school which they claimed numbered over a thousand members.⁴²

movement. By late in the nineteenth century there were Sunday School departments in some of the denominations.

⁴¹"News of the Neighbors," SG, 5 May 1922, 7; "News of the Neighbors," SG, 28 April 1922, 7.

⁴²"News of the Neighbors," SG, 7 July 1922, 7; "News of the Neighbors," SG, 7 April 1922, 7; "News of the Neighbors," SG, 21 April 1922, 7; "Methodist Mention," YD, 31 May 1923,

The churches of Cushing mounted a Sunday school campaign among the major churches. This "Go to Sunday School" campaign, sponsored by the "Brotherhoods of the Churches of Cushing," reported their results for the biggest churches in June, 1922: Presbyterians, 149; Methodists, 260; Southern Baptists, 337; Disciples of Christ, 344; total, 1,090. Note that this was another example of intra-denominational evangelism. In an accompanying editorial, the editor not only complained that the totals would have been higher had more churches reported their numbers, but also spoke about Sunday school with the voice of the city progressive businessman.

Considering the fact that the thermometer was hovering around the 100 mark and that many are away on their vacations or are entertaining vacation visitors, this is not as bad as might be. However it is such a small percentage of the population of Cushing in attendance that it would be worth while for the city to take notice as every town is judged by visitors by its churches (not buildings) Sunday schools and its public schools as much and some times more than by its business houses by prospective residents and business men.⁴³

This joining of religion and civic progressivism was common and will be noticed particularly in the role of the ministers to be discussed later.

A similar movement that was specifically pan-protestant was the Christian Endeavor movement, founded in 1881 to help revitalize Sunday schools by Dr. Francis E. Clark in Maine. It spread rapidly, paralleling Sunday schools in many ways. Both held conferences on the county, state, and national level, both had all ages enrolled, and both were part of a broader educational and evangelical effort rooted in energies released in the Second Great Awakening.⁴⁴ Endeavor, though, was specifically pan-protestant: even though there were pan-denominational Sunday school conferences the Sunday schools were more specifically denominational.

An Endeavor meeting was reported and described from the Vinco (Methodist) Endeavor group.

8; "Do You Go To Sunday School?" SG, 17 March 1922, 7; "Christian Church To Be Enlarged," SG, 2 December 1921, 8.

⁴³"Sunday School Campaign Gets Results," Cushing Citizen, 29 June 1922, 3 [hereafter "CC"].

⁴⁴Ahlstrom, Religious History, 858.

We had a big crowd out to endeavor Sunday night. Meeting was led by Aletha Gearhart; topic was, "The Cause of Happiness." Sylvia Case and Ivan Knox gave talks. Beryl gave a reading and said a few words; also Mrs. May Lynn. Mrs. Nellie Rice told a story relating to happiness, and we had a real good meeting. Sunday next, Sylvia Case will tell something interesting of Joseph's life, and Beryl Knox will tell the beautiful story of Ruth and Naomi. We will have a Bible story every endeavor meeting.

Endeavors frequently had joint meetings and these meetings often were another of those rural-urban events that helped connect the parts of the county. In October of 1923 the Happy Valley Christian Endeavor had a meeting in which it was joined by the Endeavors of Cushing and the Harmony Endeavor. In 1922 the First Presbyterian Church in Stillwater had a Christian Endeavor union banquet for all Endeavors to attend, an annual event. The next year the Guthrie District Christian Endeavor Union convention was held at Cushing. "Inspirational addresses...." were to be featured, with Field Secretary Harold Singer the main attraction. Seniors (older people) were charged 50¢ to attend while Juniors and Intermediates only paid 25¢.⁴⁵

The Revival: Morality Play and Spectacle

In this quite Protestant and evangelical county, the revival was in ways the penultimate expression of religiosity. It was the most distinctive event of modern American evangelical Christianity. Revivals were demonstrative faith, physical faith, countering a quietist, inward faith in much the same way that the county people trusted to a labor theory of value, obvious and physical, countering the hidden and sleight of hand of bankers and middle-men. Revivals were physical manifestations, labors for the Lord, from the hearty singing to the sweat on the evangelist's brow. It was a labor of religious emotionalism.⁴⁶

The characteristics of the revival range beyond religion. First, it was gathering, a coming together. The gathering of believers was in itself an affirmation. In a county whose expanses were filled with men and women spending days working alone in fields and household, the

⁴⁵"News of the Neighbors," *SG*, 24 February 1922, 7; "Lincoln Lines," *QC*, 25 October 1923, 5; "Jottings About Town," *SG*, 5 May 1922, 8; "C.E. Convention," *QC*, 25 October 1923, 5; "A Successful Convention," *QC*, 1 November 1923, 1.

⁴⁶On the physicality and emotionalism of the revival, see Ownby, *Subduing Satan*, 156-59.

coming together was both an affirmation of faith and of community, a religious equivalent to the constant cries of cooperation from Farmers' Union, Chambers, Rotarians and churchmen. And as a gathering it was also a secular social event, a time to re-acquaint and to perform those characteristic actions of speech, pose, position that reaffirmed community.⁴⁷

It also was speech. This could be plain or elevated: one connected to, the other elevated, the listener and occasion. At the Antioch Church in the Rose Hill, District 69, an unnamed minister and his wife, the song leader, led a revival. "We have a good talker, one who knows how to make his subject interesting." The anonymous preacher had come and spoken of interesting things in plain language.⁴⁸

The repetition of words and ideas, intermixed with jeremiad and determined betterment, eventually blended together into something like a chant. The words were not for intellectual betterment or even new ideas: The words were the same words always heard, they were the same stories repeated for edification. It was formulaic speech put forward in a context which had an anticipated beginning, middle, and ending: the evangelist's words were incantations.

Revivals also had various actors filling known roles: Preacher, song-leader, chorus, audience. Revivals are quite formal structurally, and the ligatures of that form are words. Words spoken in public had the pretenses of learning and their being spoken in public elevated the occasion, but the major function of the talking or preaching was to initiate the proceedings, to connect and to reassure. And the fact that all knew the form, all knew the words, allowed all to focus on the emotionalism of the event. The responses from the audience, the songs of choir and assembly, and the coming forth of those to be saved completed the total involvement in the occasion.

The revival was, above all, religious spectacle. It had a cast that included distinctive roles for all attending, even for the backsliders who attended. It had a form and progression of events. It combined the arts of speech, music, and acting, much like opera. It was the one place in which

⁴⁷"Revival meetings were festivals that celebrated the church-centered, home-centered values of evangelical culture." Ownby, Subduing Satan, 144.

⁴⁸"Rose Hill Items," CC, 9 February 1922, 8.

open displays of strong emotions were not condemned but actually encouraged. And there were no simple observers: Filling a seat made you part of the morality play. There was chant, exhortative speech, emotional outburst, rousing loud song, a community ensemble.⁴⁹ It confirmed community, purged the soul, and legitimized belief. It was a group enactment of the individual journey from recognition of sin to chastisement, exhortation to the good, penance for recognized sin, and the emotional release of affirmed absolution. It was Genesis to Jesus.⁵⁰

This was a period of plentiful revivals and some well known revivalists. In December of 1921, Billy Sunday visited Yale. It was not a planned stop on his tour. The Yalites heard he was leading a revival in Tulsa and contacted him.⁵¹ Although not technically a "revival," they had been touched by the great revivalist of their age. But, in fact, revivals came in all sizes, with and without famous men and women. They were sponsored by churches of many denominations and they happened frequently. In most minds revivals are associated with Baptists and Methodists, but in Payne County they covered a broad group of protestant churches.

Revivals frequently involved open cooperation between congregations, another sign of the pan-Protestant evangelicalism of the County. In 1923 the Methodists and Presbyterians in Cushing held a "Union Revival". The revivalist, Rev. Frank Mathias, assured the paper that "...he will bring his [sic] a splendid song leader." In Yale in 1923, the Nazarene Church sponsored a

⁴⁹"Beyond their importance for the unconverted, alter experiences were community events in which church members helped and cajoled the unconverted toward the alter and then observed as the penitents wrestled with and hopefully resolved their spiritual crises." See Ownby, Subduing Satan, 153.

⁵⁰"The Revival grows in interest and power in spite of the handicaps of inclement weather. We are having additions at nearly every meeting. There will be baptismal services Monday night after the preaching service. Everybody invited to see this sacred ordinance preach a sermon by symbol of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord." ("Christian Church Notes," YR, 14 April 1922, 1. On the importance of baptisms at the end of revivals: "For most evangelicals, the traditional Christian rite of initiation had become a major spectator event; new converts were pledging union not merely with God and a specific church but with a localities entire evangelical community." See Ownby, Subduing Satan, 154.

⁵¹They brought him over by car one morning. He talked to school children in the Baptist Church, then spoke to the largest audience ever in the High School auditorium on the subject of "Hope." Reverends Wood and Proffitt assisted. The address was "...not a sermon ranting about conditions as they are, nor was it filled with invectives against the people in general but rather as a talk on matters that were easily understood and matters which the ordinary persons have knowledge of from day to day." Then they took Billy Sunday back to Tulsa. The great man had come (or been brought) and he had spoken of interesting things in plain language, thing about which they already knew. "Billy Sunday Preaches in Yale," YD, 14 December 1921, 1.

revival. "The services are of a union nature and everyone is cordially invited to attend." Run by the Gamble Gospel Team, they were held in an empty lot just south of the newspaper building. Sometimes the revivals were so frequent they almost overlapped in an area. In late December, 1921, Star Valley finished a revival, while in nearby Ingalls the Methodist Church was continuing a revival under Brother Henderson, assisted by Rev. Mr. Wagoner. And in Perkins the revivals sounded almost like a tag team match. "The [sic] C.S. Clark closed a successful revival service at Perkins Sunday night at the Methodist Church. Evangelist Chappell, of the Baptist Church followed, beginning a meeting Monday night. The Christian people of Perkins are working together now better than for many years."⁵² The revival appealed to a broad Protestantism. This broad audience was another demonstration of the popularity of the revival.

Sometimes revivals received almost no advanced notice and were, in fact, simply a weeks worth of meetings by the pastor or a nearby colleague. But most revivals were planned and publicized. In June of 1923 the Methodists of Yale announced a revival for September. It was to be a "union" meeting, a meeting designed to appeal to all protestant denominations and often planned with one or more other denominations. Each revival was a news hope.

The thing that ought to be done in Yale is to hold a great Union meeting. If this could be done, and it can be, five hundred souls ought to be saved. Such a meeting would make Yale an ideal Christian City. It would stir the entire community for miles in every direction. It would harmonize all business relations, stabilize all industries and make for a better co-operative spirit. Pastors of our sister churches, pray over this thing. Members of all churches, talk Union Revival in your clubs and socials. Create a spiritual atmosphere wherever you go -- wherever you come into contact with others, and later, let us compare notes and see if we cannot get together in one of the greatest Religious campaigns ever attempted in this part of the state. Having prayed over the matter, express your thoughts to your pastor, and the pastors in turn will take the matter up in their ministerial meetings.

The intermixing of christian and civic objectives, plus the language of community, was quite normal for the County and its ministers at the time. Notice his mention of a regular ministerial group meeting in the town, an example along with the union revival, of the pan-denominational Protestantism of the early 1920s.

⁵²"Union Revival Meeting Begins Soon," CC, 8 March 1923, 2; "Revival Meeting," YD, 28 June 1923, 1; "News of the Neighbors," SG, 23 December 1921, 7; "News of the Neighbors," SG, 9 June 1922, 7.

Rev. O.V. Beal was the minister planning this great campaign. In September he announced that the revival would be starting September 16 and would run for "...three or four weeks as the Lord may direct." It was to be a "union meeting", the converted urged to join any of the protestant churches in Yale. "The matter of 'doctrine' and 'ordinances' of the several denominations will not be stressed during the meetings. All these matters will be left to the pastors of the churches with which the converts unite. Nothing could be fairer than this." The evangelist was to be Rev. J.F. Pennington, District Missionary for the Oklahoma District: "He is a man large in body, great in spiritual things, and is a splendid preacher." "Our first object will be to get people saved--saved in the old time way...." What Rev. Beal did not mention in his column was that the Yale Kamelia Kourt, the County's only identified female Klan auxiliary, had visited his church and given him an unnamed gift for the revival effort the week before. This was the only appearance of the Kamelia in the County during the period of the hooded Klan.

Unfortunately for Rev. Beal, the revival of indefinite length closed down in the first full week of October. The Rev. Beal gave a good face to this in his column in the paper.

If we estimate the meeting in terms of numbers only, we would not nearly give the actual results for many were uplifted and greatly blessed by the Holy spirit during the revival. So far as numbers are concerned there were about 40 conversions, a goodly number of reclamations and many accessions to the church.⁵³

Most revivals did last. The Ingalls Methodist Church had a revival in December, 1922. They had another the following August, led by the pastor, Rev. J.E. Henderson who was assisted by Rev. Fred Nail from Wichita, Kansas. One of their appeals concerned the heat. "The church is a cooler place than the average home to spend an hour in." In early September the revival was

⁵³"Methodist Mention," YD, 28 June 1923, 8; "Kamelia Kourt Appear Here," YD, 6 September 1923, 1; "Revival Meeting to Start Soon," YD, 16 September 1923, 1; "Methodist Mention," YD, 11 October 1923, 9. As a postscript, Rev. Beal was transferred to Watonga in early November at Conference meeting. Was he transferred because of a mediocre revival? His replacement, Rev. J.W. King, is described as "...a preacher of strong evangelistic tendencies, a hard worker, a good fellow." See "Make A Change Of Ministers," YD, 1 November 1923, 1. Ownby notes the importance of a successful revival and how that was measured: "Members of the evangelical community had a deep interest in enlarging their number during the course of a meeting; not obtaining a substantial number of conversions was their failure as well as a failure for the Christian cause." See Ownby, Subduing Satan, 150.

still going strong and the correspondent noted that, "The good order observed at all meetings is a feature appreciated by all," a rather suggestive if ambiguous note. The revival began August 20 and went until at least the second Sunday in September.⁵⁴

The United Brethren at Lost Creek Church had a revival in May and June, 1922, which produced an unintended consequence. The County home agent, Mrs. Almira Abernathy, went to the Elm Grove schoolhouse northwest of Perkins to give a talk and found the women had sent their husbands in their stead. "Perhaps the reason of this was, most of the people had been attending the services at Lost Creek church for the last two weeks, and that was the last night of the meeting...." Mrs. Abernathy, not one to lose an opportunity, spoke to the male assemblage about the traditional lives of women and how men should help their wives more. It should be noted that Elm Grove was at least six miles from the Lost Creek Church. This incident speaks to the feminization of religious attendance as well as the fact that rutted roads could not stand in the way of a believer headed for a good revival.⁵⁵

The evangelist had to walk a thin line between religion and entertainment. Evangelist W.H. Thompson, conducting services in 1922 at the Yale Presbyterian Church, noted that a church shouldn't be simply social: if it was, it was lost. The writer then described the evangelist as preaching old-fashioned redemption. The first reason for a church was not social or spectacle, but was religion.⁵⁶

A common feature that both entertained and elevated was the music. Song leaders were nearly always named, and music was another way to practice the pan-Protestantism of most revivals, as well as a very direct form of participation in the event by all attending. When Rev. Estes and his chorister, M. Allen, were coming to the First Baptist Church in Cushing, preparations not

⁵⁴"Notes of the Neighbors," SG, 9 December 1921, 7; "News of Ingalls," SG, 18 August 1922, 8; "News of Ingalls," SG, 25 August 1922, 1; "News of Ingalls," SG, 1 September 1922, 1; "News of Ingalls," SG, 8 September 1922, 1.

⁵⁵"News of the Neighbors," SG, 26 May 1922, 7; "News of the Neighbors," SG, 9 June 1922, 7.

⁵⁶"Evangelistic Service at the Presbyterian Church Now in Progress," YD, 11 January 1922, 7.

only included "cottage prayer meetings" held around the city but the preparation of a "a big men's choir."⁵⁷

Vinco held a successful meeting led by Brother MacFarland "and a lady singer" who turned out to be Mrs. MacFarland. This was a rather common combination. That first week they drew members of the Christian Church in Perkins to their meetings despite "extremely muddy roads" which kept down attendance. The meetings were held weekly on Saturdays and Sundays, morning and evening, with sermons that were "illustrated". The next week it was still going strong, and Sunday they had nine conversions at the morning service, one in the evening. By the third weekend in May things were cooking. Evangelist MacFarland was joined by Pastor Forbes of Guthrie and J.W. Garner of Perkins. They had groups attending from Stillwater and Perkins, Sunday school that topped 75 in attendance, Baptisms of sixteen or seventeen at Dugout Creek on the Ivan Knox's farm Sunday evening with two hundred attending, preceded by a pot luck supper Sunday afternoon with over one hundred in attendance.

In the same issue of the Perkins Journal, where the last account of the Vinco revival occurred, there was a boxed ad and a news account announcing the a revival was to be held at the Perkins Methodist Church, "An old time revival where old-time methods hold sway; where the sinner and saint feel no conventional restraining and doctrine of Christ shows the way." As an added plus in the warming weather, the revival was to be held in a large tent next to the church.⁵⁸

Song-leaders, illustrated sermons, pot-luck suppers, gang-preaching and meetings in tents may all seem like show-business, and that's correct. Spectacle was one of the major draws of the revival, and it was a spectacle in which the participants were a dynamic part of the cast. In a county full of work-a-day people, many of whom were led rather isolated daily lives, and who had some fears about the modern world that demanded reassurances, the desire for spectacle was

⁵⁷"Estes And Allen Coming," CC, 9 February 1922, 1.

⁵⁸"News of the Neighbors," SG, 21 April 1922, 7; "Vinco Items," Perkins Journal, 21 April 1922, 8 [hereafter "PJ"]; "News of the Neighbors," SG, 28 April 1922, 7; "Revival at Vinco Church," PJ, 28 April 1922, 1; "News of the Neighbors," SG, 5 May 1922, 7; "Vinco Items," PJ, 12 May 1922, 4; "News of the Neighbors," SG, 12 May 1922, 7; "Revival Meeting At M.E. Church," PJ, 12 May 1922, 1.

understandable and was one of the major attractions of the revival. Spectacle also became a basis for the huge crowds going to public Klan events.

Preaching was expected to be lively, culminating in the confirmation of given moral and religious assumptions, and encouraging enough to gain the climactic spectacle of sinners trooping to the fore to proclaim their repentance and be assured, and assure the crowd, of their new life. Preaching was not there for any intellectual purpose or to break new ground. In fact, the opposite was true. Preaching confirmed known truths.

One fact which pointed to the non-intellectual nature of the preaching was the almost complete lack of anything but the most general comments upon the contents of the preaching. Mention of preaching the "old" style, illustrations in lectures, a pleasing voice, were the types of comments generally made about revival preaching.

In the period covering 1921 to 1923 in Payne County, a period in which there were probably over forty separate revivals mentioned, one of the few rather full account of what was actually said came with a revival in March, 1922. Rev. Mathis was conducting a revival at the Cushing Methodist Church with Mr. Armstrong as chorister. The reporter present, probably the paper's editor, made these observations on the sermon.

Rev. Mathis concluded his sermon on the Ten Commandments Tuesday night. A good crowd was present to hear him.

Where people have the least regard for the Sabbath you have a lower grade of citizenship. When a person begins to loosen up on the Sabbath observance they loosen up all along the line. God says "Remember the Sabbath Day and Keep it Holy."

The worst murderer is the one who kills inch by inch, the law cannot touch him but he is a murderer.

A fallen man is as a fallen woman. If a woman is barred from society we should bar the man also.

The lowest kind of theft is the stealing of character, and one of the greatest curses a community can have is an old lying gossip of a woman, there is nothing worse unless it is an old he gossip.

The sin of covetousness is one of those ugly sins that preachers hate to tackle because it touches so many people. These were the highlights in the sermon last night.

The sermon tonight will be on the subject: "The Devil and How He Works Us."

Here are four things Mathis believes in: Heaven, Hell, Jesus (your only savior) and the Devil.

Nearly forty boys were on the front seats last night and about sixty boys and girls attended practice at 4:15. Saturday night the boys and girls will give a sacred concert. Don't miss it.

Special prayer was offered for the bereaved Foster Family.⁵⁹
Do not allow the babies to keep you home. Dr. Mathis is most considerate of the youngsters. Bring them along.⁶⁰

Out of the complete report above, the sermon got a little more space than all the rest, but not by much. The content of the sermon and the evangelist's reported thinking holds nothing unusual: A standard topic covered in standard ways, homiletic and aphoristic. And it also links religion to civilization, a not uncommon comparison.

Two weeks later there was again a relatively full account of Mathis's sermonizing. At the morning sermon, built on the story from "The Book of Kings" of the floating ax, he exhorted laymen never to lose their zeal and become a "mere 'axhandle'", to always be the cutting edge. And to keep that head on the handle required three wedges: "Prayer, Study of the Bible and Activity." He then attacked public education, stating that the need was for "...more of character building and less of some subjects now taught in our Public schools, more of the Bible and less of frivolous fads." The editor missed the afternoon sermon, but made the evening sermon based on "Pilate's Question": What to do with Christ? "The preacher was able to apply it to National conditions and asserted that Christianity was the one influence which will restore American ideals and methods." In the coming week he was preaching on "Amusements", "Heaven and Hell," "The Jailer's Question," "Sermon to Young Men," "Home," "Prodigal Son", and, on Sunday, "The Sower," "Hours of Depression," and the finale in the evening, "Prepare to Meet Thy God."⁶¹

It is interesting how this editor seemed to have tied into the revivals. Not only did he uniquely give relatively full coverage to the content of the sermons and follow the revival in articles in his paper, but he wrote an editorial in the midst of the revivals that seemed to echo the

⁵⁹The late Mr. Foster, a banker, had been the head of the Klan in Cushing.

⁶⁰"Revival Jottings," CC, 16 March 1922, 1. On the emphasis put upon young people for the commitment to church membership, see Ownby, Subduing, 151-53. Ownby noted the "...distinction between the girls with shining eyes and the boys with ducked heads shows how difficult it was for young men to humble themselves by publicly accepting the attitudes of evangelical culture." (152)

⁶¹"Interest Growing In Revival," CC, 30 March 1922, 1.

heightened religiosity accompanying the revival. In a rambling editorial he began by declaring, "The fight is on and in earnest. The fight is for better times and that we may have better times the fight is on for a better people." What was needed was "...a better individual, a better community, a better nation."

And I want to tell it now, if you would be in the front in the near future, you must be a real man or woman and do a real man's or woman's real work; you will have to give up some of the habits, practices, customs and "modes" prevalent of late. The world is going to demand it. Sham, hypocrisy, frivolity, loose talk and looser conduct will not go.

I fully believe the top of the hill has been reached, or better, the crossing of the ways. Christianity and Americanism are going to take charge. Get on the wagon today.⁶²

The following Sunday the revivalist spoke about the reform of the layman, the individual. In the account given in the March 30 issue, the editor made no mention in the article about something that had happened at the Thursday evening meeting. He reported on it in a separate article.

Thursday night about sixty Ku Klux Klansmen, from somewhere, fully robed and hooded, marched to the Methodist Church, where revivals are being held. They entered the church just as the prayer was being begun and stood in aisles at attention during its delivery. At the close of the prayer an envelope in which was an enclosure containing a statement of the principles of the order and a sum of money was handed up to the platform.

The enclosure was read and the evangelist made a short talk after which the white robed visitors quietly marched out.

The Klan then went to the Baptist Church and visited with a Sunday school class of fifteen year old youngsters that was having a meeting. They thanked the teachers with a speech and some money.⁶³

What were the results of a revival? For the individual it was an emotional, uplifting experience, it legitimized his or her belief structure, and it was fun. For the organized Church, it could help spur growth in numbers. In November of 1921, the Christian Church in Stillwater sponsored a revival featuring C.R.I. Vawter of Enid, accompanied by Mrs. Lucile Mize, an ordained minister who did counseling ("She holds the special meetings for girls and women...."), and Miss

⁶²"The Fight Is On," CC, 23 March 1922, 4.

⁶³"The Ku Klux Klan Attend The Revival," CC, 30 March 1922, 1; "We the 15-year-old boys and girls....", CC, 30 March 1922, 1.

Clarkie Reaves, a soloist ("She sings the gospel message in a way that touches the hearts of the people.").⁶⁴

Evangelist Vawter impresses himself upon the audiences as a speaker of power. He is true to the Book, logical in reasoning, straight to the point. Especially does he appeal to men. This is proven by the large number of men that always attend his meetings. Throughout his sermons his Irish wit is in evidence."

There was some brief account of his sermons. In "The Permanency of the Word" he contended that earth and heaven may go but the Bible and Jesus's truths shall remain. And in, "Hell and Who Is Going," he concluded that many who go will be good men who don't believe. More importantly for the church, his revival lasted for about a month. The revival created much emotion and enthusiasm. It was spectacle and it entertained. And it brought something else. The November 11 newspaper issue reported that Sunday had seen 43 conversions, Monday 20 young men, Tuesday 14 women and girls. By the following week they claimed 130 more converts. By November 25, they claimed 212 conversions: 90 men and 122 women and girls, again an indication of the feminized state of religion.⁶⁵ At the end of the revival the church announced the need for a new addition and the following week the congregation voted \$7,000 to erect the new addition. They also gloried in the fact that due to the Vawter revival they had gained 278 new members.⁶⁶

From an institutional point of view, revivals meant an enthused membership, likely some monetary reward from offerings, new members and more impressive statistics. In an age that had found a love of institutional numbers in the church -- Sunday School attendance, total memberships, conversions -- these revival results were some of the reward for presenting that

⁶⁴Note that Mrs. Lucile Mize is both the only female ordained minister mentioned in the newspapers of the County in the period, and that she is also probably the only ordained minister in the County not addressed as "Reverend".

⁶⁵Ownby notes a study of 27 churches from 1868-1906, in which 62% of the membership were women. See Ownby, Subduing Satan, 129.

⁶⁶"Vawter Evangelistic Party In A Meeting At The Christian Church," SG, 4 November 1921, 7; "Great Crowds Attend Vawter Meetings At The Christian Church," SG, 11 November 1921, 4; "Vawter Meetings, Christian Church," SG, 18 November 1921, 6; "Vawter Meetings Christian Church," SG, 25 November 1921, 8; "Christian Church To Be Enlarged," SG, 2 December 1921, 8; "Proposed Addition To Christian Church Adopted," SG, 9 December 1921, 1.

spectacle that was the revival. And revivals and their numbers also helped the minister professionally.

Ministers

Within Protestant Christianity, the position of the minister has always been fraught with contradictions. The Protestants were birthed in the tradition of placing more power over spiritual matters in the hands of the laity, the "priesthood of all believers." But because of position and training, the minister has always had the potential to override the centrality of the individual believer. All groups need a leader, and the minister was the natural choice for this in a church. This happened despite the fact that the position of the protestant minister is not that of a sacred man but that of chief teacher, hence the scholastic gown instead of sacred garb. Even in churches which were the most democratic, such as the Baptists, Congregationalists and Presbyterians, churches with congregational choice of ministers and without dominance by an ecclesiastical structure, clericalism was an endemic threat.

The minister in a protestant church is a man naturally set-apart.⁶⁷ In Presbyterianism the minister is not a member of the congregation but is instead a member of the Presbytery. In all denominations he was often from somewhere else in the nation, an outsider. His ideas and work were constantly under the scrutiny of a board of the congregation, with the powers of that board varying from denomination to denomination. Sometimes this led to turmoil. In 1923, after two years of conflict in the First Baptist Church in Cushing, Rev. James S. Paden was asked to leave. He refused and even got a judgment in his favor by the Pawnee Baptist Association. The church's Board of Trustees did not sway. Rev. Paden took them to court claiming he had a contract. The Trustees won and Rev. Paden was ordered to clear all his things from the parsonage and church in short order by the church board.⁶⁸

⁶⁷Only in the lower church denominations such as the United Brethren were there women ministers in the county at this time, with the single exception of the revival held in Stillwater by Rev. Vawter in 1921.

⁶⁸"Oust Cushing Minister," SAD, 14 June 1923, 4; "Church Case In Courts," YD, 21 June 1923, 9.

Clerical powers were not necessarily related to the ecclesiastical structure of the denomination. In Yale, Oklahoma in 1922, the most heard ecclesiastic was the Rev. D.C. Mallory as voiced through the Yale Democrat. The Methodist Episcopal Church has an ecclesiastical structure which could potentially stifle the individual cleric: strong Bishops who arbitrarily rotated ministers (about every two years), a climate which could promote complacency among ministers who knew they could be rotated to any size church any year. Yet Mallory continually stirred controversy, especially with his Sunday evening talks on social topics.⁶⁹ The rival paper gave space to the Baptist minister, Olin Cornelius. In that denomination the congregation chose the minister who stayed as long as the congregation supported him.⁷⁰

Although the legal position of the minister varied by denomination, in reality ministers always had powers derived from non-religious facts of their position. First, they were the executive officers of public corporations with relatively large budgets. Although the published Census does not provide figures for individual churches, it does give average figures for denominations by state. These figures illustrate the economics of the corporations ministers led.

Besides being a corporate manager, the minister was generally an educated professional. Ministers in the 1920s would have had far more education than almost all their members. The question of inspiration versus education as a requirement for the ministry was common in Protestantism. As late as 1914 this same controversy was played out in the formation of the Assemblies of God denomination.⁷¹ By the turn of the century the trend toward a theologically trained ministry was strong in almost all of Protestantism.

⁶⁹The "letters" to editor Ira Minnick of the rival Yale Record were, I suspect, written by the editor and several times early in 1922 made hilarious fun of Rev. Mallory. "And Ira, this preacher bird proved by count of noses that this burg is going to the devil," reported the supposed letter writer concerning Mallory's constant concern with the immorality of modern women's clothing. "And Ira, he says in Patee they are quitting clothes altogether and just painting facksimilies on the flesh, and maybe they will be doing that here before long." See "To the Editor Of The Yale Record," YR, 13 January 1922, 1.

⁷⁰For example, see "Christian Church Doings," YR, 20 January 1922, 1.

⁷¹Edith L. Blumhofer, Restoring the Faith: The Assemblies of God, Pentecostalism and American Culture (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993): 113-41. There were few Pentecostals in the county and they tended seemed to be rather loosely organized. There may have been a Pentecostal congregation in Yale, possibly other cities.

Table 4.2: Church wealth by denomination in Oklahoma, 1926⁷²

denomination	members/ church	real property per church	per mbr.	expenditure / yr. per chrch	per mbr.
Disciples of Christ	327	\$15,226.00	\$ 46.56	\$3,533.00	\$10.80
Methodist Episcopal (N)	147	\$13,915.00	\$ 94.66	\$3,889.00	\$26.46
Southern Baptist Conv.	136	\$10,280.00	\$ 75.59	\$2,680.00	\$19.71
Presbyterian U.S.A. (N)	160	\$23,440.00	\$146.50	\$5,136.00	\$32.10
Churches of Christ	62	\$ 2,783.00	\$ 44.88	\$3,533.00	\$56.98
Protestant Episcopal	108	\$13,163.00	\$121.88	\$5,281.00	\$48.90
Roman Catholic	257	\$18,424.00	\$ 71.69	\$4,970.00	\$19.34
Negro Baptists	85	\$ 2,911.00	\$ 34.25	\$ 648.00	\$ 7.62

Paul Harvey argued that changes were occurring in the clergy by the late-nineteenth century even in the tradition of Baptists in the South, a church tradition having strong congregational power and an emphasis upon an inspired ministry. Harvey was concerned to show the interactions and parallels between white and black southern Baptists, as well as the controversies between competing theological brands of Baptism.⁷³ His thesis is that the ministry in southern Baptist churches was becoming more educated, professional, and middle class in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For this study, he presented a model by which to view the protestant ministry as it confronted the modernity of the twentieth-century.

By the last half of the nineteenth-century, Baptist ministers were becoming better educated and, as a result of that education, more religiously sophisticated than their parishioners. It also meant they were becoming more professionalized and more middle class.⁷⁴ By the 1880s, southern Baptist congregations generally expected more education in their ministers. This

⁷²US Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Religious Bodies: 1926, v. I, Summary and Detailed Tables (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1930): 236-39. The census does not break the figures down to the county level or smaller city level. The 1926 census is the closest to our period and is likely accurate enough for our purposes since Oklahoma did not have a booming economy in the period and, aside from the oil industries, had recovered from the 1920-21 recession very slowly.

⁷³Paul Harvey, Redeeming the South: Religious Cultures and Racial Identities among Southern Baptists, 1865-1925 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997): 257-58.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 163, 137-39; see also Chapter 3, "These Untutored Masses: Spirituality and Respectability among White Southern Baptists," pp. 77-106: He argues that the confrontation was at least as much about professionalization and middle class aspirations by the ministers as it was an educational gap. This dissertation argues in a similar vein for the identification of the ministry with the professional and business class in the towns of Payne County and, hence, with that class's biases and concerns.

promoted professionalism, and ministers came to expect in return incomes which would allow them to drop other occupations. "By 1920, congregations of two hundred or more members rarely considered untrained men for pulpit postings."⁷⁵

To this educational and social gap was added attempts by this male ministry to make Christianity more masculine. The "ideal of manliness" stressed "competence and self-possession in public" and "provided a gendered language that also shaped the emergence of moral professionalism in the ministry." This could be manifested through public concern, boosterism, and emphasis upon cooperation and growth in a community with Christians working together.⁷⁶ There was also the recognition by the minister that he was charged with the management of the affairs of the congregation. From this identity as a manager came, among other things, ministers who wanted salaries which would allow them to be respectable.⁷⁷

Harvey links all this to the form that religious progressivism took in the South. He calls this progressivism as practiced by the Baptist ministry "social Christianity," an approach "envisioning a public role for Christians in reforming and regulating human institutions, without necessarily seeing this public role as primary."⁷⁸ It was different from the Social Gospel movement of the northern progressive ministry in its focus on morals than on relief and structural change in the society. And it confirmed the institutionalized racism of the society even as it spoke in tones of cooperation and civic virtue.⁷⁹

In Payne County in the early 1920s there was a great deal of harmony within the ministerial community of the major Protestant faiths. Instead of denominational gulfs, there were union

⁷⁵Ibid., 147.

⁷⁶Ibid., 164-65. "It is he who must not only preach the doctrines of self-development and neighborliness, but must also, in his daily intercourse with his members and with others, unveil before them the possibilities of community development, link them onto governmental information and agencies, and, by his example, inspire and unite them in cooperation for better things.' Pious yet practical, full of spiritual homilies and agrarian wisdom, equally at ease with biblical injunctions and the latest in agricultural techniques, the figure of the manly minister seemed the ideal synthesis of nineteenth-century evangelicalism and twentieth-century social Christianity." (p. 165)

⁷⁷Ibid., 159-62. See also his entire chapter seven, "Scientific Management in Our Church-Craft," 197-226.

⁷⁸Ibid., 198. He contrasts this to the more urban, northern, poverty-oriented Social Gospel movement, noting that in the South there were very few Social gospellers.

⁷⁹Ibid., 1-13.

revivals, cross-denominational Christian Endeavor, and, at least publicly, a solid Protestant front which was strongly evangelical, conservative on personal morality, more up-beat than apocalyptic, and identifying Protestant Christianity with patriotism and the saving of the United States. It was a county in which the major protestant church leaders practiced a public pan-Protestantism.

This ministerial professionalism would apply less to the rural churches. The rural churches with small memberships, small physical plants, and small annual budgets would tend hold down ministerial ambitions and probably attracted a less educated, less professionalized clergy.⁸⁰ As an example, in the I.X.O. and Perkins area, Mr. Claude De Witte served as a Methodist minister, probably to one or more small churches. He was a student at Oklahoma City University and he quit his pastorates when he left for Boston to get a theological degree, probably at Boston University, in 1922.⁸¹ Many of the rural churches were serviced by shared ministers, as noted before. Rev. J.C. Henderson, for example, gave a quarter time at Ingalls and three-quarters at Ripley in 1922, oil boom towns but with small populations and smaller churches.⁸² There was not much pretense in such assignments, dealing as the minister did rather immediately with small groups of relatively poor people. In contrast, the city minister of a large church likely had the education, talent, and ambition to achieve in his profession. And although he dealt with his congregation frequently, his Boards likely held many professional and business men.

The major ministers in Stillwater and, especially, Yale, were often allowed to write their own copy for the papers. Many papers regularly ran a column listing the major white churches and often giving space for more than simply the location and schedule of events for the church. Thus ministers were sometimes the only major regularly named figures to have columns in the papers other than the editor. Often these blurbs, and other articles about churches and ministers, were

⁸⁰The author's father can illustrate this from a different state. Raised in the rural, small-church Dunkard Brethren tradition, he headed for the ministry first through a one-year Bible college. His mentor there told him that he could achieve more if he went to a full seminary and another denomination, pointing out that many ministerial positions in the Brethren Church were filled by lay ministers. Roland Showalter got a B.A., then went to Colgate-Rochester Seminary (Northern Baptist) and served his professional career in the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. in New York, Ohio, Illinois, Tennessee and North Carolina.

⁸¹"News of the Neighbors," SG, 17 March 1922, 7.

⁸²"News of Neighbors," SG, 6 January 1922, 3.

of nondescript content, but ministers, in their writings, often placed the church in a very central and secular role in the communities.

And in this public role, ministers showed the "social Christianity" discussed by Harvey. Rev. Olen Cornelius, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Yale, made a pitch for members in this way.

The Church stands for sanitation, morality, law enforcement, civilization of the highest type, and as an education factor it is unparalleled and is the only agency in existence that has Christianity as the main issue of life.

A congenial place to worship, a hearty hand shake and a welcome to all.⁸³

At a regular meeting of the Stillwater Minister's Union in 1922, those present heard a pitch in favor of the proposed school bond issue. All the ministers pledged to deliver a sermon entitled, "The Church and Righteousness in the Schools and Government."⁸⁴

The man who seemed to be allowed to talk the most was Rev. D.C. Mallory, pastor of the Methodist Church of Yale. In November of 1921 he wrote:

We are beginning another year of service to the community as a church. We are sure that we are entitled to a place in the work of betterment of the community, only as we show the community that we really desire its best interests shall be observed and fostered. Together with other churches we are desirous of building up an aggressive, Christian citizenship. We really want to do our part.

In a sermon in December, 1921, entitled obscurely, "God's Golden Overpius," he stated this again.

...Jesus was an economist and desires that every service should be observed with decency and order. The only reason any church has for being in any place is its desire to serve the community. If it is here for selfish purposes then the sooner it is closed the better.

He had a Sunday evening service in which he discussed women's fashions, condemning those that tended to entice men. He answered hypothetical critics of addressing such topics:

⁸³"Churches of Yale," YD, 11 November 1921, c.3.

⁸⁴"Meeting Of The Ministers Union," SG, 7 April 1922, 1.

The position taken was that women have a right to adorn her own ideal [sic], unless that ideal makes such an appeal to the wrong factors as to become a detriment to clean thinking and clean living. The changes in styles were then traced and it was shown how more or less the women of American [sic] have been blindly following the styles that were born in the old country in not the best environment.

The crowd was in a great good humor and received the heartfelt message in the spirit in which it was given and scores expressed themselves as being thoroughly satisfied with what they heard. The whole purpose of the preaching is to stir up the moral conscience of the people of Yale to at least think on the current situation in order that characters shall be strengthened and the citizenship of the community be allowed to develop into a well-rounded, vital, aggressive way and many of the moral problems thus be solved.

In January, 1922, he again hit on the central civic role he sees for the church.

The object in view in the methods of the Tabernacle church is to stir the public conscience on matters of current importance. The people sought are the unchurched. There are many men who are vitally interested in the material welfare of the community who have never evinced the slightest interest in the work of the Church here. This is not as it should be. Every man, woman and child in the community is directly or indirectly benefited by the presence of the church here and owes himself or herself the duty of becoming acquainted and identified with the Tabernacle. Every man ought to take time to consider all the elements that enter into the community life and see that if it were not for the Church here, that there would be no growth or progress. This is always true and only the crowd who do not want to see virtue and morality and sobriety and decency, will object to it.⁸⁵

This could be interpreted as normal church boosting, an attempt to elevate the profile of the church and get more members. But Rev. Mallory was consistently projecting the church as a civic institution almost over its role as a religious institution. There was a strong likelihood that what he stated was widely believed, particularly by fellow ministers. It is also almost certain that he wrote this on his own and without any consultation with his employer, the boards of his congregation. Unlike the message of the revival, harping continually on well-worn homiletics, this was a minister dropping homiletics and speaking as head of a civic institution.

This did not go unopposed. As noted above, Ira Minnick's rival paper not only made some fun of the topics Rev. Mallory attacked, but featured the Christian Church's Rev. Olen

⁸⁵"Churches of Yale," YD, 11 November 1921, c. 3; "Methodist Church Notes," YD, 5 December 1921, 1; "Notes From The Tabernacle," YD, 9 January 1922, 1; "Churches of Yale," YD, 13 January 1922, 7.

Cornelius. In January, 1922, even that minister spoke indirectly about Rev. Mallory. He addressed the problem of the showman-preacher, not the subjects Mallory discussed.

To be ignored is to them gehenna [sic]. To glorify God and enjoy him forever is not enough; they must cut a figure along with other notorious characters in the public eye, for this also is a part of the chief end of man.

And so instead of going quietly about their work doing good to all men according to their opportunity they attempt to play the eagle. They soar into the heavens of dazzling rhetoric, and spread their wings in the broad realms of sensational devices, to make a show either in the pulpit or in parochial activity becomes a consuming all devastating ambition.

These would be eagles of the pulpit have brought the ministers in many quarters into irretrievable [sic] disrepute. Not a few newspaper men hold ministers in contempt because of their unpleasant dealings with pulpit Charlie Chaplins who clamor for space in which to soar in their columns. A minister itching for public recognition not only makes himself ridiculous but throws suspicion on his brethren.⁸⁶

Notice that he is not attacking on grounds of theology or in opposition to civic activity by a minister. He is objecting to the flamboyant style of some minister, most likely of Rev. Mallory. Cornelius, after all, was the man who stated, "The Church stands for sanitation, morality, law enforcement, civilization of the highest type, and as an education factor it is unparalleled."⁸⁷

On a more overt plane, ministers participated in the organizations that businessmen joined. Each Rotary Club, for example, had positions for businessmen and professionals. One of those professionals was always the minister. When he joined the club he was not automatically the chaplain, a fact that points to a philosophical equality of him with the business and professional men he was regularly meeting with.

In public addresses outside their churches, ministers often sounded exactly like their fellow businessmen. In November of 1921 at a Chamber of Commerce Meeting at which Rev. D.C. Mallory of the Tabernacle gave the blessing, Rev. Denton R. Woods, the Presbyterian minister, spoke on the question of why people don't shop in their own town or the closest town. He blamed much of it on "...a desire to purchase through the inducement of highly colored pictures and descriptions of goods from the mail order catalogs," as well as a general "...lack of loyalty to the community which they live." He gave some solutions to the problem. If any

⁸⁶"Christian Church Doings," YR, 20 January 1922, 1.

⁸⁷"Churches of Yale," YD, 11 November 1921, c.3.

merchant was "profiteering," then "...the people should take every step possible to do away with it." He proposed a loyalty campaign in Yale. He suggested every merchant post an article from the previous week's newspaper entitled, "Ten Commandments for the Home Town." At the end of Rev. Woods' talk, the irrepressible Rev. Mallory jumped in and stated that businessmen should institute sale days in Yale.⁸⁸

Such interests, such concerns may not startle the modern reader, but its emphasis upon the church as a civic entity with the minister as its self-appointed point man was a far cry from the position as humble servants and teachers of Christ that was the more traditional image of the minister and one still found in the county's rural churches. And concerns such as these show a distance from the controversies such as modernism that were still churning the denominations in the early 1920s.

Conclusions

Organized Protestantism was the most respected institution in Payne County in the early 1920s. All newspapers publicized churches each week. Rural correspondents mentioned the church nearly every week in their columns. In several newspapers ministers were given column space each week. And in the newspapers covered for this work there was not one criticism of organized religion or organized Protestantism. The Protestant churches of Payne County were both physical and organizational landmarks in the countryside and towns. They also had the most respect and legitimacy of any institution within the County.

Besides their religious function, churches provided other things for the County. Rural churches provided one of the foci for the rural community. Both rural and urban churches represented personal communities for their members, a religious camaraderie. Protestant churches reinforced traditional moral assumptions about the individual and the society. The white Protestant establishment in the County never challenged the existing male dominance or the legalized and popular racism of the County because it was part of that patriarchy and of the racism.

⁸⁸"Chamber of Commerce Luncheon Well Attended," YD, 4 November 1921, 1.

And the Protestant churches provided occasion and spectacle. The apex of this was in the revival, periodically reenacted morality plays in which all who had gathered participated. Like the Klan's public occasions, the revival drew from beyond the membership and was a very popular institution. Spectacle drew crowds.

Ministers were the most prominent physical element of white Protestantism in the County. The urban ministry in particular was both chief teacher for his flock, manager of a good-sized corporation, a professional, and often a person who also wore a civic face. Many urban ministers identified with the business class in their town, joined the organizations of the business class and spoke the language of the business class. This showed the self-perception of the ministers as professionals, and it added legitimacy both to the institutions of the business class, and to the rhetoric emanating from their institutions.

For many reasons the Klan insinuated itself with both the institutional church and urban ministers. The Klan, always conscious of its claim to be a Christian fraternity and also conscious of its public image, visited churches and supported them with a few dollars and approbation. The Klan identified itself with the aims of the Church. And the Klan attracted at least three ministers in the County into its brotherhood. Although the motivation of the individual ministers is impossible to verify, the Klan gained legitimacy both as an institution and for its message when clergy doffed their dark robes to take up the white robes.

Chapter V

Community

The great mistake lies in the incorrect idea that the interests of the country and town are not the same. They are mutual and not only that but mutually dependent. Every community must have a center. This center logically is the town. Thus the town is a part of the community as much as is the country. And this is the thought which is to be emphasized, which must be accepted, if success is to be gained, namely, that we all, town and country, are one community, with common interests, not two, with opposing interests. And it is the manifestation of the true spirit of all American citizens, which still really exists and still is strong, that are working for one great end, and therefore all are neighbors and friends whose duty and desire are to help one another, which such gatherings will bring forth to the good of all. 'United we stand, divided we fall.'

Cushing Citizen, June, 1922¹

Community is one of the defining elements of humankind. Almost no humans live in a true isolation. Community is defined by neither geography nor size, though both are factors. Community is also a set of assumptions about shared values made by the majority. And community stands for both social and individual values.

During the era of the hooded Klan, "community" was often referred to and attempts were made to explain it. But it also had to be modified because of the ascendancy of the urban county during the previous decade of oil and War. "Community" grew out of the experience of the rural community. It not only emphasized characteristics such as "co-operation", including a concern for individual people and their activities, traditional family values, and a labor theory of value which merged into physiocracy or Jeffersonian emphasis upon the value of the agricultural, but it also reinforced the white, protestant, patriarchal *status quo*. To those who conformed to this *status quo*, "community" extended paternalistic protection.

¹"Rotarians To Entertain Farmers At Picnic," Cushing Citizen, 22 June 1922, 1 [hereafter "CC"].

The urban county spoke in warm terms of the community of the rural county. But even as the loudest of the urban county, the businessmen, pressed those rural community values of cooperation, personalism, and traditional family values, they subtly changed the meaning of community. Bowing to the rural community as the purer, they proclaimed the new dominance of the urban. Speaking warmly of the value of labor, they went about their ways as middle-men and bankers. Loudly proclaiming the new community of rural and urban counties, proclaiming the need for cooperation at schoolhouse meetings throughout the rural county, businessmen practiced their craft of competition.

The community they proclaimed was patriarchal, Protestant and white. But it was a patriarchy, a Protestantness and whiteness, with paternalism. Troubled by the images of the modern woman portrayed in newspapers and movies, the male leadership of the County made concessions in the political realm while drawing protective lines of demarcation in the social and moral realms. The Protestant county accepted the established Catholic minority while retaining at least vestiges of anti-Catholicism. The White county proclaimed its respect for "good coloreds" even as legal and social Jim Crow restricted African Americans, treated them arbitrarily, and depersonalized them in the public forum.

No organization or institution spoke in the public forum against this package of values and assumptions that was "community". But even as the Klan accepted community it could not act cooperatively. In a County that emphasized the individual and personal, the Klan was anonymous. The Klan was white and was Protestant, but its reputation for intolerance clashed with the County's paternalistic tolerance. The County's ideas about community were crucial to the domestication of the County's Klan during the period of the hooded Klan.

Community

Editor Gelder of the Yale Democrat romanticized about "community" in 1924, stating: "My community supplies me with law and order, trade, friends, education, morals, recreation and the

rights of a free-born American. I should believe in my community, work for it, and I will."²

Community was a value laden word. The county was changing in the period of the hooded Klan and so was its idea of "community".

Community had several elements in the county: personalism, cooperation, and traditional personal values of family, work, and status of women. Underlying these was the assumption of the dominance of Protestantness, patriarchy, and whiteness. These elements and assumptions appear in a variety of venues, both rural and urban. What was interesting was not this rather traditional grouping of elements, nor even the fact that people at the time wanted to discuss and reinforce these ideas. The important thing was the fact that both rural and urban parts of the County spoke the same values, the same rhetoric, and they spoke of it publicly often enough that it had to reflect actual general feelings. But at the same time the business elements had managed to change the meanings of "co-operation" to not only include themselves but to promote their need for customers. Despite that, there was no real gulf between town and country over the issue of the basic values that a white, protestant, patriarchal society should live under.³

Many of the rural ideas of community were incorporated in an urban vision of community. The reality was that the town was becoming a geographic center for an extended community, just as the rural community was a geographic center for a district. The emphasis upon roads found in the city business community was a natural outgrowth of this sense of the city as the magnet, the city as the cross-roads, and the natural successor to the small rural communities. This may not be a new idea, but it was well stated at the time.

The advocates of the urban dominance of the County still used the same words and much the same ideas as the rural countians. The Yale editor thought it fitting to include an editorial by the Fairbank, Iowa, View, on this subject.

²"True Community Spirit," Yale Democrat, 1 May 1924, 4 [hereafter "YD"].

³A summary of the historiography of the "urban-rural conflict" is in, Charles W. Eagles, "Urban-Rural Conflict in the 1920s: A Historiographical Assessment," Historian 49 (November, 1986): 26-48. An important study of the Klan in Oklahoma which utilized this conflict is Garin Burbank, When Farmers Voted Red: The Gospel of Socialism in the Oklahoma Countryside, 1910-1924 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976). The evidence in the present study shows no evidence of this type of split.

The mutual relation of the farmer, banker, merchant, professional men, editor, pastor and our private citizens, creates community. This [r]elation extends as far out as the auto or team brings customers to the common center. Every member of this community should be vitally interested in the welfare of the every other member.⁴

Notice how easily he places in the middle the cash nexus, the fact that for the leaders of the new urban places of Payne County, community also meant money and customers. The community was an organism, and all organisms must have a dominant part. In the community of the County, the city was the head. To understand how this newly proclaimed centrality of the urban in the County modified the values of "community", we must first understand the elements that went into "community".

"Community" started with the individual. Payne County was a county still close to its rural roots. It is in part from a rural urge to personally know the people in your small community that the naming of names became very apparent in the newspapers of the county, and most likely it reflected level of personal acquaintance, of personal interaction, which has been lost in our own day.

Newspapers are the most telling evidence of this concern for the doings of the individual. Every paper in the County had both rural and city news shorts. The Stillwater Gazette had correspondents in at least twenty-three named districts or combined districts, blanketing the northern reaches of the county. The Stillwater Advance Democrat added at least another thirteen named districts. The Cushing Citizen, a late-comer to the rural correspondent scene, had at least ten districts covered, most south of the River, before the Klan de-hooded in August, 1924. The Yale Democrat had at least seven rural correspondents, while the Yale Record only carried reports from Quay. The Perkins Journal had a rather constant stream of notes by the editor on areas around Perkins, especially reports from Vinco, directly south across the River. The Ripley Record pulled in reports from at least five locales around the town.

⁴"Puli Together --- Get Acquainted," YD, 2 December 1921, 3. For similar ideas, see "Rotarians To Entertain Farmers At Picnic," CC, 22 June 1922, 1. This latter is quoted later when the differing ideas of cooperation is discussed.

All these papers had short paragraph items devoted to their town or city folk. The little Ripley Record had a first and last page full of "Local and Personal" and "Additional Locals" each week. The Yale Democrat had its "All Around News", while Ira Minnick of the Yale Record simply mixed short local items in various corners of his pages. In Cushing, the Citizen had its "Local News". The Stillwater Gazette had its "Jottings About Town," while the Advance Democrat had its "Around Our Town."

These shorts, both rural and urban, told of the comings and goings of individuals or families. In July, 1921, the Advance Democrat noted that Rev. Brooke of the Forest Valley District was seeing a veterinarian in town about his cows. In May, 1922, Will S. Hale returned from the grand encampment of Oklahoma Odd Fellows held in Enid. The only graduate of Stillwater's "Washington (colored) school" in June, 1922, was Joseph William Griggs (this a nearly unique notice of an individual black person). Groups were also recognized in these columns, such as the Christian Endeavor of the Cushing Christian Church which went swimming in the Cimarron and had a watermelon feast in August, 1922.⁵ The rural correspondents covered much the same, probably naming even more names than the urban locals. In some issue of newspapers, such as the Stillwater Gazette, the majority of a page would be devoted to scores of rural short notices, usually only one or two sentences in length.⁶

Another way to maintain the interpersonal was through organizations. In the towns and cities, even though they were not of large size, this function of organizations was probably more important than in the more limited field of individuals around a rural community. The extreme of this reportage upon the minutia of the person in the city organization was the Yale Democrat's incessant reports on small social groups in town, most of which were populated by married white women. When Coterie Club, the Kappi Chi Club, the Alpha Delphians or the Kill Kare Klub met, they often got page one treatment several paragraphs long, and usually all the people present

⁵"Around Our Town," Stillwater Advance Democrat, 7 July 1921, 8 [hereafter "SAD"]; "Jottings About Town," Stillwater Gazette, 19 May 1922, 8 [hereafter "SG"]; "Jottings About Town," SG, 2 June 1922, 8; "Local News," CC, 12 August 1922, 4.

⁶And excellent example of the naming of names is the extended quote about the movement of tenant farmers found in Chapter II by the Pleasant Hill correspondent to the Stillwater Gazette. See "News of the Neighbors," SG, 10 February 1922, 7.

were named.⁷ In newspaper reports on the Chambers of Commerce, and the Retail Merchants', very full coverage was given to both individual speakers and what they spoke about.

This concern for the individual carried over into the blossoming businessmen's service clubs of the County. It was part of the structure of these businessmen's groups. The emphasis upon the interpersonal was central to the founder of Rotary International. Members were the men you were urged to deal most with in business because of your common membership in a club and the interpersonal relationship that common membership created. To this end, and in the interests of camaraderie, Rotarians have always used first names in their meetings.⁸

When Mr. Zuck spoke of organizing Farmers' Union locals, or visits were made by city groups to rural districts, the reports were full of named individuals. Fraternal groups got their officers listed frequently, particularly at the times of their elections, while women's civic groups got recognition of at least their leaders. Virtually all the organizations named were white, as were the individuals. No Payne County paper in the early 1920s reported on any black organizations, even black churches. Outside of the Police blotters, the newspapers almost never carried any article about black countians. And newspapers in the County seemed very scrupulous about identifying anyone who was "colored". This was a county in which the majority white population, urban as well as rural, seemed to desire the naming of names, but only white names except in the Police blotters. It was a personal approach, but within the bounds of social biases.

But one white organization was never described in personal terms. Klan meeting were never even announced, let alone reported on. And Klansmen were anonymous, not even known to their neighbors, often now known to their families. When the Klan gave money to a minister, even the Klan speaker was anonymous. There were only two occasions in the period of the hooded Klan that any Klansmen were named at a Klan activity other than a funeral. One was when a national, named, Klan speaker came to Stillwater in 1923 and two local ministers stood with

⁷In the issue of December 9, 1921, the Alpha Delphians and Kill Kare Klub got first page treatment, Kapa Chi page two. In the next issue (December 12, 1921), the Entre Nous Study Club, Coterie Club, ONO Club, and the S.O. Coterie Club all got page one treatment.

⁸James P. Walsh, The First Rotarian: The Life and Times of Paul Percy Harris, Founder of Rotary (Shoreham by Sea, West Sussex, Great Britain: Scan Books, 1979):79.

the hooded Klansmen on the podium. The ministers did not wear hoods and were named. The second occasion, to be reported on in the next chapter, was when the street-speaker Sgt. Webber was reported speaking at a Klan rally in June, 1923.⁹

Klan parades are a fine example of this anonymity. When the local soldiers marched off to War in 1917 and 1918, they marched militantly but were recognizable persons, known persons in the community. When the Klan marched in 1922, they marched militantly but without individuality, without personality. At Klan events reporters even noted the crowd speculating about who these Klansmen might be or if they were even from the community. Ironically, this anonymity of members put the Klan into the same category as black organizations and Catholic churches, schools, and any Catholic organizations which might have been in town.¹⁰

Another element from the rural and urban sense of community was the emphasis upon traditional families and traditional family values. The moral rectitude of the citizen and family were considered basic to the preservation of community. In Payne County, there was never any public disagreement with this.¹¹

It was assumed by the rural people and accepted by many urban people that the rural family was better at maintaining traditional values. In an article actually discussing the often bad state of facilities and teaching at small rural schools, a professor from Columbia University was quoted in the very rural Perkins Journal saying that country kids do succeed largely due "to the wholesome influence of the average country home" despite one-room schools.¹² Editor Gelder

⁹See Appendix I for an annotated chronology and citations of all known Klan events in the County during the period of the hooded Klan. As explained in Chapter VII, it is assumed that Sgt. Webber was a Klansman even though that is based on circumstantial evidence.

¹⁰It is likely there was at least one branch of the Knights of Columbus organized in the county, but there were no local reports in the period of the hooded Klan about that organization. Black churches had women's "circles", the black areas likely had social clubs, but the newspapers are silent as to their existence.

¹¹Women, considered central to traditional values, will be discussed later in this chapter. Another element of this, religion, has been discussed extensively in chapter four and will be mentioned only briefly here.

¹²Professor Mabel Carney, "Disadvantages of the country school child.....," Perkins Journal, 16 September 1921, 5. Note that this syndicated story was published by the most pro-rural paper in the county.

of the Yale Democrat echoed that belief. "The farm is the best home of the family, the main source of national wealth, and the foundation of civilized society."¹³

Another way in which the traditional family could be lauded was through obituaries and anniversaries. Those who had worked and raised families were eulogized. In 1923 Reverend and Mrs. David McLaury celebrated their fiftieth anniversary. "Reverend and Mrs. David McLaury have lived in this section a long time, most of the time on the farm where the home now is, five miles south of the city. They are truly pioneers in the full sense of the word, pioneers in common wealth building and community building." "Their labor has been great, their hardships many, but their reward, even here on earth, is great in the extraordinary family record, the pleasant home, the church buildings and the satisfaction in accomplishment."¹⁴

The urban community did not disagree with this emphasis upon the traditional family and its values. This attitude about family and the type of life held as example, a life of protestant christian values and hard work within a nuclear family, showed up, for example, in the urban attitude towards the poor. Several of the editors and the businessmen about whom they reported made a differentiation between the deserving and the undeserving poor. Editor Gelder in Yale was a fine example of this thinking. Yale had a Good Fellows Club that served as an umbrella to coordinate charitable giving in the town for Christmas. "There are some unfortunates within our city -- not their fault in all cases -- but let's help by following out the Christmas spirit and make the day bright for them. Join the Good Fellows club -- It's their object." The editor thus admitted some people were poor due to circumstances beyond their control, but the implication was that most are poor because of their own volition. A year earlier he had explained that families could not be helped "...when a family fails to make any effort to help themselves or invite others to come to live with them." This ignored the fact that for many poor people a strategy of survival in hard times was to move in with a less-poor relative. The editors instead imposed a preferred model of the properly motivated living in nuclear families. And he seemed insulted by another

¹³YD, 7 December 1921, c.4.

¹⁴"Fifty Years of Married Life," CC, 8 November 1923, 1.

frequent aspect of poverty: "Poverty is no disgrace, but filthiness is. There are none so poor nor so busy but what they can find soap and water and the time to apply it."¹⁵ The model for the traditional family was still the extended family, composed of nuclear families. In this myth, the members of this extended family would all gather on a Sunday after morning church and before evening services in the orchard of a farm house with crops and pigs, uncles and aunts, children and grandchildren, all around. The reality of cities tended to chop up the extended family, but the common myth was the same in city and countryside.

Religion was an accepted center to both rural and urban communities, and there was really no debate on its importance. For the community, it was seen as the bulwark of traditional mores. For the businessman this posed no threat, for this was never an evangelicalism that tried to light candles in business account books or profit margins. It was an evangelism concerned with personal morals and personal salvation, and it would have been a stupid businessman who ever entertained a notion to oppose those things. In the rural community the church was a glue, a social focus, an element of identity, as well as a place to worship. This centrality could not be duplicated in the rising cities of the county where there was a surfeit of organizations. But the papers spoke as if that centrality existed.

A further important element of this concept of community was the idea of cooperation. This word appeared very frequently in reports from both city and countryside. In the countryside, not only did the rural community personify it with the small acts of cooperation between neighbors which have always been part of rural life, but it was a concept concretized in the Farmers' Union. Not only did the Union emphasize cooperative marketing and buying, it also contained a rich rhetoric of "co-operation" or united action. As Perkins' Farmers' Union began its cooperative store, the Journal reported, with some hyperbole: "The Farmer's Union here is the strongest organization Perkins has ever had. That there is strength in unitedness will shortly be well proven. Farmers will have valets to comb the hayseed out of their hair." At the annual meeting of the

¹⁵YD, 7 December 1921, c.4; "Take Notice," YD, 25 January 1922, 1; "Needs Looking After," YD, 4 January 1922, 4. In the last, filthy case, he is specifically concerned with a family he helped find that had eleven children and seemingly absent parents.

Payne County Farmers' Union, a resolution was passed against the "present marketing system" and in favor of farmer-controlled "association". They also called for cooperation with laborers since their interests were "identical". When Mr. Zuck spoke to the Independence local west of Cushing, "There was a good attendance, even including a banker from Cushing, so seems greatly interested. Farmers around that oil center are hoping to see a great change for cooperation that may bring relief to the present standing conditions." And Independence local had a picnic with the state President of the Farmers' Union, the popular former Stillwater resident John Simpson, as speaker. "John A. Simpson made a fine talk on cooperation. There were several talks on true Americanism and community spirit."¹⁶ Mr. Zuck seemed to combine the personalism with cooperation and an elevated vision of an agricultural tomorrow when he wrote that, "The sentiment of the Farmers' union should be one of continuous advancement toward a greater and better agricultural method of living. Money isn't the only thing in the world that makes for civilization, but the real and true brotherly acts of kindness, devotion and willingness to give to the uplift of humanity at all times."¹⁷

The term "cooperation", so prominent in the papers of the time, actually had different meanings to farmer and townsman. The heart of cooperation for the farmer was both the cooperation between individual farmers on a day to day basis, but also cooperative buying and selling. This cooperation involved men leveled by their common occupation in which they were attempting to deal with middlemen and a marketplace which they found distant and hostile. But imbedded in this rural ideal of cooperation was a labor theory of value mixed with a physiocratic or Jeffersonian emphasis upon agriculture being the basis for all community.

Although the loudest anti-middleman rhetoric was rather subdued among farmers in Payne County in the 1920s, echoes of it still emerged in the rhetoric of that master organizer, John Simpson, resident of the county until about 1921 and President of the State Farmers' Union (and later of the national organization). In a rather fiery little piece published in the sympathetic

¹⁶"It Happened In Perkins," PJ, 23 September 1921, 1; "Farmers' Union Notes," SG, 4 November 1921, 5; "Farmers' Union Notes," SG, 23 December 1921, 5; "News of the Neighbors," SG, 2 June 1922, 7.

¹⁷"Farmers' Union Notes," SG, 31 March 1922, 8.

forum of the Stillwater Advance Democrat, he claimed that in these days the moneyed have subverted the Constitution and we live in a country that is "Democratic" in name only: "Thousands who fatten off the labor of others, thousands who see their fortunes swelled each year at the expense of thousands of their fellow beings, are prime to cry out against any change and criticize and condemn those who would like to see things made better." Simpson claimed that the men who made the Constitution cared more for humanity than money, but that today's national leaders have perverted that and care more for money than for humanity and the true ideals of the Constitution.¹⁸ Although he was invoking a labor theory of value in this, to a degree it was a rhetorical stance. Simpson was not a radical. In 1922 he opposed the Union's flirtation with the socialistic Farmer Labor Reconstruction League and went with the agricultural editor, John Field (Republican), for governor. And the Farmers' Union in fact accepted the existence of the market place run by the middleman, trying to beat the middleman rather than bury him. The fact that he used such rhetoric indicated it still had currency among his intended audience, farmers.

The Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Retail Merchants' Associations, and Lions Clubs, were the middlemen. They, too, were somewhat wary of big businesses in far-off cities, but they did not condemn them. The business man in Cushing or Yale, Stillwater or Perkins, dealt with those bigger entities and often went to those bigger cities to view the latest fashions or goods for sale. The local businessman, in turn, spoke "cooperation" but it meant a different relationship than when the farmer spoke. In the cooperation between rural and urban, there was not the cooperation between primary producers but of businessmen attempting to sell to the farmer: by its nature this was an uneven relationship. And the urban community accepted the old enemies of farmer lore, the banker, the railroad, the middle-man, because the leadership of the urban community was exactly these people.

Editor Green in Cushing summed much of this up in his verbose way. The Cushing Rotary Club planned a series of five of rural meetings in 1922, each at a different designated picnic site. Rotary would bring families, food and soft drinks and provide each site with seating.

¹⁸"Tools of Democracy," SAD, 21 July 1921, 4.

They also would bring a radio and set it up so people could listen to a station out of Oklahoma City!

This was an attempt, said the editor, to bridge gaps that have occurred within the community, to re-establish authentic "community."

In this age of selfish isolation and lack of neighborly intercourse, it is refreshing to know that the country folk have been the first to realize how far the world has drifted from the American community life and neighborly association, have taken the long step toward returning to the real foundation of the perfect community and to normalcy.

He did not explain what "long step" was taken by the rural countians, but he blamed this fissure in the true American community on the times, and on a mistaken belief in the opposition of town and country, businessman and farmer.

In the hurly burly of war and wealth and because of the many modern conveniences and practices, much of the beauty and joy of living has been lost sight of. The people, even of a small community, have drifted apart. Naturally false distinctions arose, misunderstanding and even suspicion took place of good will and co-operation

Town and country, each absorbed in their own development, began to think and believe that their interests clashed. Consequently there often arose coolness.

The great mistake lies in the incorrect idea that the interests of the country and town are not the same. They are mutual and not only that but mutually dependent. Every community must have a center. This center logically is the town. Thus the town is a part of the community as much as is the country. And this is the thought which is to be emphasized, which must be accepted, if success is to be gained, namely, that we all, town and country, are one community, with common interests, not two, with opposing interests. And it is the manifestation of the true spirit of all American citizens, which still really exists and still is strong, that are working for one great end, and therefore all are neighbors and friends whose duty and desire are to help one another, which such gatherings will bring forth to the good of all. 'United we stand, divided we fall.'¹⁹

This editor, like many townsmen, was from the country, and he was likely sincere in his homage to an era he believed had existed and could exist again. But implicit beneath his appeals to the rural community he believed existed, his appeals to recreate something "American", was an appeal by the town for trade. It was an appeal by the businessmen who led these towns for the country people to recognize the new community, and to recognize the new center of community, the town. And the true leaders of the extended community of the county were the businessmen.

¹⁹"Rotarians To Entertain Farmers At Picnic," CC, 22 June 1922, 1.

One of the activities that brought the interpersonal, the geographic, plus all the nice words such as "cooperation" and "community" together was an activity of service clubs and Chambers in our period, the rural visit. Usually this took the form of the city organization cooperating with a Farmers' Union local. The Rotary or Chamber would pile into cars, travel to the designated rural location, usually a school house, eat chicken, make speeches extolling cooperation and buying locally, and the editor would proclaim it a success. These were always billed as simply one group of nice humans meeting with another group.

It was not a program advertising the city of Yale in an effort to show how big or superior we were; but a good, clean honest endeavor to express the feeling that Yale and her citizens needed the help and the cooperation of the rural citizens and that the rural citizens needed the help and co-operation of the citizens of the town. Really it was a big get-together meeting -- interesting to a great degree, and, we believe, of much value to us all.²⁰

This particular visit to Council Valley School, southwest of Yale, sponsored by the Yale Chamber of Commerce and the Council Valley local of the Farmers' Union, was a model meeting. Twenty-eight autos carried eighty-four Yalites to the school where they "...partook of a generous chicken supper prepared by the ladies in that vicinity." Then came the speakers: Mrs. G.W. Dobson, Council Valley teacher and one of the organizers of the local Farmers' Union; County Extension Agent Rathbun, who spoke on farmers needing better organization with cooperative marketing, and farmers and townsmen needing better understanding; Mrs. Wallace of the Yale Civic League spoke; Mr. C.G. Peter, Retail Merchants Association of Yale; Mrs. Asa Smith of Council Valley spoke on mail order houses, presumably against heavy dependence on them because she "...was well received." And Mr. J. Rorex, salesman of Mebane seed cotton, spoke on "...the advantages of selected seed cotton and especially the variety he had for sale." This may sound

²⁰"A Good Thing," YD, 10 May 1923, 4. In another article he called for greater understanding between town and country and claimed that the "farmer is a business man", not a "hick" or a "rube". See "Co-operation," YD, 14 April 1924, 4. "There should be closer understanding between the farmer and the city merchant. Either one by himself would be handicapped." "The time is past when the farmer is called a 'hick' or a 'rube' and these characterizations never did become popular except on the vaudeville stage and in the cheaper lines of fiction. The farmer is a business man, he is as intelligent as is his town cousin, he is part of the community and should take an interest in that community. He must be given to understand that the town people are anxious to have him with them and help in those matters which are of a benefit to the entire community, inside the city and outside the city."

boring to modern ears, but meetings and speeches were a social binder as well as spectacle and entertainment at that time.

The central speaker was Rev. Beal, the Methodist minister in Yale, who spoke on "cooperation"

Rev. Beal handled the subject well, showing that he had given the matter much thought and that he had been observant of those things which benefited from co-operation. He explained the desire of the community for mutual benefit; explained the value of co-operative organization among the farmers themselves; explained that the old business slogan, 'competition is the life of trade,' was obsolete and had been replaced by a more modern and better slogan, 'co-operation is the life of trade.' He touched upon the value of buying at home and assured his hearers that, quality considered, one could do as well for cash with the local merchant as he could with the mail order house. He spoke of the value of co-operative marketing and the doing away of competitive farming and the real value of co-operative farming.

Mr. Beal stated that the Yale people did not come to the meeting for loaves and fishes alone, but also for the chance to show their rural neighbors that the Yale Chamber of Commerce wanted to meet and mingle with them for the purpose of a better feeling and understanding in the whole community.

It is interesting in this example that the man delivering these remarks was not a businessman but was a minister, likely someone who periodically covered a circuit that included some of the people in that rural district.²¹ Paul Harvey claimed that the white, Southern, Baptist ministers of the time wanted to look "progressive" and boosterish, the representative of a masculine religious tradition which hoped to counter what they perceived to be the feminized religion of the time. These ministers had also adopted a corporate model for the management of the church. Rev. Beal fit this model. His position as chief spokesman for the city also fit Harvey's study. "Religious and secular progressives were culturally captive to visions of an efficient and cooperative society dominated by a Protestant morality."²² And Rev. Beal ended his speech by emphasizing the

²¹"Fine Meeting Held At The Council Valley School," *YD*, 10 May 1923, 1.

²²Paul Harvey, Redeeming the South: Religious Cultures and Racial Identities among Southern Baptists, 1865-1925 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997): 197-226; on the corporate model, see p.200; quote, p. 206. Harvey deals with all "Southern" Baptists, black and white, rather than strictly the Southern Baptist Convention. His remarks seem applicable to a the body of protestant ministers of all denominations in Payne County in the early 1920s.

interpersonal relationships which the Yale boosters hoped were engendered by the trip -- "to meet and mingle".²³

Overall, the concept of community survived the differences between rural and urban on the idea of cooperation. Both groups continued to prominently use the word. There were no great breaches between the groups, no great issue of values separating them. There were, however, issues which potentially challenged the whiteness and Protestantness of the male-dominated power structure of the County.

Women

The status of women in the nation was changing in the early 1920s, though it is easy to exaggerate the amount of change. Secular trends had placed more and more women into the workforce. Women had feminized various jobs including nursing, secretarial work, teaching, and operating telephone exchanges. They were found more and more in factory settings, though frequently in traditional job categories such as garment making. They continued to perform the bulk of work around the house and the raising of the children, but many now did that in addition to a job outside the household. World War I increased the demand that they labor outside the household, pushed by the twin stimuli of patriotism and national necessity. Although this had not translated into permanent outside employment for most of these women, the event further legitimized women in the broader workforce.

Women had also achieved the vote after nearly a century of lobbying. This not only meant women could vote but that women could enter politics. Radical women's organizations continued working for an equal rights amendment, but most women, and probably nearly all men, paused and attempted to sort out the new world of enfranchised adults.

²³For another example of a businessman to farmer meeting, see "Rotarians To Entertain Farmers At Picnic," CC, 22 June 1922, 1. This type of meeting became a rather common forum and the newspaper comments about them were consistent.

In certain aspects Payne County had some touches of the new woman. True, in an agricultural county there was no radical breach between home and work, hence women worked in both spheres regularly and as a matter of course. But there were some newer touches.

There were women in the county holding elective offices. There was a County School Superintendent, Miss Emma Bassler, a relatively young lady and a Republican. Her campaign advertising for her re-election bid in 1922 noted that during her term she had made 221 visits to schools in the 89 school districts under her care (virtually each rural school formed a district), hitting all schools at least once. She had also pushed for "equality" between rural and urban kids regarding high school, and during her term about 500 rural students attended high schools, all of which were in the cities.²⁴ She found herself opposed from within her own party in 1922 and lost the position. There was also a female state representative elected in 1922, Edith Mitchell (D., Yale), who would gain the ire of many for not voting up articles of impeachment on Governor Walton in 1923. In Cushing there was a Republican Women's Club and there arose county women's organizations for both parties. The League of Women Voters was formed in Stillwater, though there is not evidence of any in the county beyond that city. Stillwater and Cushing also had Business and Professional Women's Clubs.

Political parties had taken notice. The Republican editor of the Stillwater Gazette wrote an extensive editorial on "Why Should Women Join A Party?" He boasted on the Republican record, claiming they had elected the only two women to Congress and had given numerous other female candidates a chance. Editor Brown accused the Democrats of paying lip service to women and only nominating them when there was no chance of winning. And he said that in the modern world a person had to join an organization to get their views heard. "If any woman wishes to accomplish anything politically, she stands a splendid chance of doing it in the Republican party -- much better than anywhere else."²⁵

²⁴"Few Reasons Why Emma A. Bassler Should Be Re-Elected County Superintendent of Schools in Payne County," YD, 27 July 1922, 9.

²⁵"Why Should Women Join A Party?" SG, 1 September 1922, 2.

One of the other Republican editors of the county, Mr. Green of Cushing, took a different stance when he editorialized about the Superintendent of County Schools, Emma Bassler, a good Republican lady and an incumbent. In this case long-held biases against women, biases likely held in some measure by most men in the County, showed forth.

Many women have the ability and energy to perform the duties of many offices as well as men, in some cases even better. Nevertheless there are instances where, from their very nature, women cannot succeed so well. Nature has decided this. Although they have the same political rights, the same opportunities and equal intellectual ability, and all that, the Creator created women different from man in some respects.

The plan of her life made this necessary, and so the Creator made woman to fit in where man does not and can not and fitted man for work that women cannot successfully do. There is a difference between them. It cannot be overcome. No argument is necessary, all can see it.

Then, admitting this, let us apply it to this matter of official duty. As we have tried to show heretofore, in last week's Citizen, women can and do excel in many offices. But there are a very few in which women cannot, because Nature has fixed it so, meet every situation of do the best work. The County Superintendency, strange to say, is one of these. Strange because it is the one office which woman has long especially claimed.

Citizen Green, who claimed 21 years of teaching and a stint as City Superintendent, never explained why women could not fill the office of County Superintendent of Schools, but he never changed his opinion and he endorsed all the Republican candidates for office in the county except one, Miss Emma Bassler.²⁶ She lost that 1922 election and served through the spring semester of 1923.

To add interest to the matter, Mr. Green backed Miss Leo Knowles of Stillwater for Court Clerk.

Miss Knowles is a young lady of pleasing personality and appears full of energy. She also impresses one as competent and as possessing business ability.

There is no question but what a woman can perform the duties of Court Clerk just as well as a man, all things being equal. The old prejudice should be laid aside in this instance. There may be official positions, requiring special characteristics, temperamental or otherwise which some think woman does not possess, but this is not one of them.²⁷

Such bifurcated vision, rather abrupt in the case of the conservative Mr. Green, tinged most discussions of women in the period.

²⁶"Woman And The County Superintendency," CC, 13 July 1922, 2.

²⁷"For Court Clerk," CC, 15 June 1922, 4.

This duality showed in the attitudes towards women in business and the professions. In the Stillwater Gazette was an editorial about Miss Emma Hall, now Assistant Secretary of the Commerce Trust Company in Kansas City. Editor Brown, referring to Miss Hall, stated that, "The idea that there is any limitation of sex which makes it impossible for women to make good in business was exploded by experience long ago." But he added that marriage "...is the greatest handicap to a business woman's career...."²⁸

It was likely a traditional view of women, their mores and position, was dominant in the County both as assumption and everyday fact. In Yale, Reverend Mallory, the Methodist minister, spoke about women and concluded that the woman must be a housekeeper first of all. She must make a home for children, for too many children today have no home life. He tapped in here to a constant concern of conservatives: The home without a full-time mother is a home producing delinquent children. Commenting on a group of boys he felt were vandals, the Cushing editor claimed it went back to "the lack of proper training and instruction both at home and in school."²⁹

Rev. Mallory, in another evening sermon, also lauded the "American Home." "God intended every man to be priest in his own household....", but the mother is also important. Combined, the parents can create the good family that is so important for society's sake.

The Christian home is the finest institution on the face of the earth. The happiest sight in the world is to see a father and mother leading their family heavenward; the most horrible sight is to see the father and mother leading their family hellward.³⁰

The woman most lauded in the papers of the county was the mother and housekeeper. The woman should be embedded in the family. Obituaries often elevated the woman who had raised a family and been the good helpmate to her husband, usually a farmer. In a glowing article in 1922, the Cushing editor pointed to the living family of Mr. and Mrs. John M. Roberts, "an

²⁸"Women in Business," SG, 13 January 1922, 2. This bias was the same the kept many teaching positions in public schools, even into the 1920s, open only to unmarried women. It was felt the work of women, but never of men, would be harmed by the commitments and results of marriage.

²⁹"Notes From The Tabernacle," YD, 23 January 1922, 1; "Fuss, Feathers and Fumes," CC, 13 July 1922, 7.

³⁰"Notes From The Tabernacle," YD, 1 February 1922, 1.

Oklahoma American family and a real American group." The mother had sixteen kids and still had thirteen alive. Six boys served their country in World War I. And even now, the grown boys make it point to get home to be with their mother at least once a year. "To them 'mother' is still the best and dearest woman on earth." So, on a previous Sunday, forty-nine sons, daughters and grandchildren sat down to dinner at the family home near Cement, Oklahoma. To add to the glory of it in the editor's eyes, the family raised most their own food until very recently, "Another American habit...."³¹ Men got their glory by their objective achievements, but women got theirs in the reflected glory of their children.

The "modern" woman scared the county commentators. The County learned of these through newspapers and movies. They challenged the traditional role of women. Again, Rev. Mallory in Yale voiced some of that concern. Reporting on a Sunday evening talk by the minister the "Influence of Woman's Dress Upon the Morals of the Community," Gelder reported that Mallory lauded women as the traditional moral stanchions of the community and stated that "...women can control the moral situation in every community if they desire to do so." But he counted women to be slaves to fashion, something that nullified the equality granted them by Christianity for it lowered them. Gelder then summarized the minister:

The position was taken that women have a right to adorn her own ideal [sic], unless that ideal makes such an appeal to the wrong factors as to become a detriment to clean thinking and clean living. The changes in styles were then traced and it was shown how more or less the women of American [sic] have been blindly following the styles that were born in the old country in not the best environment.³²

It is interesting how easily he turns the crime of being fashionable unto foreign influences.

And then there was the "flapper". Every reference to this newly discovered species in Payne County papers was negative or, at best, a humorous dig. "We note the flapper is pleading for a fair showing. Goodness! Hasn't she had it?"³³ The heart of the matter was gotten to by the Cushing editor: The flapper flaunted her body and conventions because her values were

³¹"An Oklahoma Mother," CC, 24 August 1922, 8.

³²"Notes from the Tabernacle," YD, 9 January 1922, 1.

³³SG, 25 August 1922, 2.

subverted. In an article from Berkeley, California reporting on a speech by Miss Mary Ide Bentley, former secretary of the San Francisco YWCA, editor Green found confirmation.

Approximately 2,000 'flappers' are on the University of California student rolls.... 'Flappers,' Miss Bentley said, 'usually are girls who believe personality is physical, who consider all advice as abstract, who live continual change, who converse in generalities and who are in many higher institutions of learning.' 'To present a picture of the normal girls as she exists today is a daring venture,' Miss Bentley added. 'She has no average, she has no group tie. She is a stranger to herself. Sometimes especially to members of her own family -- and cannot be compared with her kind of a previous age.'³⁴

This was the image of the "modern" woman as the immoral citified woman, a woman without ties to family or inhibitions, that so frightened these male writers in Payne County, and it must be assumed their audience of both sexes. This was the girl at the "petting parties", the girl who thought "personality is physical".

The Klan was patriarchal. Despite the strong arguments by Kathleen M. Blee that women in the various Klan auxiliaries were crucial to the success of the Klan both by their speaking and by their whispering campaigns, the Klan is usually portrayed as a male fraternity to which female auxiliaries are an afterthought.³⁵ There is evidence for only one female auxiliary in the county, the White Camellia in Yale. There is no evidence of any action taken by the Klan in the county against women who flaunted traditions. This may be because the county was rather conservative in their attitudes towards women and simply had few wild women.³⁶

Outside news reports likely caused some of the concerns expressed about good women gone bad. "An Arkansas circuit court has ruled that school girls have a right to paint their lips, rouge their cheeks, pluck their eyebrows and powder their noses." "Judge Porterfield of the Kansas City juvenile court says delinquency among girls of the big city on the Kaw has increased

³⁴"Says Flappers Are Plentiful," *CC*, 2 February 1922, 1.

³⁵Kathleen M. Blee, *Women of the Klan: Racism and Gender in the 1920s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991). See particularly her "Introduction" (pp. 1-8) in which she notes the traditional views and her own. She found interviewing Klan women from the period to be disconcerting because, "Many informants had little remorse about their time in the Klan. Some were proud of their Klan membership and anxious to clarify what they saw as historical misunderstandings of the order." (5)

³⁶Mrs. Billie Fisher claimed that her sister was a flapper in high school in Stillwater in about 1921. Interview with Mrs. Billie Fisher, 25 July 2000.

30 per cent in a year. He is shocked and afraid, and attributes the fault to short skirts, gay mothers and unthinking fathers."³⁷ The motion pictures also presented a different world to the youth of the early 1920s, a mostly urban world and one with women often more aggressive, doing more questionable things, than what they experienced in Cushing or Stillwater women.³⁸

To whatever was due the stridency of some of the voices about women, the women of Payne County hardly seemed a threat to either traditional values or the patriarchy of the county. They also did not make an issue the Klan could directly exploit. There was nothing for the Klan to save the women of Payne County from.

Jews and Roman Catholics

Some religious groups have been labeled by bigots as "un-American". It is difficult to know where to place anti-Semitism and anti-Catholic ideas. In the context of this work it is most logical to treat Roman Catholicism and Judaism not as religions but as "foreign" influences. Catholics were definitely a target of the Klan nationally, though the Klan's national attitudes toward Jews was much more nuanced. What was interesting was that anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic rhetoric was not publicly heard from the Klan in the county, nor very much from anyone else.

Probably the oldest "enemy" of Christendom was the Jew. From the image of the medieval "wandering Jew," the fear of medieval Jewish mysticism (and the fake documents that resulted), to the images of the Jew in the more modern era as usurer, cold-hearted money manipulator (and consequently a person who did not do real labor), and the conspiratorial shadowy figure behind every disaster to befall Christendom, the Jew has been vilified as no other in western culture.

³⁷"Glimpses of Earth," *SG*, 14 April 1922, 1; "Gazettes," *SG*, 28 July 1922, 2.

³⁸Ted Ownby, *Subduing Satan: Religion, Recreation, and Manhood in the Rural South, 1865-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990): 195-99. He claims that the movies were not only the most important of these modernizing influences, but a crucial breach in the control southerners tried to have over their culture.

The Klan's national position towards Jews was not simple. In the 1923 Asheville conference of major Klan leaders, Dr. H.W. Evans, Imperial Wizard, took it upon himself to do the anti-semitic portion of the conference. He began by asserting that the Klan itself was not bigoted but had been provoked into a defensive stance by attacks by Jews and others. All patriots, whatever creed, were the Klan's friends and should not fear the Klan. Evans even evoked some admiration for the Jew because the latter had lived unto himself in America and actually practiced, from ancient time, a form of "klannishness". Also, they protected their women and valued their families, admirable traits. Constantly claiming no aggressive concern about the Jews, the speaker ended with a long paean to the apostle Paul, declaring that the Klan "...believing that the white man's civilization is cemented with the morale of Protestant Christianity, the organization holds tenaciously to the tenets of Christ." Below the surface throughout was the implication that any Jew that stepped out of line would be in trouble, and he constantly claimed that the Jews, late-comers who came to America to escape persecution elsewhere, have never contributed anything to American society or well-being. They were parasites:

...he has not been a builder of houses, or bridges, and of highways, but a maker of wearing apparel from wool and cotton and silk -- and he produced and refined none of the raw materials. As a distributor, he has been a peddler -- a small dealer -- a profit-gatherer between the man who produced and the man who consumed. In finance, he has been the money-lender, the pawn broker, who, from the emergencies and tragedies of the poor, derived his gains.³⁹

Despite the relatively moderate tone, the Klan was widely known to be anti-semitic.

The 1920s in the United States has often been pointed to as an age of bigotries, anti-Semitism being a chief element among them. Jews had always been attacked for rejecting and crucifying Christ, a stance held by the Roman Church until the 1980s. In America, there were many other ways to attack Jews. Jews were attacked by anti-immigrationists. In the Red Scare, Jews were featured prominently in reports of radicalism, and in 1918-19 the Literary Digest ran a pair of articles that used the terms Bolshevism and Jew interchangeably. Adding to the attacks

³⁹Dr. H.W. Evans, "The Attitude of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan Toward the Jew," Papers Read, 117-23.

was the emergence in the United States of editions of The Protocols of the Elders of Zion. A document produced by Russian secret police at the turn of the century, it supposedly revealed a world-wide Jewish plot to foment a world revolution. It was given wide credence in the 1920s. Various authors attacked Jews, the most famous being a series of articles and speeches made by Henry Ford from 1921 to 1927, initially published in the Dearborn Independent. Other works include Madison Grant's, The Passing of the Great Race, Lothrop Standard, The Rising Tide of Color, Alfred P. Schultz's, Race or Mongrel, Burton J. Hendrick, The Jews in America, and various writings by others such as Kenneth Roberts. President A. Lawrence Lowell of Harvard University worried that the school had a "Jewish problem" because enrollment percentages had jumped from 6% in 1908 to 22% in 1922. Amidst all this the Jewish response was to stress assimilation and outward conformity, assuming that by not drawing attention Jews would also not draw fire.

But folklorist Carolyn Lipson-Walker, interviewing southern Jews in the 1980s, found that "...she heard primarily narratives about 'Klan cordiality towards Jews.'" And although the major recent author on anti-Semitism, Leonard Dinnerstein, claimed that ultimately the strategy of assimilation did not work and that the 1920s were difficult for Jews, he found the 1930s worse and the 1940s to be the worst decade for anti-Semitism in United States history.⁴⁰

In Payne County there was virtually no Jewish population. In Yale and Cushing, the Arkeys and Futoraskys were likely Jewish. The best known Jew in the county was Jake Katz who came to Stillwater from Winfield, Kansas, in 1894 to work in another person's dry goods store. In 1896 he founded the store which still bears his name. Affable, a very good businessman, he developed a loyal clientele and a great deal of prestige in Stillwater and later Yale. Local Jews met in his Stillwater home for services, though for synagogue services they all had to travel to Oklahoma City.⁴¹

⁴⁰Leonard Dinnerstein, Antisemitism in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994): 78-104; for the anti-semitic quote, see p. 84; for a listing of recognized anti-semitic authors, see pp. 94-5, also footnotes 74 and 75; for the Klan, see pp. 95-96.

⁴¹"Katz Celebrates 50th Anniversary," SAD, 15 November 1944, 1; Peggy McCormick, Making a Home in Stillwater (Perkins, Oklahoma: Evans Publications, 1989): 25-26.

The county made no public point of anti-Semitism, though on a personal level it undoubtedly existed. Publicly the countians were tolerant, Mr. Katz in particular being a prominent and respected member of the Stillwater community and Mr. Arky and Mr. Futorasky active in civic matters in Cushing. In 1922 Rabbi Joseph B. Latz of Tulsa's Temple Israel spoke to the Lion's Club of Cushing on the "American Jewish relief drive." He received a positive response from the Lions. He visited with Mr. and Mrs. I.G. Futorasky afterwards. Periodically wire stories were published that covered either a Jewish holiday, such as Rosh Hashanah, or some other event.⁴²

But stereotypes existed. The editor of the Advance Democrat reported that, "A friend says his idea of a good business man is one who can buy goods from a Scotchman and sell them to a Jew at a profit." In Yale, the editor reported that Lee Hall's hat was taken by someone else after a meeting and that he needed it back. The hat that was left "...makes him look like a cartoon of an original Jew."⁴³ But that same paper could run a very positive short article about Jake Arky getting "his final naturalization papers," and note that A.E. Sloan and Ben Monett accompanied him to Oklahoma City as witnesses.⁴⁴

Roman Catholics were a constant target of majority protestant America. Accused of owing allegiance to another power, the papacy, and thus not being "100% American", Catholics actually had been targets of Protestants dating back to the early days of the Reformation, and anti-clericalism aimed at the Catholic hierarchy existed for centuries before the Reformation and still exists, especially in Roman Catholic countries.

The Klan based its opposition to Roman Catholicism officially on the doctrine of the separation of church and state. "We would advance this doctrine for the believer in the superiority of the pope over the State that he take no part in the affairs of a Government which he is not

⁴²"Rabbi Latz Addresses The Local Lion's Club," CC, 19 January 1922, 1; "Jewish New Year," SG, 30 September 1921, 4; "Gazettes," SG, 23 June 1922, 2, concerning charges by the A.F. of L. that Harvard University discriminated against Jewish workers, an action the A.F. of L. labeled as "un-American".

⁴³"Around The Town," SAD, 11 August 1921, 3; "Don't Help His Looks," YD, 14 December 1921, 1.

⁴⁴"To Get Final Papers," YD, 17 January 1924, 1.

prepared to support to the uttermost."⁴⁵ It was again Dr. H.W. Evans, the Imperial Wizard, who chose himself to discuss this religious group at the 1923 Asheville meeting of the Klan leaders. Arguing that the Catholic hierarchy was already scurrilously attacking the Klan and the Klan was only standing on principles in its purely defensive response, he argued that the "highly organized and entirely secret" hierarchy of the Roman church was plotting to take our government and our liberties. A prime target of Catholic attack was the "free public school system," a reason for the Klan call for a department of education in the federal cabinet. In general the Roman hierarchy would take our "sacred liberties," something the Klan pledged to oppose at all costs. "If this be religious intolerance, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan bids the thinking public of America make the most of it."⁴⁶ A Catholic President would be a disaster, and block voting by Catholics, a threat to the American system of government, was seen as a sad "trend". Dr. Evans then painted the Romanists with the broad brush of anti-immigration rhetoric.

When America ceases to be a country inhabited by Americans and becomes the polyglot center of the universe, our co-mingled populations will have no fixed ideas as to what human liberty means, nor the responsibility which freedom entails upon the people who enjoy it, and our free institutions will collapse.

From every angle our country and its institutions are in danger, and no danger is greater or more destructive than the infiltration of peoples and ideas which are not American.

With true christian compassion Dr. Evans expressed sympathy for the Catholic layman. But, he said, he and the Klan had to oppose any attack on "our Holy American institutions." Thus, the "semi-political religious organization" that is the Catholic hierarchy must be opposed by the Klan due to:

...an antipathy bred into us from the loins of our forefathers, the men who conquered the wilderness and built a nation, and set ablaze the beacon fires of liberty that all the world might see by that light the true road to happiness.⁴⁷

⁴⁵H.W. Evans, "The Attitude of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan Toward the Roman Catholic Hierarchy," Papers Read, 115.

⁴⁶Ibid., 116.

⁴⁷Ibid., 115.

As a result, the Klan followed up on its rhetoric and opposed the Roman hierarchy and all Catholics. In most accounts of Klan activities, anti-Catholicism is at least an element and, in some cases, the leading element.⁴⁸

In Oklahoma, Roman Catholics were a minority that did suffer from anti-Catholicism.⁴⁹ The 1917 battle over the "bone-dry" law, which finally freed sacramental wine from prohibition, gave Catholics some hope. The War found Catholics fully backing the United States, with many Catholics joining the fight in France. In 1920, the fight between the incumbent, James J. McGraw, and Col. Jake L. Hamon, for Republican Committeeman, turned into a brawl between two rich oil men. Hamon needed an issue and began passing out conspiracy theories about McGraw's Catholicism and, particularly, his membership in the Knights of Columbus. Hamon did well and it was due to a negative vote.

Soon after that, the Klan came into the state, and in addition, there were other anti-Catholic groups: The Evangelical Protestant Society, the Society of American Patriots, and the American Children's Foundation. There were also some free-lance anti-Catholic lecturers. Roman Catholics in turn lumped all anti-Catholics together and applied to them the generic term "Klan". There were several anti-Catholic newspapers beyond the Klan's Fiery Cross. In some cases, Catholic teachers were fired or not hired.

The 1922 gubernatorial election renewed anti-Catholic threats. Besides Walton, whose wife was a Catholic and who posed no threat, running for the Democratic nomination was Thomas H. Owen, a former Supreme Court justice and the one who wrote the pro-Catholic wine decision, and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, R.H. Wilson, who was an avowed Klansman. When anti-Catholics circulated a petition for a Constitutional amendment in the state to mandate that all students attend public schools through the eighth grade, an anti-Catholic move, Walton opposed it and Wilson enthusiastically backed it. The Catholic Church, overtly through some of its

⁴⁸For an excellent summary of Klan fears which shows how frequently Roman Catholics enter into their list of things opposed, see Leonard J. Moore, Citizen Klansmen: The Ku Klux Klan in Indiana, 1921-1928 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991): 13-43.

⁴⁹For the response of Roman Catholics in general to the anti-Catholicism they found in the South, see, Lynn Dumenil, "The Tribal Twenties: 'Assimilated' Catholics' Reponse to Anti-Catholicism in the 1920s," Journal of American Ethnic History 11 (Fall, 1991): 21-49.

organizations, and covertly through voter word of mouth, opposed the petition and spread the word about whom to vote for in the nomination process. The Klan actively touted Wilson, and when Walton won the nomination some interpreted it as the Catholics defeating the Klan. The Church hierarchy immediately denied they or the church were involved in politics. The Catholic influence did seem important in stopping the school petition, although most the denominations in the state joined them in this quest to save religious education.

After election, the Walton governorship wound its erratic course for about eight months and created so much controversy that it fairly drowned out anti-Catholicism. But the Catholics had gained a reputation for political power that, whether deserved or not, helped them in the future. Thomas Elton Brown's 1974 dissertation entitled the chapter on this period, "Battling Anti-Catholicism At High Tide, 1920-1924," and his work bore out the title.⁵⁰

In the Payne County in 1926 there were 791 Roman Catholics, or 8% of the religious population. In Stillwater and Cushing there were well-established Catholic parishes. In 1921 the parish at St. Francis Xavier in Stillwater celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. At that time the church had 280 members comprising about a hundred families. Bishop Theophile Meerschaert had appointed its first priest in 1891, Father Felix de Grasse, who held services in Stillwater periodically for about four years. By 1899 the parish had a permanent priest, bought the last of its property in 1904, and grew. Prior to 1914 a school was opened because it was closed, then revived in 1914.⁵¹

In Cushing was another Catholic parish, served during much of this period by Father William Treinenkens, a Belgium priest. He served a parish in Drumright, Creek County, from 1913 to 1918 while permanently assigned to Cushing. When the Drumright parish decided to build a church the priest began to receive threats. He believed them to be from the Klan and expressed some fear. A parishioner from that parish, interviewed years later, stated that the Klan was

⁵⁰Thomas Elton Brown, "Bible-Belt Catholicism: A History of the Roman Catholic Church in Oklahoma, 1905-1945" (Stillwater, Oklahoma: Ph.D. diss., Oklahoma State University, 1974): 91-123.

⁵¹"Catholics Observe Silver Jubilee," SAD, 2 June 1921, 1.

powerful and anti-Catholic in Drumright. "Catholics lived in constant fear."⁵² In 1923 the priest decided to visit Belgium, began the trip, and was found dead in a hotel room in Evansville, Indiana. Newsom reported that the parishioners always thought it was a Klan murder, though no person was ever charged and it was initially ruled a suicide. The Cushing paper warmly mentioned the man, noting that he "...has been quite popular among the people at large...."⁵³

In the County Roman Catholics seemed to have been a respected minority, although it was likely that on a personal level there was much general anti-Catholic feelings and rhetoric. The level of anti-Catholicism is difficult to judge because Catholicism was so infrequently mentioned. There was one mention from the rural areas, from the Longbranch district in the far north-center of the county, noting that Mr. and Mrs. Wisherd attended the Catholic Church at Stillwater. There are also some wire stories from around the state, such as the dedication of the "cathedral" at Guthrie, and international news such as at the death of Pope Benedict XV.⁵⁴

None of the papers in the county ever had the local priest write a column, or reported with any regularity about Catholic affairs, local, national, or international. Catholics actually became more invisible in these papers than did blacks, though largely because the editors didn't put "catholic" after a man's name the way they put "colored". There was more mention in the papers of much smaller and more loosely organized groups of "holiness" people and "pentecostals".

The Ripley Record provided some of the only pieces of locally printed anti-Catholic rhetoric. "Several from this community attended the lecture at Sooner Valley Monday night. Ole Olson was raised a Catholic until he was 17. He was like Paul of old when he heard the truth he

⁵²D. Earl Newsom, Drumright! The Glory Days of a Boom Town (Perkins, Oklahoma: Evans Publications, 1985): 110.

⁵³Newsom, Drumright, 116-17; "Catholic Pastor Found Dead at Terre Haute, Ind.," CC, 21 June 1923, 1. Please note that although the paper expressed grief about this, there was no follow-up in the following weeks, nor even a notice about a funeral. This might be protestant blindness and to the fact that the priest was likely buried elsewhere and may have been in the ground at the time the short article was written.

⁵⁴"Notes of the Neighbors," SG, 9 June 1922, 7; "Oklahoma State News," SG, 30 December 1921, 1; "Life Of Pope Benedict Has Sudden Ending," CC, 20 January 1922, 3. It is interesting that the article about the Pope sounded as if it were written by an official Catholic publicist and was quite detailed as well as complimentary to the Holy Father.

obeyed it."⁵⁵ Sooner Valley is the district containing Mehan which was an oil boom-town. Yale hosted a traveling anti-Catholic lecturer in 1922.

Sister Mary Ethel, advertised to lecture to women only in the High School Auditorium Monday afternoon and to the general public that evening, was greeted with a good attendance at both.

She claimed to be a sister who became very disenchanted with Catholicism, sought to escape the convent for some time and finally did it.

Those who were expecting a ranting, scathing attack of Catholicism were disappointed for the lecturer handled the subject in a quiet but convincing way and made many of her audience think of matters in a more sincere way regarding conditions as they are in the world today.⁵⁶

It is likely that there was a quantity of anti-Catholic feelings within the county in the early 1920s. It is also likely that there were other visits by itinerant anti-Catholic lecturers at that time and anti-Catholic discussions in some groups. But there is no recorded anti-Catholic action, violent or pacific, in Payne County at this time. Catholics seemed to be integrated into the towns. Their congregations were part of the settlement of the County. The congregations had extensive properties. And Catholics could probably be found in all economic classes of the County. They were a protected minority. And the Klan, in its few public pronouncements in the county, never attacked the Roman Church.

African Americans

In a very good article concerning Oklahoma's reputation as a "western" state, Danny Goble argued that Oklahoma was much like a southern state in at least two important ways. Oklahoma, like a southern state, had a political system that re-elected people time and time again. On the federal level this translated into inordinate power in the Congress due to the seniority system. The second similarity with the South was in race: Oklahoma was the northwest corner of

⁵⁵"From Mehan," Ripley Record, 14 December 1922, 8 [hereafter "RR"].

⁵⁶"Sister Mary Ethel's Lecture," YD, 14 June 1922, 8; "Well Attended," Yale Record, 16 June 1922, 1 [hereafter "YB"].

the Jim Crow belt. The Twin Territories were a goal of early escapees from Jim Crow's advent in the South, and the hopes that turned to disappointment in Oklahoma helped turn the flow of African Americans leaving the South from a westward track to a northward flow.⁵⁷

Racial discrimination in Oklahoma began even before the establishment of Oklahoma Territory. The forced enrollment of black freedmen into the Five Civilized tribes had never been a neat fit, and the influx of blacks and whites into Indian Territory as miners and as tenant farmers in the 1880s and 1890s had accentuated their lack of rights in a land politically owned by the Indian.

Table 5.1: Racial Breakdown of the Twin Territories and Oklahoma⁵⁸

date	Population total	White Population total	White Population %	Negro Population total	Negro Population %	Indian, etc. total	Indian, etc. %
1890	258,657	172,554	66.7	21,609	8.4		
1900	790,391	670,204	84.8	55,684	7.0		
1910	1,657,155	1,444,531	87.2	137,612	8.3	75,012	4.5
1920	2,028,283	1,781,226	87.8	149,408	7.4	57,681	2.8
1930	2,396,040	2,123,424	88.6	172,198	7.2	100,418	4.2

In Oklahoma Territory the black population had always been a small percentage of the total population. Discrimination in Oklahoma Territory started at an early date. The first to come was a local option law for school segregation (1890-97). This came despite Republican control of the state, exercised especially through the governor's office, and solid black support for that party. It also came because in the early years of Oklahoma Territory there was much racial mixing socially, in churches, saloons, and other places.⁵⁹

⁵⁷Danny Goble, "The Southern Influence On Oklahoma," in "An Oklahoma I Had Never Seen Before": Alternative Views of Oklahoma History, ed. David D. Joyce, 280-301 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994). See especially pp. 284-90.

⁵⁸Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910, v. III, pt. 2, Population, Nebraska-Wyoming, Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1913): 466; Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, v. III, Population Composition and Characteristics By State (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1923): 812; Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930, v. III, part 2, Reports by States, Montana-Wyoming (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1923): 541

⁵⁹Jimmie Lewis Franklin, Journey Toward Hope: A History of Blacks in Oklahoma (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982): 31-33.

In 1897 the Territorial Legislature decreed segregated schooling. That same year, after blacks were denied admission to both Oklahoma A. & M. College in Stillwater and the University of Oklahoma in Norman, the legislature created the only publicly supported black institution of higher education in the Territory and, in mission at least, the only comprehensive college in the Territory, Colored Agricultural and Normal School at Langston (hereafter Langston University). Although black leaders, led by Edwin McCabe, desired a true liberal arts college, the white legislature created a Tuskegee on the plains, a vocationally oriented school. The truth is that for decades it was primarily a high school with some students in the normal division (teacher education, essentially two years of high school and two of college) and very few on a baccalaureate level.⁶⁰

At the same time there was a growing level of racism in what would become the state of Oklahoma. In 1901 Sapulpa drove out all blacks. There was also a spate of whippings and even some lynchings. Disgusted with the unresponsiveness of the Republican Party to black demands, black leadership called for a Negro boycott of the 1906 election for the Constitutional Convention. The result was a near-complete sweep of delegates by the Democrats. The Convention's presiding officer, "Alfalfa Bill" Murray, was an avowed racist who became even more so with the years. He and his Democrats would have written full Jim Crow into the Constitution except they knew President Roosevelt would not sign such a document. They would have seriously restricted black voting, but blacks in the territories lobbied heavily in Washington and got universal suffrage. The Constitution subsequently contained school segregation and a definition of "colored" that meant having African heritage.⁶¹

In the first Oklahoma legislature, Senate Bill number one was segregation of railroad cars and waiting rooms (the "coach law"). They also banned interracial marriage.⁶² Jimmie Lewis Franklin noted that:

⁶⁰Ibid., 68.

⁶¹Ibid., 40-44; Goble, "Southern Influence," 286-87.

⁶²Goble, "Southern Influence," 286-87; Franklin, Journey, 48.

From the beginning, support for segregation was strong and essentially nonpartisan, and this remained true across the years. Whatever social scientists may say about Oklahoma's Jim Crow code, the passage of segregation laws helped to internalize behavior toward blacks that led toward increased racial antipathy and hatred.⁶³

Local communities passed restrictive housing ordinances, such as Tulsa's in 1916. Although these were outlawed in a Supreme Court Case from Louisville, Kentucky, in 1917 (*Buchanan v. Warley*), de facto segregation continued. When Governor "Alfalfa Bill" Murray tried to impose legal housing segregation along with martial law on Oklahoma City in 1933, it led to *Allen v. Oklahoma City* which finally slapped down such ordinances (1935).

Voting was restricted by a "Grandfather Clause". The first National Association for the Advancement of Colored People chapter in the state, the Oklahoma City chapter, was founded in 1913, and it took the lead in challenging that Jim Crow mainstay in the Supreme Court. The US Supreme Court killed such laws (*Guinn v. Oklahoma*, 1916). The legislature came back with a law, often called the "universal" registration law, that left it up to the county registrar whether he would visit a community to register voters, and it provided for an extremely brief registration period. This effectively cut black voter registration and was not killed until the United State Supreme Court ruled it down in *Lane v. Wilson*, 1939. Besides effectively killing black political participation, it cut back on the competitive two party system. The Republicans, split between a "lily white" groups and a group that wanted black inclusion, were dealt a serious blow by the voter restriction laws. Goble argued that this law plus massive Democratic corruption of the electoral process produced the solidly Democratic state assumed by most observers. The fact was that up through the teens the state had the basics of a viable two party system. A very crucial mistake by the Republicans was the desertion of the black voter by that party.⁶⁴

Blacks did not sit idly by during all this, though their options narrowed over time. In 1915 Roscoe Dungee established the Black Dispatch in Oklahoma City and proceeded to publish it until his death in 1965. He constantly pointed to the sins of racism and his paper became one of

⁶³Franklin, *Journey*, 46.

⁶⁴Danny Goble, "Oklahoma Politics and the Sooner Electorate," in, Oklahoma: New Views of the Forty-Sixth State, edited by Anne Hodges Morgan, and H. Wayne Morgan (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982): 134-43.

the national voices for black rights. The dignified Inman E. Page, first President of Langston University, pushed liberal arts education for blacks and was eventually fired in part for this stance. But the racist laws were effective and blacks had no real voice in government.⁶⁵

Black education also suffered from bad facilities and equipment, teachers with less training and less pay, and a public school funding mechanism that put them disastrously behind white schools. Black elementary and secondary schools got only county tax levies, and although the courts said the counties had to levy these, the amounts were relatively small. White school districts not only got their part of the county levy, but could also levy a district tax. In 1920, the outlay per pupil for a white student in the state was \$22.60, while for a black student it was \$11.50.⁶⁶ This funding system was not abolished until 1955. One of the few things that helped black schools were funds provided by national foundations, particularly the Rosenwald Fund. By 1926, 10% of all black students in the state were schooled in building built with the aid of that fund. In Payne County there were two schools that got Rosenwald funds.⁶⁷ The black community worked to help their schools, and they also mounted a major attack on illiteracy among blacks, dropping it statewide from more than 17% in 1910 to 13% in 1920 and 9% in 1930.⁶⁸

Payne County's initial population was very white and it was not one of the preferred goals of black migrants. Populations were drawn south of the River to Langston, Meridian, and Guthrie. In 1900, Logan County had a total population of 26,563, and a black population of 6,102, or 23% black. Payne County had a 2.2% black population at that time. In 1920, Payne County had only a 4% black population and was over 95% white, 93.5% of that native born white. It is difficult to break this figure down into urban vs. rural, and, even if that were done, the bare fact remains that Payne County had few blacks. It is even unlikely that Payne County blacks were undercounted due to itinerant black workers since the county had a rather large group of itinerant white workers

⁶⁵On Roscoe Dunjee, see Franklin, *Journey*, 54-7. There has been a biography with writings done on Mr. Dunjee, but it was too late to be included. See Bob Burke, Angela Monson, *Roscoe Dunjee: Champion of Civil Rights* (Edmond: University of Central Oklahoma Press, 1998). On Dr. Page, see Franklin, *Journey*, 68.

⁶⁶Franklin, *Hope*, 62.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 65-6; Cynthia J. Savage, "The Julius Rosenwald Fund: Northern Philanthropy in Oklahoma's Separate Schools," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 77 (Spring, 1999): 4-21.

⁶⁸Franklin, *Journey*, 67-8.

due to the petroleum industry. In the 1920s there were a few blacks crossing the river and spreading mostly eastward from Coyle towards Perkins. All the major towns had some black population.

Table 5.2: Foreign and Racial Make-Up of Payne County⁶⁹

Year	Numbers / Percentages					black	other*
	total pop.	white total	white native born	white foreign born			
1890	7,215	7,115				100	
		98.6%				1.4%	
1900	20,909	20,378	19,752	626		450	81**
		97.5%	94.5%	3.0%		2.2%	.4%
1910	23,735	22,213	21,610	603		1,456	66
		93.6%	91.0%	2.5%		6.1%	.3%
1920	30,180	28,793	28,233	560		1,208	179
		95.4%	93.5%	1.9%		4.0%	.6%
1930	36,905	34,664	34,330	334		1,924	317
		93.9%	93.0%	.9%		5.2%	.9%

*described as "Indian, Chinese, and Japanese" in 1910, 1920, and as "other" in 1930

**number not provided in census

There were a few incidents of strong racism before statehood in Payne County. On June 24, 1901, a black dummy was found hanging from the rail bridge at Glencoe. It was a warning to black railway crews to keep in line. Newsom quoted the Glencoe Mirror that "...as long as they keep their place and do not attempt to become citizens of the town" all will be peaceful. There were no blacks in Glencoe at the time outside of the itinerant railway crews.⁷⁰

In Ripley a major landowner, Brian Morehead, ran a cotton plantation with blacks as the workers. There were several incidents of black-on-black murder. Then, in 1912, Marshall William Ferris of Ripley was shot twice by Sun Barnes, a black man he was arresting for drunkenness. The next day whites milled in the streets. Black families were prepared to leave and there was even a

⁶⁹Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910, vol. III, Population, 1920 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923): 568; Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930, v. III, part 2, Reports by States, Montana-Wyoming (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1933): 568.

⁷⁰D. Earl Newsom, The Story of Exciting Payne County (Stillwater: New Forums Press, 1997): 153.

move to make it a "white man's town". The Santa Fe moved black employees out. No lynchings occurred and tensions calmed eventually.⁷¹

Racism came easily for whites in the county by all accounts, though it was a racism that generally excluded violence. The Stillwater Gazette, for example, ran a wire story about how blacks were being brutalized in Georgia with murders and lynching going unpunished, and the editor attacked "lynch law." Later editor Brown ran an article about a lynching in Columbia, Missouri, attended by students from the University. The moderate editor caustically noted that, "Students of the University of Missouri were interested spectators, but not active participants, in the lynching of a Negro at Columbia Sunday. Modern education thrives on the demonstrative method."⁷²

Several papers in the county ran articles about the lynching of a black strike-breaker by members of the butchers' union during a meat-packers strike in Oklahoma City in 1922. Eight men were eventually arrested and six pleaded guilty immediately and got life.⁷³ Condemning the violence, the Yale Democrat took an interesting tack by attacking radical union members who gave a bad name to unions.⁷⁴ In general the newspapers in the county condemned violence, the exception being the Cushing Citizen regarding the whipping of Walter Mathews, a subject to be covered in the chapter on the Klan.

The county papers' treatment of the Tulsa Race Riot in 1921 was rather peculiar. They had to know major events were transpiring in Tulsa, but there was almost no coverage. A typical, rather detached account was in the Stillwater Advance Democrat. Dick Rowland, a black man, was accused in this account of assaulting a "white orphan girl" in the incident which triggered the event. The rather sparse reports listed 68 "negroes" dead and nine whites. It also mentioned that about 6,000 blacks are being "held" in Convention Hall and a Park.⁷⁵ There was undoubtedly

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 71-5.

⁷² "Dark Ages In Georgia," SG, 26 January 1923, 4; "Gazettes," SG, 4 May 1923, 2.

⁷³ "Oklahoma State News," SG, 20 January 1922, 1; "Oklahoma State News," SG, 27 January 1922, 1.

⁷⁴ "Uncalled For," YD, 20 January 1922, 4.

⁷⁵ "Tulsa In The Throes Of A Race Clash," SAD, 2 June 1921, 1.

verbal news around town about these major events. It could be that the papers were attempting to ensure calm by not discussing the matter, or it could be they lacked much feeling for the events due to the whiteness of the County.

In the white county press, race was not mentioned often but it did slip in. The Stillwater Advance Democrat ran an article about a "Salesmanship Club" which was looking for subscribers. If you joined you would be entered in a contest to win a Buick Six Touring car valued at \$1345.00. Rule one in the contest began, "Any reputable white man, woman or child residing in Stillwater, Payne County, Oklahoma, or surrounding territory...." The Advance Democrat, in a news report about "Stillwater's colored diamond athletes," the Hot Shots, noted that the pitcher for Stillwater in the last game, "Hi Pockets" Carter, lacked good stuff so he was replaced by "Big Boy." "'Big Boy' is as dark as the ace of spades and has a tendency to get fat. His legs are so big that he has to move them out of the way of each other when he walks." The same paper's editor spent a week attending a convention in Georgia and had this observation: "Negroes in the south always address white gentlemen as 'sir.' It is a custom not followed so much in the North." It's possible to detect a sense of longing in his musings.⁷⁶

Sometimes the comments seemed stereotypical to today's sensibilities. The American Legion in Yale had a meeting in which the newly elected commander launched into "...a black-face monologue followed by a solo by Rupert Spencer and was thoroughly enjoyed by those who heard it." In Cushing the Lions were entertained by a visiting "Minstrel troupe." The Gazette used a stock, black figure for commentary. "Curt Kafircorn says the negro question is settled in Oklahoma." Editor Brown sometimes said things which were rather caustic and this could be understood as a stereotype of the "good" colored or as a critique of the current state of the "negro question." In a jab at both southerners and blacks -- the editor was from Kansas -- he noted another time that, "Southern whites long have boasted that they alone understand the Negro. Surely they ought to do so. They both speak the same language. When they say 'meat'

⁷⁶"Salesmanship Club," SAD, 9 November 1922, 4-5; "Negro Minstrels; Stillwater Loses," SAD, 14 June 1923, 8; "Georgia Gleanings," SAD, 5 July 1923, 2.

they mean bacon."⁷⁷ There were a few jokes told in dialect with typical stereotypes of blacks, but these are rather rare. The Cushing editor included a joke featuring blacks in dialect in January, 1922, but a month later he included a similar joke, in dialect, negatively parodying a white country bumpkin.⁷⁸

Rarely was there overt racist rhetoric in the newspapers. In two cases the Cushing editor slipped into this. In the first he reported on a white man found dead. The man had an I.W.W. card (one of the few mentions of that group in the county newspapers of the period). He had last been seen heading for "Niggertown" for a drink, one of the rare times that derogatory term was heard in a newspaper in this period. The editor was thinking more about the Wobbler card than race: The racial element simply confirmed what he thought of a Wobbly, and he likely used the name for the black section widely used by whites in the town.⁷⁹

In what were the most blatant racial remarks found in any of the papers consulted in the county, editor Green did some musing in an editorial in July 1923, just after the perambulations of Sgt. Webber and also after a large Klan rally -- upon which he did not report -- had happened near town. His musings showed how easily he could slip from bigotry to business.

If there were neither Japs, Chinese, Mexicans nor negroes in this county, what a great time we would have. If Polaks, Slavs and Dagoes did not creep in, peace would come to a number of our people.

If there were no negroes in Cushing, Chief Newby would not be able to boast that his department is self supporting.

If everybody in Cushing did just what they say that others should do, there would be such prosperity here as no city ever experienced. Or if talk accomplished as much as deeds Cushing would be a wonder. The same is true of every other town.

If every dollar made -- mark you 'made', profit or increase -- or every dollar earned in Cushing that is spent elsewhere, were spent in Cushing for the same things, the pay roll in Cushing would be almost doubled and we would have 4000 or 5000 more people living here.

And so the editor continued in his normal, rambling style. It is a strange editorial with its mix of bigotry and boosterism. It was written in the town within the county with the worst history of labor

⁷⁷"Big Get Together Meeting," YD, 18 February 1921, 1; "Lions Have Interesting Meeting Tuesday," CC, 12 January 1922, 1; "Gazettes," SG, 4 August 1922, 2.

⁷⁸"Both Good and Bad Needed," CC, 20 January 1922, 7; "He Knew A Better Plan," CC, 22 February 1922, 7.

⁷⁹"Oil Worker Found Dead In His Room," CC, 11 January 1923, 8.

relations as well as the highest numbers of itinerants and unemployed laborers in previous years. But it provided an insight into the underlying racism that was widespread within the white community of Payne County in the early 1920s.⁸⁰

Whites assumed the "race" question, or "negro question", had been solved, and no whites recorded in the newspapers of Payne County in the era of the hooded Klan objected. Nor did any public figures, even those from the "Party of Lincoln." The Stillwater Gazette, Cushing Citizen, and Yale Democrat at the least supported John Fields, the Republican candidate for governor in 1922. Fields included in his political ads a statement that he agreed the "negro problem" was solved and should be left as it was. Fields boasted that Republicans enacted the first Territorial race laws, segregation of public schools, and backed segregation in transportation. "Neither of these laws will be changed during my administration, if I become governor. No Democrat stands stiffer than I for white supremacy."⁸¹ Race knew no political bounds as an issue. Racism was endemic in the county among whites.

The silence about blacks found in these papers implicitly placed them far back in the community. Blacks were rarely mentioned and are frequently nameless when they were. There were months on end in all of the major county papers in which you would not be able to tell that any black people lived in the towns of Payne County. Their churches were never mentioned in the columns devoted to city churches, while minority white churches such as the Latter Day Saints Reorganized and the Christian Scientists are listed at least sometimes. Some white ministers got large play in the newspapers, while black ministers rarely saw their names in the newspapers. Often at graduation time the papers listed white graduates, but they rarely mentioned black graduates. When school registration was announced in the Fall, there was hardly a case when any mention is made of the black school in a town. And no mention was ever found of black reactions to the existence of the Klan in the county.

But just as there was an unconscious whiteness in Payne County, there was also a point at which the racism of the majority white society became paternalistic. There was a definite division

⁸⁰"Some lfs," CC, 12 July 1923, 6.

⁸¹YD, 14 September 1922, 3. A similar ad also appeared in the Stillwater Gazette.

in white minds between "good coloreds" and "bad coloreds", the latter always being trouble makers. The "good coloreds" were people who lived in the town or nearby, conformed in daily life to the rigor of Jim Crow, worked hard and didn't cause problems. In Ripley, when they debated putting up a Klan-style sign of warning at the entries to town, townspeople objected to the usual warning to "niggers", stating that they never used the word and that their "coloreds" were good coloreds. Ultimately the signs were erected but did not mention race⁸² In Stillwater in 1921 the principle of "the Washington (colored) school" for six years left to teach at Oklahoma Colored Agricultural and Normal in Langston, his, and his wife's, alma mater.

The Elsberrys have been conspicuously successful in their work in Stillwater, have earned the esteem of the community, and the highest commendation of the members of the board of education and the superintendent of schools.

Their residence in Stillwater has been an epoch of benefit to their race, and therefore to the separate school system.⁸³

It is interesting how lauding Mr. Elsberry could be used to reinforce segregated schooling. This was not only one of the rare remarks in the newspapers about a black person outside of the police or court reports, but it was the most laudatory remark found in these papers in this period about a black man of the county.

The Cushing editor reported that African Americans in that city had had a big meeting with over a hundred in attendance at the Baptist Church. The leader was Rev. Drake (the only time in over three years of weekly papers the pastor was named). The minister delivered "...a scathing talk on the conditions existing in the addition both moral and physical."

The meeting was called by the better element of colored people in protest against the activities of the bootlegging and dope peddling class who are bringing the addition into disrepute, and it was brought out in the various talks that the great majority of the colored people living there are law abiding citizens and want to correct existing evils if that is possible.

No attempt will be made to ask the offenders to move it was stated, but from now on they will be given to understand that their activities will not be tolerated by the better class of colored citizens. Mention was made during the meeting of the condition of the streets and the lack of modern facilities and plans for obtaining much needed

⁸²Alvin Mitchell, and Veneta Berry Arrington, Little Tom and Fats (Stillwater, Oklahoma: Forum Press, 1983): 151.

⁸³"Prof. Elsberry Joins Faculty Of Alma Mater," SG, 9 September 1921, 1.

improvements were made. Several committees were appointed to make an extended investigation of conditions and report to the officers of the Civic club which was formed as an outcome of the meeting Monday night. A special committee was appointed to appear before the city council at its next meeting for the purpose of conferring with that body in relation to the carrying out of some of the plans laid Monday night.⁸⁴

It is interesting that the minister was talking about morals and about bad physical conditions in the black "addition". But the editor wanted to talk first about black morals and crime, and he did so. Even the title seems to sound a call to moral improvement. Also, only one black person was named: If it had been a white meeting, all the speakers would have been named, and the committee heads, and possibly their members, would have also been named. The references to "better element" and "better class of colored citizens" are jarring to our minds today but were meant as compliments at the time, for to the editor it was an acknowledgment that blacks were improving under Jim Crow. Finally, notice that when blacks needed to get something done in the early 1920s, they did just what whites did: They formed an organization. It was an organizing era in the county.

In another case, the Cushing editor wrote about a marital dispute that ended in the woman almost killing the man with a gun. The husband declined to press charges. "The residents of 'The Addition,' the colored section to the northwest, were excited on Sunday by hearing pistol shots."

It is quite a while since any such act has been reported from the negro section and it was hoped that all the bad negroes had been driven out. And they have. Johnson is said to be a hard working industrious man, but has a somewhat ugly temper. He is employed at the Cushing Motor Company.⁸⁵

If gunshots and woundings are not common in "The Addition" it must have been a rather law abiding place. And Mr. Johnson qualified as a "good colored" in the editor's mind, despite having accosted his wife over years, because he was "hard working and industrious," and he was employed.

There was a strange paternalism at work here, one which was likely most useful for whites. Good coloreds were identified and known, which meant that outside, "bad" coloreds were also

⁸⁴"Colored Folks Would Improve," CC, 22 February 1922, 5.

⁸⁵"Negro Shot By His Own Spouse," CC, 23 March 1922, 1.

identifiable by whites. This made getting rid of the "bad" easier. And the fact that there were "good colored" really meant they obeyed the Jim Crow laws and lived lives approaching the middle-class white standards of morality, propriety and success. It did not mean the police would not be down in "The Addition" making arrests or that they would do so gently and with regard to a person's rights.

Schooling was another area of evident discrimination. In the years we are concerned with it is difficult to tell how many total students were in the county. In 1920 the census stated that Payne County had an 88.1% school attendance rate among its 7 to 13 years old (4,276 of 4,856). But that year the census stopped showing a break-down by race, and the total school population would be larger due to the rather narrow age range used for the statistic.

As an example of black attendance, in the 1923-24 school year, Cushing had 2256 students, with 2097 white students (93.0%), 159 black students (7.0%). The white population included 48% males, while the black included only 44% males.⁸⁶

It is difficult to tell how many rural black schools existed in 1921-23.⁸⁷ Cushing, Stillwater, Ripley, and Yale all had black schools. In the county the only black schools the literary evidence turned up from 1921-23 were in the two or three districts across the river and east of Coyle -- a bleed of population up from the Langston vicinity into districts 60, 59, and possibly 58 -- and a school in District 19, Union Valley, east of Stillwater and above Mehan. It is very likely there were several more. One problem in their discovery is that the rural correspondents generally say nothing about blacks. In 1922 the correspondent from I.X.L. noted a new black school.

The negroes are becoming so thickly populated between I.X.L. and Coyle that the County had to build them a school house two and a half miles west of I.X.L., on the southeast corner of the Rasmusson's farm. The house is finished, ready for school.⁸⁸

⁸⁶Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Population, Composition and Characteristics by States, vol III, Fourteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1920 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1923): 477; "Census Shows Small Gain," CC, 7 February 1924, 1.

⁸⁷The County Superintendency in Payne County was eliminated in the past decade. The records are now in the County Clerks office uncataloged. It is not certain that they would have information on schools and school age children from as far back as the 1920s.

⁸⁸"News of the Neighbors," SG, 1 September 1922, 7. It is unclear from this whether the school is in the I.X.L. District (58) or the next one west (59).

Stillwater, with its Washington School, was probably the most supportive of black schooling of any urban area of the county. It usually published some figures about black school enrollments and graduations. For example, in 1922 the only senior was Joseph William Griggs.

Table 5.3: Racial Make-Up of Student Populations in Cities and Towns, 1921-1922⁸⁹

City/Town	1921			1922			1922			
	total	white total	%	black total	%	total	white total	%	black total	%
Cushing	2042	1925	94.3	117	5.7	2044	1948	95.3	96	4.7
Stillwater	1568	1523	97.1	45	2.9	1599	1566	97.9	33	2.1
Yale	1042	1021	98.0	22	2.1	1206	1181	97.9	25	2.1
Quay	682	677	99.3	5	0.7	500	500	100.0		
Perkins	273	273	100.0			250	250	100.0		
Ripley	257	242	94.2	15	5.8	283	266	94.0	17	6.0
Glencoe	151	151	100.0			133	133	100.0		

"The exercises, held at the Isis Theater Friday night, were well attended and much enjoyed by the audience." This likely indicated that the school had no large assembly room as well as the fact that the black community encouraged education.⁹⁰ In 1923 the black teachers of the county met at their yearly meeting in Stillwater. Mr. J.W. Petus, formerly of the black college and now the principal in Cushing, was a major speaker. Other speakers included J.M. Marquess, President of Colored Agricultural and Normal University; Mrs. Emma Bassier Elledge, county superintendent; and Mrs. Almira Abernathy, county home demonstration agent. It was reported that it was a fine meeting and included student exhibits from two schools including the colored school in District 19.⁹¹

The Yale paper did not mention their school. Almost the only mention of their schools in the Ripley and Cushing papers are about controversies. Black education in Payne County was small and neglected in the public forum.

⁸⁹"Exactly Equal," *SG*, 3 March 1922, 1.

⁹⁰"Jottings About Town," *SG*, 2 June 1922, 8.

⁹¹"Colored Teachers Have Successful Convention," *SG*, 30 March 1923, 5.

The size of these schools meant they were inefficient from a fiscal point of view, a fact which further diminished the actual amount spent for each black student.⁹² It also likely contributed to factionalism among the black families. In July, 1923, when Irl R. Copley replaced Emma Bassler Elledge as County Superintendent, he was met in his office on his first day with four factions from two black districts, each of the four proposing a teacher candidate. Copley eventually hired two for the schools, sent one of the others to another school, and found the fourth unqualified.⁹³ In August, poor Superintendent Copley ran into a similar problem in Ripley. When he visited he found one pupil out of the six black students enrolled. "Negro patrons of the negro consolidated school at Ripley are on strike, refusing to send their children to school because of objections to the teacher."⁹⁴

But the biggest problem black schools faced was a white population which, at their best, ignored black education. Sometimes whites weren't at their best. In 1923, black leaders in Cushing asked for a \$27,000 dollar school. The Yale Democrat, which was the only paper to cover this, claimed the town had over 200 black students.⁹⁵ A year later the School Board in Cushing was under attack. In an unsigned letter, probably from the presiding officer of the Cushing Board of Education, an attempt was made to soothe white tempers.

In the last few days I have received several calls from residents living west of the Katy tracks complaining of the fact that the board of Education was building a beautiful six room brick structure to house the negro school children of this city while their own children were being compelled to cross two dangerous railroad crossings and in some instances walk as far as one mile to school.

There is no question but that there should be a suitable school building erected on the west side; one large enough to completely take care of their needs. There is no small amount of mis-understanding, however, about the building being built for the negroes.

The money that builds the negro school comes from the county and is not raised by taxation from this school district. The money being spent for the negro building cannot be spent for anything else than that for which the county commissioners and the Excise

⁹²Franklin noted that in 1919 the state spent \$22.60 per white child and \$11.50 per black child in the public schools. Even in 1930, blacks were 7.4% of the population and got 5.1% of the education funding. Counties levied a tax on property that funded both black and white schools. But white districts alone could augment that with their own separate school tax. Hence white schools got more funding and funding which was probably more responsive. See Franklin, Journey, 61-2.

⁹³"He Pleased The Factions," YD, 19 July 1923, 7.

⁹⁴"Additional Locals," RR, 2 August 1923, 8.

⁹⁵"Cushing Negroes Ask \$27,000 School House," YD, 2 August 1923, 3.

Board appropriated it. The taxpayers of this school district are not paying for the Washington (colored) school, while their own children are being subjected to danger. The Washington school is being built by the county but under the supervision and instruction of the local Board of Education.⁹⁶

Black education in Payne County undoubtedly aided the literacy rate and probably did teach the black population the basics. How much more they could teach was an open question. Cities such as Stillwater probably had relatively good black schools, though still sub-standard compared to the white schools, but there seemed to have been forces that limited the numbers taking high school to completion. The most likely cause for this was economics: black teens probably had to work. It was also questionable whether high school education would aid a black person that much in Jim Crow Oklahoma. The clamor of the black factions in the two southwestern districts, and the factionalism in Ripley, most likely point to teachers chosen from the local population rather than chosen for skill levels. It is also likely that in the rural districts the schools would contain a rather large number of tenant families who would be relatively itinerant. This would be a factor to consider in white rural schools but which probably had less impact on the white school since proportionally more blacks were tenants. Overall, in Payne County in the early 1920s a black education could possibly have been adequate, but likely never good, and in the county schools it was probably quite weak. In all cases black education fought the odds in a Jim Crow society.

One of the most important areas for blacks was the justice system. Only the Cushing paper regularly published a full local court report, but all editors published some proceedings. From the newspaper, without attempted quantification, it would seem that African Americans were in the justice system more often than whites. If this was true it should not be startling. The only place in the newspapers of the county wherein blacks were regularly named was in the police blotters.

It is difficult to separate out what portion of this show of African Americans in the criminal justice system was due to racism, and which part was due to the fact that the poor frequent the

⁹⁶"An Explanation For Cushing Taxpayers," CC, 21 August 1924, 3.

shops of justice more often than the rich. It may have been due to Prohibition since drink sold and consumed by the poor might have been a more public thing than middle class consumption. Middle class whites might have been given some leniency in enforcement by police officers and sheriffs who were managed by white, middle class men.

Prohibition law breaking was probably the most frequent criminal charge for both whites and blacks. For blacks especially another large area were "crimes" of profound poverty or itinerancy, such as vagrancy, loitering, and petty thievery. Drugs, usually undifferentiated, also figure in many arrests.

In some cases these arrests were made in sweeps of the black section of town. One such raid occurred in Cushing on the night of February 1, 1922. "Chief of Police Newby and Patrolman George Harison, pulled a raid in the negro section last night which resulted in the arrest of at least one offender who should be locked up." That "offender" was W.M. Kelley, colored, arrested for selling drugs (morphine) and caught "practically with the goods on." He was tried in the municipal court by Mayor Crenshaw and fined \$100. Kelley appealed to the county court. "Several other negroes were gathered in in the raid charged with vagrancy and loitering. These also were duly assessed with the fine and costs usual in such cases."⁹⁷

Yale also reported some crimes by blacks. Two women, said to be part of a gang of seven from Bristow, were arrested, one of the arrested brought in for a home burglary. After being dealt with in an unspecified manner, the seven were told "not to let the grass grow under their feet in Yale."⁹⁸ These, obviously, were not "good coloreds."

The police seemed to use abrupt methods when dealing with blacks. In the above report it is doubtful that the Yale Police were particularly gentle with these assumed offenders. In another incident in Cushing, W.E. Benny was robbed at knife-point on a city street by two African American women on the night of November 30, 1922. The Police response was swift but not

⁹⁷"Officers Raid Negro Section," CC, 2 February 1922, 8.

⁹⁸"Negro Thieves,"[sic] YD, 14 June 1923, 1.

sensitive. "Officers in Cushing arrested nearly every negro woman in the city, taking each one before Benny until he pointed out the two now held in jail."⁹⁹

One of the interesting things is that the law courts seemed to be relatively even-handed racially in their sentencing. It must first be noted that most the sentences seemed, from today's perspective, quite lenient. In 1923 in Yale a "negro man" was fined \$11.50 for threatening to kill his wife with a brick. That does not seem a very stiff punishment for threatening bodily harm, even when inflation is figured. When black and white sentences are compared, they seem rather even. In 1921, for example, the Yale paper reported three cases before Judge Brown Moore in Stillwater's County Court. "Willie Smith, a negro living east of Ripley, in the riverbed...." was caught making whiskey. A guilty plea got him 30 days and \$50, which he couldn't pay. "Lon Davidson another negro...." pleaded not guilty to the same charge and was bailed out at \$500. William McDonald, a white man, pleaded not guilty to "bootlegging" and was given a \$1,000 bail. This is one example of many in which similar offenses got similar treatment in the courts. Once in jail, segregation again fully hit African Americans.¹⁰⁰

But that still didn't stop abuse in the system. In Stillwater in 1923 Mayor Holzer, in municipal court, fined eight Negroes working for the Santa Fe, i.e., itinerant, for celebrating on pay day.¹⁰¹ They may have been loud or drunk, but whites did not seem to be picked up for such trivial offenses and fined. Whether for the sake a "progressive" image to the town, or because the rulers of the towns saw vagrancy or reveling as a sign of loss of moral control in the individual, or simply for racial reasons, blacks crowded the courts out of proportion to their meager numbers in the county, even in the relatively moderate environs of Stillwater.

Although the everyday life of the races in Payne County appeared polite, the rules were always there, socially and legally. If newspaper reports are to be trusted, there seemed to be no real physical violence directed at blacks from 1921 to 1924, a fact that was likely due to several

⁹⁹"Arrest Negro Woman Charge Knife Hold-Up," SG, 8 December 1922, 1. The same article was carried by the Yale Democrat, 14 December 1922, 8.

¹⁰⁰YD, 14 June 1923, 1; "Whiskey Makers and Seller in Toils," YD, 11 March 1921, 1.

¹⁰¹"Eight Negroes, Working for Santa Fe, Arrested," SG, 18 May 1923, 1.

factors. There was no indication of any county African American "stepping out of line." With their arrests for vagrancy and "loitering", it seemed clear the authorities would not stand by for any serious breeches of the racial lines. But the very small size of the African American population was probably the biggest deterrent to racial violence. There were not enough African Americans to present a threat to white power in the county.

There were other racial minorities which journeyed through the county at this time. Large populations of native americans surrounded the county: Otoe Missouri, Pawnee, Iowa, Sac and Fox. Indians were lumped in with other small groups in the census so it is difficult to even give numbers for them in Payne County. It had to have been a very small population. The few mentions of Indians in the newspapers were generally positive, including two accounts of the first native american to graduate in agriculture at Oklahoma A. & M. College. The Gazette did note that his graduation was unusual because "...American aborigines ...seldom take an interest in a more scientific study of the subject."¹⁰²

Mexicans almost always appear in the papers as transient laborers. From Mehan: "A train load of Mexicans and negroes are in the Santa Fe tracks in Mehan to lay new steel rails from Stillwater to Ripley. As cars are so close to the crossing east of Mehan, it makes it very dangerous for people that have to cross the tracks." In the next Stillwater paper they report the Mexicans and Negroes have been moved down the tracks. Was this traffic safety, racism, or an antipathy to transient laborers? There were attempts to do a bit of Americanization on Mexicans (who might well have been United States citizens). The WCTU in Stillwater worked with some transient Hispanics to teach them English.¹⁰³

There was only one reference to a "Mexican" of permanence in the communities of Payne County. In Ripley the paper announced that: "The Mexican who lives in the northern part of town

¹⁰²"Indian Is Aggie Graduate," SG, 1 June 1923, 7; "Full Blood Indian Is Graduate of College," SAD, 31 May 1923, 4.

¹⁰³"Teaching Mexicans to Speak Our Language," and, "Americanization Work," SG, 29 June 1923, 1.

is building a new residence." He may have been permanent and a rarity in the county, but he didn't have a name as far as the newspaper was concerned.¹⁰⁴

There were several "assyrians" in the county, likely really Lebanese, including one who was murdered, John Thomas, a merchant from Quay.¹⁰⁵ He was treated with some respect in the article beyond the simple respect given to the dead.¹⁰⁶ At the other end of the scale were "gipseys". "On Tuesday afternoon," reports the Cushing Citizen, "a band of Gipseys drove into town and began in true Gipsey fashion to work the city." They were caught. "Mayor Crenshaw compelled them to refund the \$10.20 to Rigsby, fined them \$20 and told them to get out of Cushing."¹⁰⁷

The Klan made statements upholding white supremacy on several occasions in the county in the early 1920s. In probably the most complete statement of principles by the Klan, their letter to Rev. Mallory of Yale in the summer of 1922, "Eternal Supremacy of the White Race" comes right after the "Tenets of the Christian Religion" and before such important items as "Protection of pure womanhood" and "America for Americans."¹⁰⁸ But did they do anything about race in the county?

In the newspapers of Payne County during the period of the hooded Klan, there were no cases reported of Klan activities towards African Americans or, for that matter, other non-whites.¹⁰⁹ This does not mean there were not threats or possibly even some violence inflicted on non-whites: Reportage of minority affairs in the county's press was not full and was slanted. Blacks and other racial minorities in the county knew the laws and had to know the prejudices of the county. It is doubtful that many stepped beyond those lines.

¹⁰⁴SAD, 11 October 1923, 4; "Editorial Chaff," SAD, 18 October 1923, 4.

¹⁰⁵This murder will be more extensively treated in Chapter V, "Fears".

¹⁰⁶"John Thomas' Body Found," RR, 29 March 1923, 8. About a month later, Sheriff Tull warned he'd stopped to inquire about two men and a car on a road, and they had later kidnapped an oil worker Ingalls and threatened him with what happened to Mr. Thomas. See "County Seat Items," RR, 19 April 1923, 1.

¹⁰⁷"Gypsies Get Into Wrong City," QC, 3 August 1922, 4.

¹⁰⁸"Ku Klux Klan Visits Methodist Church," YD, 6 July 1922, 1.

¹⁰⁹D. Earl Newsom has stated that the Klan blew up a black hotel in Yale in the early 1920s. I have not been able to substantiate that claim though I have no reason to doubt it. D. Earl Newsom, phone conversation, March 13, 2000.

For the white majority of the County, there probably seemed no race problem. And the paternalism extended to "good coloreds", combined with the lack of perceived "problem", tended to nullify one area of Klan activities.

Payne County was majoritarian white, Protestant, and patriarchal in the early 1920s. In the County as a whole, the strong majority group of white Protestants had both a sense of community and a sense of paternalism, all based upon the acceptance of certain beliefs and assumptions. As long as people stayed within the bounds of these ideas and their position in the County, the inclusiveness of community enveloped them, even if all included were not equal.

The sense of community shared largely by the County came out of the agricultural County. Cooperation, personalism, and traditional protestant assumptions about personal morality and family, reinforced by the mythos of the pioneer experience, were the backdrop to any discussions of people and place.

Urbanites in the County were near enough to the rural, and often dependent upon their patronage, that they accepted this same set of ideas about community. But the urban business community made exceptions to the idea of cooperation when it touched upon their competitive spirit. Despite this difference, in Payne County in the early 1920s there was a cohesive, broad set of assumptions to tie members of the County's white, protestant, patriarchal society together. Countians had similar assumptions, similar biases. This common set of assumptions about community was inclusive, and it helped ensure there was no ulcerous breach between the agrarian county and the urban county.

Within this structure there were places for those who deviated from the whiteness, the Protestantness, the patriarchy, of the County. Catholics and other non-Protestants were at least accepted and further research would likely find them integrated into the majority society, particularly into the business community, just as the Jewish and one "syrian" business man were.

Women, generally avoiding the extremes of the "modern" woman such as the "flapper" image, fit largely into the traditional roles of nurturing and caring, socializing and public

benevolence. And some women were expanding into the recently opened political spheres through membership in clubs identified with political parties, activities in the Farmers' Union, and even chapters of the League of Women Voters. Thus, though some women were demanding more public responsibility and power, most were still within more known and traditional patterns.

The "colored" population of the County had possibly the smallest sphere within the County. This was partially a factor of the black population's almost negligible numbers, and also because state law and Republican bungling had largely left the black population with little political power statewide. Yet, even for this small and discriminated against population, playing by the rules of Jim Crow, keeping up a job and a family, allowed them place within the broader community of the County. The "good" coloreds, rarely mentioned in public, seemed to have been able to live and exist and to have even been protected to some degree by the white countians' umbrella of paternalism. Any blacks who chose to break from these rules determined by the majority were not accepted and could be quickly ejected from the city or worse.

Payne County was a county without broad fissures. In Garin Burbank's important study of Marshall County, one of the basic divides within that county was between rural and urban, farmer versus the urban business elite. The urban leadership in Marshall County in the era of the hooded Klan was the Klan and it opposed Walton, while the rural majority had already been attracted to Socialism and other radical causes and supported Walton.

This dichotomy cannot be seen in Payne County. Business men traveled to the rural areas to create a bridge, albeit for commerce as well as a broader sense of community. Rural people embraced the responsive, but not too radical Farmers' Union, a group only the most reactionary could count a radical threat. Church groups and other groups intermixed rural and urban. And all the County suffered, in differing ways, from the recession of the early 1920s. Payne County lacked the extremes of Burbank's Marshall County. Part of this reason was the sense of assumptions about what community meant, and the willingness of all to make these assumptions work. The County spoke one language of public morality.

But the Klan was in some ways odd man out in this. It spoke of division and even harshness by the majority toward certain minorities in a county that valued moderate courses and inclusion. The Klan practiced anonymity and militancy in a county valuing personalism and cooperation. It included no place for women, and certainly none for blacks, in a county which rather benignly and paternalistically witnessed the expansion in ways of the role of women and the existence and even protection of a minority of "good coloreds". The Klan nationally attacked Roman Catholics, but the Klan in Payne County did not mention them explicitly because the Klan existed in a County with an accepted Roman Catholic minority. In short, the Klan could march and create spectacle, it could even attract followers, but it had to operate in a particular county, and that County had publicly accepted assumptions which blunted much of the national agenda of the Klan.

Chapter VI

Payne County Fears

"We are living in a fast and careless age...."

Rev. D.C. Mallory, Methodist Tabernacle, Yale, Oklahoma

"There appears no end to exclamations about the waywardness of young people today."

George Gelder, editor, Yale Democrat

...when the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan -- claiming nativity under the flag, speaking the English language; with one hand on the Bible and the other on the Constitution, under the cross and the flag--consecrated themselves to the white man's civilization, to his country and to his creed, the Jew, the Roman Catholic and the negro combined and made war upon the Organization.

Dr. H.W. Evans, Imperial Wizard,

Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Asheville, N.C., 1923¹

It is very enlightening to discover what an area fears. Fears locate enemies and demons, but they also comment on the county's beliefs. The Klan nationally built itself on fears, probably more so than any other organization. If you take away fear, the Klan's appeal receded to the camaraderie, an important but not distinctive element of the Klan, and the spectacle. Payne County did harbor fears. The question in this case is whether the fears -- the type, intensity, immediacy -- gave sufficient fodder for the Klan to thrive. The Klan survived but ultimately did not thrive in Payne County at least in part because the County did not offer enough fears.

It can be argued that other organizations thrived on fear. The WCTU and the Anti-Saloon League both feared alcohol and the latter became less viable after the great summit of prohibition

¹Rev. D.C. Mallory, "Churches of Yale," Yale Democrat, 3 February 1922, 5 [hereafter "YD"]; "Young People And Their Elders," YD, 17 April 1922, 4; Dr. Hiram W. Evans, "Attitude of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan Toward the Jew," Papers Read at the Meeting of Grand Dragons Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (New York: Arno Press, 1977): 118.

had been conquered. But the WCTU did try to re-make itself to cover other topics after 1920 and it did continue. The American Legion's first concern was treatment of veterans, Rotary's and Lion's were upbeat and concerned about bettering the lot of the businessman and, they reasoned, of their towns: The list goes on. But the Klan spoke only of fears: moral decay, criminality, prohibition, creeping radicalism undercutting Americanism, or challenges to white control by racial groups. Certainly the Klan did some benevolences and did provide camaraderie to those who joined. But in the main, the theme of the Klan was fear.

Payne Countians had fears during the early 1920s. These fears covered broad categories: immoralities and crime, un-American activities and radicalism. How the countians reacted to these areas of potential threat not only tells us about their mentalite, but also about the chances the Klan had of prospering on the fear of the county.

Crime

There was much concern expressed in the papers by editors and correspondents for crime in Payne County in the early 1920s. In lieu of uniform crime reports it is difficult to say whether crime had picked up since the War, or since the recession.

At first glance the newspapers often led the reader to believe there was rampant crime. For example, on a typical day the Cushing Citizen was full of short articles about local and national crime.² This paper was probably more sensationalist than others, but all had crime reporting, national, state, and local. The crime varied. The correspondent to the Citizen from Rose Hill noted many break-ins in late April of 1922, "...which is [sic] believed to be committed by a drug fiend who has been roaming the woods near here." That same theme was echoed in the a report that made a state-wide column found in the Stillwater Gazette: "An influx of drug addicts and other undesirables has caused the mayor of Cushing to order that all of these gentry hereafter will be required to work out their sentences in the ball and chain gang on city streets."³

²See for example the first page of August 31, 1922.

³"Rose Hill Items," Cushing Citizen, 27 April 1922, 5 [hereafter "CC"]; "Oklahoma State News," Stillwater Gazette, 11 November 1921, 1 [hereafter "SG"].

A whole new category of crime arrived with the automobile.

It is believed that an attempt was made to steal Mr. Bucher's fine new Hupmobile last Sunday night....It is thought that the parties were not familiar with its machinery and were unable to start it.

John Rotroff had a Ford car stolen from the home of his mother west of Ingalls Saturday night. The car was standing in the yard and was taken by some on the lookout for such a chance.

A new Ford touring car was stolen on Tuesday from W.R. Perry, a colored man living on Tom Morehead's place west of town.⁴

These are all out of the newspaper in Ripley. The smallest town in the county with a newspaper, Ripley's fear of auto theft and other crimes was not unusual.⁵

Some crimes costs more than an automobile. In Cushing it was reported that someone had opened the taps on "...several 50,000-barrel tanks on the Shaffer tank farm at Cushing....", a loss calculated at \$200,000. There were also more sensational crimes. The Ripley Record's headlines in February, 1923, screams: "Bandits Hold Up the Bank Here and Steal About \$3,500 in Money and Some Liberty Bonds."⁶ In Stillwater, where a bank had never been robbed, the Stillwater National Bank put in an electric outside alarm. "The electric system of alarm is intended primarily to serve as a warning to men in business houses near the bank who keep high-powered rifles furnished them by the bank to be used in case of a daylight robbery."⁷

Prohibition created a great deal of the traffic going through the county courts in the early 1920s, directly or indirectly. Sheriff Tull and City Attorney Reece, in an open letter in 1923, drew some connections. "The thieving going on over this county and all the counties, where that can be traced, leads to the refuge of bootleggers and their associates; and we know that all good

⁴"Additional Local," Ripley Record, 14 June 1923, 8 [hereafter "RR"]; RR, 28 June 1923, 1; "Local and Personal," RR, 16 November 1922, 1.

⁵"Local and Personal," RR, 28 June 1923, 1. From the same paper came another crime notice that indicated not all thefts were mechanized. "It is said that several sets of harness were stolen the first of the week throughout the Ingalls country."

⁶"Oklahoma State News," SG, 8 September 1923, 1; "Farmers Bank of Ripley Robbed," RR, 1 February 1923, 1.

⁷"Bank Puts In Electric Alarm Against Bandits," SG, 13 April 1923, 1.

citizens of the county, regardless of party or denominational affiliation, will cooperate for law enforcement."⁸

In fact, the county had had a problem with crimes associated with wet and dry for many years. In 1902, James Feverly got a license for a saloon in Glencoe, where one had existed and had been shut down by the dry forces led by James S. McMurtry. McMurtry appealed to the Oklahoma Supreme Court and Feverly, meanwhile, opened his bar. Feverly was arrested and fined for his action, and the Court refused him a license. Feverly blamed the smaller McMurtry and beat him up several times. On August 13, 1902, they both boarded the train. McMurtry had a gun and killed Feverly, the father of seven children. McMurtry was eventually let go without charge on grounds of self-defense.⁹

Prohibition was originally seen by its proponents as a morals question, though one heavily overlain with nativism. It became law with the state and thus became a crime problem. By 1921 it is largely viewed as a criminal rather than a moral problem, though organizations such as the WCTU never ceased their morals drumbeat about liquor. Even in that year R.N. Holsople, in a letter in the Stillwater Advance Democrat, saw it as a moral problem imbued with nearly apocalyptic resonances.

And the Church will fight on because it has no other choice. It is now on the defensive. The liquor interests now comprise the attacking body. They are attempting to regain that which they lost. The Church must repulse the attack, and must out wit and over come the enemy at every point -- and it will.

The Church needs the Anti-Saloon League as it never needed it before....¹⁰

The fact was that prohibition was a quite common crime. The editor of the Stillwater Advance Democrat, a person not in favor of booze ("The best prohibition enforcement officer is the grimy, slimy hand of death that lurks in every bottle of liquor"), could write: "Prohibition jokes

⁸"Law Enforcement," Stillwater Advance Democrat, 20 September 1923, 2 [hereafter "SAD"].

⁹D. Earl Newsom, The Story of Exciting Payne County (Stillwater: New Forums Press, 1997): 153. For a more nuanced fight between wets and dries, as well as between competing dry interests, in nearby Guthrie, see: Jay R. Dew, "Moral Reform for the 'Magic City,'" Chronicles of Oklahoma, 77 (Winter, 1999-200): 406-27.

¹⁰"Fight Will Continue," SAD, 28 July 1921, 4.

are getting tiresome but will probably continue as long as prohibition is a joke.”¹¹ That editor had earlier reported, mostly in jest and under the title, “Mein Gott Im Himmel! What Next”, that a rumor was abroad claiming the bootleggers had formed an organization to ensure the quality level of their product.¹²

Several times in the period the Sheriff busted up his accumulation of stills, held in crowded storage in the courthouse basement, and sold them for junk on the courthouse lawn. The other Stillwater editor, Mr. Brown, was also a dry, and his comments after one such sale was that, “It represented the lust of man for gold and the crude effects of moonshiners and bootleggers to supply the demand for illicit drink.” These lessons seemed lost on the public. In 1921 Sheriff Lilley turned over a “colored prisoner who has taken by our officers in a ‘choc’ raid Sunday,” to federal authorities in Oklahoma City. It was explained that,

...the authorities have thought best to turn this case over to Federal investigation in lieu of the apparent leniency shown these cases by jurors in our courts who seem loathe to bring in a verdict of guilty even when positive evidence of guilt has been shown. The alleged colored choc maker will have a preliminary hearing in the Capitol City.¹³

There are several reasons people in Payne County supported the liquor trade. Unlike Indian Territory, Oklahoma Territory had been “wet”, although the homicide narrated above and the story of the saloons in Stillwater used in a previous chapter show there was a strong dry interest in the territorial county. Bootlegging was also pre-eminently a rural activity. Beer could be made in a basement in town, but the bulk of a distilling apparatus, the “mash” smell, the need for a goodly supply of fuel, and the raw materials consisting of grains, all led the distillers as well as brewers into the countryside. That land also afforded thinner law enforcement and a better

¹¹For the quote, see “Law Enforcement,” SAD, 29 November 1923, 2. “Editorial Chaff,” SAD, 29 November 1923, 2; “Editorial Chaff,” SAD, 8 February 1923, 2.

¹²“Mein Gott Im Himmel! What Next,” SAD, 11 August 1921, 5. This was the only time any German phrase appeared in something written by an editor or correspondent in the papers read for this study so this may be taken as a clear indication of the anti-German ideas some prohibitionists held.

¹³“Mass of Law-Breaking Stuff Is Destroyed,” SG, 16 December 1921; “Federal Authorities to Act,” SAD, 11 August 1921, 5. “Choc” beer was malt beer brewed quickly and sold quickly, deriving its name from the load of sediment in the bottle, according to Mr. Ephraim Wall (interview, c. January 15, 2000).

chance of getting away if discovered. This probably turned some rural areas into co-conspirators, people who protected their neighbors. Distribution seemed to be little trouble: The impression left after reading many police blotters was that the producers ("bootleggers") got caught more often than "moonshiners" (sellers).

Although the trade was alive and well and all acknowledged the fact, it was anathema to suggest a change in policy. In 1922, a candidate for the Republican congressional seat that included the Payne County, a man from Capital Hill in Oklahoma City, suggested the nation repeal the Volstead Act. Although Mr. Amos Lincoln Wilson argued that prohibition wasted vineyards and orchards, and had made the United States the "Leading nation of the world in the commission of crime," his main argument was fiscal: It cost governments nationally \$483,339,544.98 in 1919 due to lost revenues. He came up with some other precise, if suspect, figures for law enforcement costs.¹⁴ His was a unique voice.

The newspapers toed the official line, probably out of conviction, and attacked any calls for relaxation.

People who have no more respect for law and order than to organize against it are law violators and should be pursued accordingly. We have laws and they must be thoroughly enforced and obeyed if we expect to maintain respect for our American institutions and ideals.

That by the editor of the Stillwater Advance Democrat. Mr. Brown, editor of the rival Stillwater Gazette, argued that any who call for an end to prohibition, either because it cannot be enforced or because it corrupts some police forces, do not understand that most citizens wanted an end to liquor and the liquor trade.¹⁵

At no time was it indicated that the Klan helped enforce Prohibition. The indications seemed to be that Prohibition was divisive in the county. There were certainly enough wets to make enforcement problematic whether by officials such as the Sheriff, or by vigilante groups such as the Klan. But the fact was that although the Sheriff did have some luck in the battle, there

¹⁴"For Congress Amos Lincoln Wilson, Republican Capital Hill, Oklahoma City," SG, 21 July 1922, 3; "Republican For Congress," SG, 7 July 1922, 3.

¹⁵"Undermining American Ideals," SAD, 19 April 1923, 1; SG, 30 September 1921, 2.

was never a word about the Klan nabbing a boozer. This would seem to indicate either an unbelievably covert connection between Sheriff and Klan (and there are some intimations that the Sheriff may have been a Klansman) or, more likely, a Klan that would not, or could not, act on the matter.

There was also violent crime in the county. In 1922 there was the whipping of the Cushing Lawyer, Walter Mathews, a matter that will be detailed in the next chapter. There were no other whippings in the county as far as our records go. There were some murders in the county. Undoubtedly the most sensational at the time was the murder of Mr. John Thomas.¹⁶ Almost a month later, the Sheriff saw two men by the side of the road between Yale and Ingalls. Pulling up with his revolver in his lap, he asked if they needed help. They said no. Later, an oil field worker gave the men a ride and was kidnapped. Threatened with Thomas' fate when they passed the area where the body had been found, Harvey Wilson was luckier. After dropping them at Bristow, he rushed all the way back to Ingalls before alerting authorities.¹⁷ The two men were not found.¹⁸

Mr. Thomas' murder was rather unusual in Payne County at the time. But the newspapers brought to the county the violence of the neighboring counties and the state. For example, in 1922 the anti-Klan editor of a new paper in Drumright was kidnapped by men as he walked home after work. He was taken outside the town, tied and hung by his hands to a tree, flogged by a group of men, and then told to leave town within twenty-four hours. Later in our period a nine-year old boy was kidnapped in Drumright and killed, also. Both crimes were initially assumed to be

¹⁶"John Thomas' Body Found," RR, 29 March 1923, 8. He was an "Assyrian merchant" from Quay. He disappeared on January 10, 1923, on his way to Drumright. The car was found in Britton, near Oklahoma City. His body was finally found on a farm north of Ripley nearly three months later. He'd been shot in the head twice.

¹⁷"County Seat Items," RR, 19 April 1923, 1.

¹⁸There was some fear of crime on the roads. Mr. Dale Waltman remembered as an adolescent his father bringing along a "six-shooter" when they took their cotton bales in to the gin in Perkins. Conversation with Dale Waltman, 31 March 1999.

Klan related, but the editor did not claim the Klan did the whipping and the boy's death is a far reach for the Klan.¹⁹

Newspapers also brought in a constant deluge of violence from the state and nation. There were strikes in Illinois at Herren, railroad strikes, murders, and a steady supply of reports on the Klan, particularly in Texas. Within the state of Oklahoma, the year 1923 was a roller coaster starting in mid-spring when Walton, with little to show from his work with the legislature, began to harp on violence in the state. By late June his office was claiming there were 6 "whipping parties" per week, a total of "2500 whipping parties" in the past year.²⁰ The problem with the mathematics of that statement -- it comes out to 48 whippings per week -- did not seem to worry the Governor's office.

At a certain level it does not matter whether the violence reported was near or far: it made people think about crime, and even thoughts about crime could feel threatening. The response of the county was interesting. There was new activity among recruiters for the Anti-Horse Thief Association, and for a new organization called the Anti Auto-Thief Association (the newly formed Ingalls branch had 52 members). And editor Gelder of the Yale Democrat philosophized about human nature and crime. He concluded that there are two types of law-breakers: Those who did it for conscience sake, and those who "have not strength of character". The latter were shaped by two factors: The environment (and he includes a list of these forces) and heredity, an idea he derived by "following Professor Gault of Northwestern".²¹

Some people may have thought there was a crime wave in the county, but the anecdotal information suggests it was a quite pacific place. The response of Republican candidate for nomination as state senator, Mr. L.P. Wharton of Cushing, to a query by the Stillwater Gazette about the need for a superior court in Cushing, is revealing:

¹⁹"Drumright Editor Kidnapped And Whipped," CC, 2 February 1922, 8; D. Earl Newsom, Drumright! The Glory Days of a Boom Town (Perkins, Oklahoma: Evans Publications, 1985): 107-18.

²⁰"State House News," YD, 28 June 1923, 5.

²¹YD, 23 February 1921, 1; "American Anti Auto-Thief Association," RR, 19 July 1923, 1; "Lawbreakers," YD, 28 February 1921, 2.

There was a time, some years ago, when Cushing had forty-seven saloons; it was constantly filled with transients and oil field workers, and there was much court business, especially of a criminal nature. Judge Huston, of the district court, was ill and unable to attend to court duties, the docket was overcrowded, and it was for relief that Cushing then sought a superior court.

But now these conditions do not exist. The court docket is up to date; there is no unusual amount of litigation arising at Cushing, and Cushing does not want a superior court.

The Cushing Citizen speculated that the court would cost \$25,000, too much. "What Cushing people want is a decrease, and not an increase, in taxes." He noted that Drumright had a superior court and wanted to dump it because of expenses.²²

As a postscript to crime in the county, two things should be noted. There likely was real alarm about crime, something which probably aided the Ku Klux Klan in its recruiting. But there was no recorded incident in which the Klan did any action beyond the rhetorical to stop crime in the county, with the exception of road blocks east of Yale early in the Klan's career in the County.²³ In other places the Klan had been known to take lawbreakers outside town and administer "justice". The lack of any such action in Payne County, the possible exceptions being the Walter Mathews case, would seem to indicate either a lack of crime, or a lack of public support for vigilante action against crime.

A Crisis in Morals?

It may be the fate of every generation to believe in a moral crisis in their time. The moral tone, or its lack, was another area where perception was as important as reality, just as in crime. The perception of moral challenge that came from Payne County in the early 1920s had to do in general with what may be called the "modern".

Ted Ownby suggests that by the generation of the 1920s, Christian evangelicals approached the perceived crisis in morals in a way that was new and was important for the remainder of the century. Through the early nineteenth-century, evangelical Protestants had

²²"Cushing Does Not Want Superior Court," SG, 21 July 1922, 1.

²³"Being Seen But Not Heard," Yale Record, 31 August 1922, 1 [hereafter "YR"]. These were likely erected as much to try to control mores -- the "petting parties -- as they were to intercept any real criminals.

accepted a radical dichotomy between the worldly and the Godly. The world might sin, but members of the congregation could not and were disciplined, sometimes even ejected from the church, if they did. The policy of discipline died away during the last half of the century and, by the turn of the century, had disappeared. As congregational discipline of members receded, the purity fervor was turned outwards and produced the purity campaigns of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century.

This dramatic change in strategy is particularly revealing of evangelicals' beliefs about the relationship of religion to the secular world. Church discipline had attempted to maintain the moral connections between the home and the church, regulating and softening the sinful excesses of male behavior. But by the early twentieth century, exponents of the values of home and church had become committed to the goal of enforcing those values in all segments of Southern life.²⁴

If this inverse relationship between church discipline and evangelical purity crusades is correct, it would help explain not only the surge for prohibition in the late-nineteenth century, but possibly the sometimes extreme gap between the severity of the challenges to morals and to values perceived to be "American", and the intense fear of these matters.

That traditional values were being challenged is not in doubt. The Cushing Citizen ran an Associated Press article detailing a speech given in Williams Bay, Wisconsin, by A.J. Elliot of Chicago before the International Student conference sponsored by the YMCA. He argued America was on the slippery slope. He pointed out "immodest dressing," "suggestive motion pictures," and "improper dancing," as indicators of this decline. "America is rapidly becoming paganized by the general acceptance of lower moral standards." Elliot argued that "dancing Christianity has never carried the Gospel of Christ to a lost world." His conclusion, not surprisingly, was that we must have a moral resurgence.²⁵

The question of morality came up in with some frequency in the County, but it was not an obsession of editors and other newspaper writers. It is apparent that the guardians of traditional mores were on the alert. Moral concerns even appeared at times almost by accident. County

²⁴Ted Ownby, Subduing Satan: Religion, Recreation, and Manhood in the Rural South, 1865-1920 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990): 203.

²⁵"Causes Of Social Decay," CC, 22 June 1922, 1.

Attorney W. Reece, in announcing a "Law Enforcement Week," moved into discussion of the cause of lawlessness. "The great issue today before the American people is not foreign or international but is local and domestic and is Decency, Order and Law vs. Restlessness, Disorder and Crime." "All agree that Christian education consists of proper teaching in home, church, school and public. A proper environment is necessary to our youth and this means law enforcement, decency and order."²⁶ As if to prepare the ground for this, the Advance Democrat had published, two months earlier, an editorial pointing out the fact that divorce nationally had hit the highest rate since 1916, one divorce per 7.6 marriages. And the highest states for divorce were Nevada (1,325 per 100,000), Oregon (311 per 100,000) and Oklahoma (262 per 100,000).²⁷ Moralists have always seen direct connections between the sanctity -- or lack of sanctity -- of marriage and the moral state of society. It is fair to state that there was at least a sense of moral challenge, if not crisis, in the county.

Some countians were on the alert looking for possible sources of corruption. One of the most interesting aspects of this was the county's attitudes towards the big city. The big city had for years stood for sin and wickedness, but here were the city elites in Payne County trying to make their cities look "modern" and up-to-date, and the model for that was, in many ways, the big city.

Often the big city was mentioned in an objective way: a local buyer traveled to see the newest millinery creations in New York, or a salesman went to the home office in Chicago. Then there were the constant news articles in which a big city was the background as much as the subject. The largest number of mentions of big cities in the newspapers in Payne County in the early 1920s were of this rather neutral variety.

But there was another variety of article that periodically showed up. In these the big city became Sodom and Gomorrah on Lake Michigan. "Farm Girls Often Victims," is the headline of a wire article the Advance Democrat ran in 1921. Every year, it claimed, 65,000 "American girls"

²⁶"Law Enforcement Week Called For By Reece," SAD, 6 December 1923, 5. Attorney Reece seemed to see a direct interchangeability between things of the law and things of moral values.

²⁷"Editorial Chaff," SAD, 18 October 1923, 2.

disappeared; "The city is the quicksand which swallows them. The increasing number of wayward girls is not simply a reflection on the American home but on the government of American cities."²⁸

The rival Stillwater voice under editor Brown editorialized about a big city closer to home.

Judge Porterfield, of the Kansas City Juvenile court, says delinquency among girls of the big city on the Kaw has increased 30 per cent in a year. He is shocked and afraid, and attributes the fault to short skirts, gay mothers and unthinking fathers.²⁹

The message from the newspapers seemed to say that little girls were at risk by big cities.

Bigger cities seemed to pose bigger challenges to traditional mores. The Advance Democrat in 1923, ran the provocative headline to an article, "Displaying Nudity." The editorial announced that the New York City show, "Artists and Models", will have fully nude models: They had previously worn "flimsy gauzy drapes". Although the show assured the public these nude women will not move, the editor speculated that they might soon. "Year after year the theatrical managers and show producers of the United States have been getting bolder and bolder in their appeal to human emotions by the showing of the human form."

Ten years ago -- yes, even five -- such a thing would have aroused the greatest feeling of indignation and horror that can be imagined.

Today, we hear no objection and there is no doubt that the show will be crowded.

But with the first uncovering of the human form there is more yet to come. Soon the nude human figure will be so common that there will be no thrill in viewing it. Then, we predict, the theater managers will go even farther in their boldness and present nude dancing girls.

And then -- well, use your imagination. The sky seems to be the limit.³⁰

There was the implication in this that today it's New York City, and tomorrow it would be Stillwater, Oklahoma.

There was another element in this caution about big cities, a nativist element. Big cities were the abode of foreigners and unregulated blacks. The Advance Democrat editor, who was likely no more paranoiac than other editors on matters of morality but, rather, more adept with the

²⁸"Farm Girls Often Victims," SAD, 9 June 1921, 6.

²⁹"Gazettes," SG, 28 July 1922, 2.

³⁰"Displaying Nudity," SAD, 30 August 1923, 2.

words, editorialized about the glories of the good home. In particular, the good middle class home countered crime. The opposite to this was in the big cities.

"[I]f every family had a home with lawn, and flowers, and trees, and garden in the rear, crime would disappear inside of two generations, especially if that home was his own and there was happiness inside of it. City tenements breed discontent, disease, immorality and crime, and homelessness is a constant menace to society and to the nation."³¹

Not only was a tenement not perceived as being a "home", but the underlying assumption was that those tenements were occupied by foreigners or blacks.

In another article, the Cushing paper, probably the most conservative in the county, told "The Truth About Jazz". Jazz, of course, was linked inexorably with the big city and to African Americans. This article was reporting on an address by Dr. Reuben Post Halleck at the meeting of the International Kindergarten Union in Louisville, Kentucky. His conclusion was that jazz is immoral and should be censored. It "comes from the harems of the Barbary Coast". Neither the lyrics of Shakespeare or the psalmists, "or any of the great poets," can be set to this degenerate music. This was not only a warning about the big city, it was also a warning about the influence of African Americans on society.

The big city directly invaded Payne County through the agency of some modern technologies. Radio was new, intriguing, and not threatening. Radio was still in its infancy and there were virtually no commercial stations as we know them at the time. Broadcasts came sporadically and from various sources, but there seemed no threat to social mores in the instrument. The reaction to radio at this time was fascination, and each town had several men who put together their own sets, often setting them up on occasions for the public. Radio was still in its innocence.

But entertainments such as traveling carnivals and, especially, motion pictures, posed some threat. When a carnival was scheduled for Yale in 1921, it was loudly proclaimed as "Having No Objectionable Attractions." In an editorial accompanying the ad, the editor stated:

³¹"Home Is Civilizer," SAD, 9 June 1921, 2.

Unlike many attractions of this kind, Mr. Francis has always kept his shows free from any objectionable features and in so doing has gained for himself the attention of press and public together with his slogan 'America's Cleanest Shows' assuring the public of good clean moral and entertaining attractions.³²

Motion pictures posed an even greater threat. Ownby, warning us not to underestimate the power of evangelical purity crusaders into the 1920s, claimed film to be "the most revolutionary of the new media." "The most important change that the movies brought to the rural South was simply a shift in cultural leadership from the local area to a distant urban centers." They challenged southern distinctiveness and they consistently challenged the established moral traditions of an area. "The movies were the most obvious representative of a whole array of modern amusements that evangelicals were beginning to find threatening."³³

The three major towns had theaters and moral guardians quickly realized this medium could bring alternate moral views to the towns. In 1922 Mr. Brown of the Gazette editorialized on a news report he read.

American missionaries in the orient blame the motion picture for their troubles. A report to the annual session of the Presbyterian synod of Arizona and California, meeting at Pasadena, says natives of oriental countries, viewing western pictures, conclude that all Americans are like savages, who gamble for a living, drink whiskey like water, carry two guns and a bowie knife, and kill their fellow men as a pastime; that American women are dance hall girls who smoke cigarettes, drink heavily and sell themselves for a coin or a smile. Can't Will Hays do something about that?³⁴

Hollywood had become Sodom. When the Gazette criticized Postmaster General Hays for taking the censor's job in Hollywood and resigning a position of public trust, a position he had freely taken, it was difficult to tell if the editor is more disgusted with a public servant leaving his post or with Mr. Hays destination: "...he has no moral right to relinquish that service for the allurements of private employment of any sort -- but to be lured to the movies -- ugh!"³⁵ That same editor attacked Billy Sunday, through a reprinted editorial from the Oklahoma City Oklahoman, for the

³²"The John Francis Shows," [ad] and "The John Francis Shows," [editorial] YD, 16 March 1921, c.5.

³³Ownby, Subduing, 197-99.

³⁴"Gazettes," SG, 28 July 1922, 2.

³⁵"Not So Here," SG, 27 January 1922, 2.

evangelists' support for "Fatty" Arbuckle in the famous murder trial of 1921, a trial well reported in Payne County papers.³⁶

So the motion picture, and the industry and town producing the films, was perceived to be something to be cautious about and something to be regulated.

The Yale Democrat, commenting on Washington, D.C. imposing blue laws on such things as baseball and theaters, hailed the decision not simply on sabbatarian grounds. "The government of the American democracy cannot afford to seem even lukewarm when a moral standard is presented for adoption." Blue laws were enacted, and challenged, in Payne County. In 1921 the proprietor of a Stillwater theater, "The Camera", Mr. Claude D. Jackson, was arrested along with his projector operator, Mr. Fred Turner, for opening the theater on Sunday. It was front page news. The police moved in almost as soon as the first ticket was sold. Soon thereafter, a case in Bartlesville saw such laws judicially endorsed. There were no more reported challenges like this in the county.³⁷ In fact, scanning the movies presented in the early 1920s, the modern reader is impressed with the number of melodramatic romances and action westerns, not with any challenge to moral codes. In a rather bizarre juxtaposition, the "Yale Theater" ran, "The Ku Klux Klan, A Photo Play," made up mainly of filmed parades in Tulsa and Oklahoma City, during that great year for marches, 1922. It was a double bill shared with, "Polly Of The Follies" starring Constance Talmadge and billed as an "Educational Comedy."³⁸ If there was a threat to morals posed by the movies, the guardians seemed to have nipped it in the bud.

The automobile posed another threat to body and soul. The threat of bodily injury was always apparent; The editor of the Ripley paper narrated one such accident.

Some children of Tom Munday were also hurt by being run into by a car on that [last Friday] afternoon. They were driving down the street when their buggy was struck by the car and somewhat smashed up. The car was also somewhat demoralized and slight injuries were sustained by the occupants. The question of being on the wrong side of the street seemed to figure in the matter.³⁹

³⁶SG, 23 September 1921, 7.

³⁷SG, 16 September 1921, 1; "Ordinance Against Sunday Shows Legal," SG, 4 November 1921, 1.

³⁸"The Yale Theater....", YD, 14 June 1922, 8.

³⁹"A Chapter of Accidents," RR, 12 October 1922, 1.

That rather hard hitting account is simply the most interesting of a host of car accident stories.

That was to be expected in a era still debating the merits of drivers' licenses and tests.

Much more sinister for the morality of the citizenry was another result of the car. George Gelder of the Yale Democrat presented a two-part attack on automobiling. He complained about the great increases in speed allowed on the roads and the danger that posed: "thirty miles an hour last year and forty miles this year." Then he got down to the moral problem.

And speaking of young people and automobiles -- there's another thing this day and age has brought forth which we cannot reconcile ourselves, and that's what's called the 'petting parties'.

Almost any night you can drive along the highways and see cars parked alongside the road, in the by roads and in the lanes with lights out and curtains drawn. Sometimes they contain men and women of mature age, but more often it is the so-called 'flappers' and 'jelliebeans.'

And oftentimes the curtains are not drawn and the flash of your lights reveals things which even though you be not of a Puritanical turn of mind, will disgust you.

And who was to blame for this? Parents. The concern for the automobiles (and boys not shaving, another topic he covered) spread to a more general critique of modern parenting.

But why jump unto the young people altogether? They are not the only ones to blame.

As a matter of fact we feel that they are less o [sic] blame than are the parents. A few years ago the average boy or girl had a horror of deceiving his or her parents.

Nowadays they do it, are proud of it and brag about it.

A few years ago the mother was the confidant of her daughter.

Nowadays the daughter makes a confidant of her boy and girl chums and is secretive to her mother.

A few years ago the boys sneaked out behind the barn and smoked cornsilk cigarettes.

Now they buy Camels and are better judges of corn whiskey than are their fathers.

The automobile may have provided a new means of sin, but the fault was with a failed upbringing.

Be it the city or the countryside of Payne County, the individual was held to a known moral standard. The newspaper editor assumed all would agree with his sense of traditional morals, and the newspapers easily switched into moral language.⁴⁰

⁴⁰"A Lesson Always," YD, 19 April 1923.

Moral laxity did seem to catch the eye of the Klan and, in their only attempt in the period of the hooded Klan in Payne County to enforce morals, they were reportedly stopping cars in and around Yale in August, 1922. This was reported in only one Yale paper, Ira Minnick's Yale Record.

Several nights the past week there has been seen white robed figures with full regalia of the Ku Klux Klan on the streets and on particularly the roads leading into Yale.

What the parties were looking for is a mystery, but we would judge from the report that they were watching the highways and the city streets for joy riders who had no business joy riding or booze peddlers.

The public will probably never know just what these silent sentinels are after, but in our estimation the parties they are after will find out sooner than they expect it.⁴¹

Interestingly, nothing more was reported on this. If there were any people stopped, their voices have been lost to us along with the reasons they were stopped. It has to be accepted that newspapers will never tell all that happened with the Klan, but it is strange that a County with Klansmen who seemed ambitious to publicize themselves in good light -- marches, ceremonies, churches -- the Klan never boasted of an action taken to enforce morality.

There did seem to be a feeling abroad in the county that traditional morality was being challenged. There probably was truth to this. A War had been won but with a strong sense of bittersweetness. The great moral crusade of Prohibition was already widely disrespected, movies and cars challenged the control of family and traditional moral standards, and, as was seen in Chapter V, even women seemed to be loosening the boundaries of traditional roles.

Respect, it seemed, had slipped to such a degree that even the most legitimate institution of the County, the Protestant church establishment, could occasionally be quite publicly chastised. Prior to the great Fourth of July celebration in Stillwater in 1922, the committee planning it had suggested a "pavement dance" in the evening. The WCTU immediately objected, followed by a unanimous complaint by the Minister's Union: Dancing would promote immorality. The fact that merchants separately complained that the dance crowds would

⁴¹"Being Seen But Not Heard," YR, 31 August 1922, 1. For exactly the same type of situation but one that led to a court case, conviction, and governor's reprieve for the convicted Klansman, see Leo Kelley, "Black Brush of Hatred: The KKK on Trial in Altus," Chronicles of Oklahoma 72 (Spring 1994): 52-65.

obstruct flow into their businesses was also taken into account and the "pavement dance" was struck from the program. There were elements of the community, though who did not like that outcome and publicly stated their complaint against the guardians of traditional morality.

In connection with the complaint against the pavement dance there appeared on the water tower of Stillwater the legend in big white letters, "To Hell with the preachers, let's have a Fourth of July."⁴²

The Klan often spoke of their support for traditional family morality, but they did not seem to step boldly into the breach to stem the tides of immorality, real or perceived. They did march into churches and give encouragement in word and money for the good christian work of the minister and his flock. But they never threatened an adulterer, kidnapped a woman for fornication, or took any action against an individual son or daughter of Adam beyond doing something in an around Yale on a night in August, 1922. This would seem to indicate either overblown concerns by newspaper editors and the guardians of morality, a Klan that did not care to back up their words with strong deeds, or a county which would not condone private violence. It can probably be assumed that the newspaper editors did take it for granted that they spoke of a morality common to the County. But it could also be that the edifice of a common, traditional morality, if it had ever really existed, was being slowly eroded by pressures of War, automobiles, modernity and the Saturday matinee.

Nativism

One of the most frequently heard values in the county was "100% Americanism," a phrase which predated the Klan and the American Legion. Both organizations helped make the phrase famous, but it was used by everyone from the WCTU to the Farmers' Union in sermons and in public speech. It was assumed everyone knew the word's meaning, but if they did it was likely because it was an umbrella that sheltered many forms of nativism. It was patriotism and it was fear of foreigners. It was an attack on "slackers" from the War and it was implicitly racist. Most of all

⁴²"Big Time Planned For County Celebration," YD, 23 June 1922, 1; "In connection with....", YD, 23 June 1922, 1.

it affirmed the status quo. And it was a package of fears and affirmations that seemed to fit this white, protestant, God-fearing county, even if the things feared were miles away.

The tale of Sgt. Webber pulls much of this together. The late spring of 1923 was a tense time in Stillwater and, more and more, the county and the state. Despite the resistance of President Whitehurst of the State Board of Agriculture, which oversaw the College in Stillwater, the president of Oklahoma A. & M. had been fired and George Wilson was appointed. Wilson was Manager of the Farmer Labor Reconstruction League, an organization to whose Shawnee Platform then candidate Walton had subscribed. Wilson and his organization, plus many of the advisors of Walton, were labeled as "socialists" by his opponents.⁴³ Wilson proposed making the College everyman's school, with a tendency on his part to slight academics and research in favor of practical instruction. When he was appointed, several academics resigned in protest. The town held rallies and even got a visit in Oklahoma City with a gruff and abrupt governor. Wilson spent several days on campus, guarded by Highway Patrol men, and then was forced to resign under pressure from the town and the state.⁴⁴

At the same time, Walton was beginning his struggle against the "whipping parties" and was soon to declare martial law and carry on a much-publicized fight against the Ku Klux Klan. In November, after a constitutional crisis and the final Supreme Court decision allowing a session of the legislature that was self-called, Walton would be impeached.⁴⁵

Sgt. Webber was around, and probably street speaking, before he gained notoriety. On June 13, a Thursday, Cushing man Arch Flood swore out a complaint against William Franklin "Sargeant" Webber for public drunkenness which had been observed on June 4. The delay in making the charges was never explained. Judge Brown Moore in Stillwater, before whom the case appeared, was described as pro-Walton and was head of the Democratic Party in the County.

⁴³Sheldon Neuringer, "Governor Walton's War On The Ku Klux Klan: An Episode In Oklahoma History, 1923 to 1924," Chronicles of Oklahoma 45 (Summer 1967): 157-59. The standard account of the Reconstruction League is still Gilbert C. Fite, "Oklahoma's Reconstruction League: An Experiment in Farmer-Labor Politics," Journal of Southern History 13 (November 1947): 535-55.

⁴⁴Philip Reed Rulon, Oklahoma State University Since 1890 (Stillwater, Oklahoma: Oklahoma State University Press, 1975): 173-75.

⁴⁵Neuringer, "Walton's War", 160-75.

He issued the arrest warrant. Sheriff Tull made the arrest but later told the newspaper that he thought it was a frame up.⁴⁶

Quickly, the American Legion post in Stillwater and a group of fifteen Stillwater businessmen forced a quick hearing and paid Webber's bond. Some arrived at the courthouse before Webber's arrest at 8 p.m. Wednesday, another bit of timing never explained.

Representing Flood in this matter was Walter Mathews (sometimes spelled, "Matthews"), a Cushing attorney who had been whipped the previous September by three men from Cushing and ten from Shamrock (Creek County). The Cushing men included the head of the Cushing Klavern and a Cushing minister in that Klavern. All the men in the whipping party were eventually acquitted. Flood had been defended by Mathews in several previous matters, including a charge of moonshining (which garnered a guilty plea).

With his arrest and bail on June 13, Sgt. Webber began an odyssey. After the hearing, he and the Judge met in the Judge's chambers, arguing over the date for his trial. As they parted, the Judge said, "I will not argue with you here in my office, but you can go camp in the streets and preach my funeral every night if you want to." "Don't Worry, Judge, I'll Lay it on," was the reply. And he did.

Webber then spoke on the street, after which he was hustled to the Legion hall for a fete. The Stillwater Gazette said that he claimed to be an "ex-secret service and Legion man". At the Legion Hall, "Maj. J.B. Pate, in a brief speech, commended him for his 'fearless and open stand' against the 'reds,' the bolshevists, the communists, the socialists and the I.W.W. organization, and proposed that a collection be taken for the speaker. A letter of endorsement by the post was ordered prepared."⁴⁷

He continued to speak in Stillwater streets on Thursday. He had claimed he would go to Perry Thursday but then canceled the trip. Friday morning he went to Cushing. There, on Friday evening, a confrontation occurred. Sgt. William F. Webber had, in:

⁴⁶"Street Speaker Stays 'To Lay It On' Moore," SG, 15 June 1923, 8.

⁴⁷"Street Speaker Stays 'To Lay It On' Moore," SG, 15 June 1923, 8; "Webber Leaves To See Arch Flood At Cushing," SG, 22 June 1923, 5.

...several addresses on the streets of Stillwater last week, made some remarks in his last talk Thursday night about Mrs. A.L. Bowline that he retracted Friday night when faced by A. L. Bowline in Cushing, so he signed following:

To Whom It may Concern: I did not mean to infer that Mrs. Bowline, in using the New Republic in her classes, is herself representing socialism, free love, bolshevism or any 'red' tendencies whatsoever.

Sergeant William F. Webber⁴⁸

His linkage of fears is interesting, sliding effortlessly between "Americanism" and traditional morals. He was reported speaking in Yale Saturday afternoon and evening, where the editor reports that he hit "...socialists, the reds, the I.W.W.s and others...." and also gave "...several packages to Judge Brown Moore and to Arch Flood...."⁴⁹ He was expected the following Tuesday (June 19) in Ripley. More than two-hundred citizens came out that evening to hear Sgt. Webber, but he had auto problems which delayed and then canceled his appearance. "It was after 10 o'clock before the crowd dispersed upon learning that it would be impossible for the speaker to get here in time for a talk."⁵⁰ They re-scheduled him for Thursday evening. The crowds returned to downtown Ripley.

An immense crowd gathered here last Thursday night to hear Sergeant Webber deliver an address on Bolshevism, Anarchism and Socialism. The sentiments of the speaker were endorsed by many, but there were also dissatisfied ones who criticized the lecture. Sergeant Webber has made addresses in most every town in the county and has been greeted by large audiences.⁵¹

The next day he seemed to have spent the afternoon in Cushing, but that evening he went to Perkins. "Quite a number from Free Silver vicinity attended the speaking at Perkins Friday night by Sergeant Webber. All were much pleased with his speech."⁵² Two days later, on Sunday, he spoke at Mehan. "Sergeant Webber spoke to a large and appreciative audience here Sunday afternoon. His talk was well received and seemed to please everybody, with one or two exceptions."⁵³

⁴⁸"Retracts Statements," SAD, 21 June 1923, 4.

⁴⁹"More Stillwater Excitement," YD, 21 June 1923, 1.

⁵⁰RR, 21 June 1923, 8.

⁵¹"Local and Personal," RR, 28 June 1923, 1.

⁵²"Free Silver News," RR, 28 June 1923, 8.

⁵³"News of the Neighbors," SG, 29 June 1923, 7.

Sometime in the beginning of the next week, the Sergeant was up in Yale and the American Legion hosted him at a hastily called special meeting. About fifty were present "on a hot night" and he spoke for two hours. He claimed to have served almost three years with the Gordon Highlanders and Canadian Expeditionary Force, then was an instructor for the US Army upon his return to the United States. There was no mention of his being an "ex-secret service man" as he had told the Stillwater Legion post. The Sergeant's actual service seemed factually malleable, but the story he told was exciting.

Sergeant Webber's work carried him into some of the hotbeds of radicalism and I.W.W.ism, and after becoming familiar with their methods and efforts to destroy our government and our institutions, he has made it his life's work to oppose their activities and to awaken people to a realization of their duty and their responsibility. He is preaching a thoroughly sound doctrine of Americanism. It is not the purpose of this article to even make an outline of his talk which lasted about two hours; but suffice to say there was no sign of fatigue visible on any of his audience -- every bit of his talk was interesting and important.⁵⁴

Finally, we hear of him one more time. The meandering readers from the Free Silver district reported to the Ripley Record that they had again traveled to hear the speaker.

A large crowd from this community attended the public naturalization of the K.K.K. east of Cushing last Thursday night [June 28, 1923]. The Free Silver bunch enjoyed Sergeant Webber's speech as he unfolded real facts which they have been knowing [sic] for years.⁵⁵

At that point he seemed to disappear from the records. He was not mentioned again in the papers. The fact that he knew about Mrs. Boline's class in Cushing would seem to indicate he spent some time in that city, but he claimed a self-appointed crusade to inform people of the red menace and other things, implying that he was itinerant. In a cynical age he might have been judged a crazy ranter or, maybe even more sinister, a flim-flam man who had found a great scam. The fact that there are two descriptions of his military past would tend to confirm a certain nebulousness about "Sergeant" Webber. His veracity is not of great concern here. His

⁵⁴"American Legion Notes," YD, 28 June 1923, 1.

⁵⁵"Free Silver News," RR, 5 July 1923, 8.

acceptance, and the acceptance of his ideas, by broad segments of the county's white community is of interest.

There are several layers to the Sergeant's odyssey. This was spectacle, just like a revival or a Klan function. The "facts" were known or assumed by most his hearers, except the small number of doubters at the Ripley rally. It was a hot summer, a drought summer. People were truly worried about their governor and their county's lucrative state institution. The speeches and spectacle reinforced ideas already alive in the County. And it was something to do on a hot evening which had a certain unpredictability about due to the crowd, not the message.

The fact that he ended at a Klan naturalization gave mixed signals. At those events, counted sacred by the organization, I know of no other case where a non-Klansman spoke. One reason for this was that the initiates were without hoods until they became members, allowing an outsider to pierce their veil of anonymity by standing in front of them to speak.⁵⁶ On the other hand, what he was saying and the connections, sometimes great leaps, he was making between issues, was not unusual in Payne County, Oklahoma, at that time, both within and without the Klan.

Sgt. Webber's odyssey through Payne County in that hot summer of martial law and confusion in Oklahoma had some intriguing things about it. First, the Cushing Citizen made no reference to him despite having been the paper in the town where the events began and ended. One crucial issue of the paper is missing.⁵⁷ But Webber was around long enough to warrant some remark unless the paper specifically chose to ignore the matter. They chose to ignore nearly all Klan initiations, including the one where Sgt. Webber spoke, so it may have been the policy of this conservative, bigoted editor to actually try to ignore those he considered more reactionary than himself. In his fine study of the reaction of ten Indiana newspapers to the Klan, Bradford Scharlot argued that ignoring the Klan was one strategy adopted by the press

⁵⁶The Klan kept the crowd at some distance, for example, at the great naturalization on the Twin Mounds west of Yale. See "K.K.K. Initiation," YD, 5 October 1922, 3; "Ku Klux Initiation," RR, 12 October 1922, 8.

⁵⁷The Citizen seemed prone to losing issues, especially around times of some crisis: the issue directly after the Walter Mathews whipping is missing, for example.

opponents to the Klan, possibly the best, since even "objective" reporting legitimized the Klan.⁵⁸ But, there is also a contrary argument. It could be argued that if Green were a Klansman he could be helping to maintain the secrecy of the Klan's activities. In either case, the avoidance of Webber and Klan news is rather intriguing.

The most important thing about the Webber affair was the response he got. This was a crisis time in the state, but the response of editors and correspondents seemed to indicate how well Webber's ideas fit with those of at least a large number of countians. And Webber created spectacle. Webber may have seemed to have more "facts" than a revivalist, but the appeal of both was in the speaking of known truths and predictable claims to people who largely wanted to hear them. "The Free Silver bunch enjoyed Sergeant Webber's speech as he unfolded real facts which they have been knowing [sic] for years."⁵⁹ And both he and the revivalist created spectacles which incorporated the viewer. The image of Webber found in the newspapers portrayed him as something of an Old Testament prophet or a latter day John the Baptist, with crowds pressing in upon him. Webber's odyssey showed how easily nativist ideas slid between the eccentric Sergeant, the citizenry, and the Klan, and between Americanism and traditional moral assumptions.

Talk of Americanism was heard everywhere and it drew crowds. The Ripley Record noted in late 1922 that, "Several ladies went from here to Cushing today to hear a lecture on '100 Percent Americanism.' A noted preacher was the speaker." In Yale the irrepressible Rev. Mallory of the Methodist Tabernacle spoke on the subject after the Klan had announced their presence.

At [Sunday] night a message was delivered on 'What is 100 per cent Americanism.' The church was filled and the discussion of whether we need the Ku Klux Klan here in Yale was discussed for near an hour while one could hear a pin drop any time during the service. The people were tremendously interested in the discussion.

As to the term, Rev. Mallory claimed, in the words of the editor Gelder most likely, that

⁵⁸Radford W. Scharlott, "The Hoosier Journalist and the Hooded Order: Indiana Press Reaction to the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s," Journalism History 15 (Winter, 1988): 122-31, especially p. 130.

⁵⁹"Free Silver News," RR, 5 July 1923, 8.

...Americanism means no more and no less than that pure allegiance to the doctrines of the United States, its laws, customs and usages, which distinguish the real American from all others, some of whom may be living in America but are not of America. It is that affection for and support of all the institutions and traditions upon which our country was founded and by which it will be maintained in the face of all opposition, internal and external. It was then shown that anyone who did not meet these requirements can not rightly be called an American who is one hundred per cent, even though he was born in this country and had grown to manhood here. The speaker listed Unbelievers in God, Bootleggers, Gamblers, ussers, Immoral Libertines, male and female, tin horns and all undesirables as failing to grade one hundred per cent.

After that, Rev. Mallory took time to expound again on a favorite topic, female dress and how it was contributing to the immorality of the community. It would have been an interesting connection to have heard. Rev. Mallory's analysis is weak on particulars but great on the feel of the arguments. There is almost a naiveté about the fact that the norms he uses as "American" are those of a dominant group.⁶⁰

This non-specific "Americanism" became fodder for many speakers. The Lahoma Club in Stillwater hosted Dr. Evans who spoke on "Americanization." In Ripley, Rev. Stephen D. Williams lectured in the High School auditorium on "True Americanism" one Friday night in January, 1923, stating that it was "100 percent devotion to the principles of this government. This he said was a devotion that made attachment to any other country, or principles that were not in accord with the fundamental ideals of the United States impossible." Williams stated this was an age with many dangers to "Americanism." That didn't seem to answer it all for Ripley, for about five months later Rev. J.C. Henderson of the Methodist Church was preaching a sermon on "Americanism," a warm-up for an address he planned to make later in the High School auditorium.⁶¹

The American Legion, in many ways the professionals among the "Americanism" crowd, had a more specific agenda. It was laid out by Dr. Frank McGregor, chairman of the state Americanism Committee for the American Legion, in speeches he gave nearly a month apart in the tumultuous year of 1923. The Legion first wanted to stamp out illiteracy, for the illiterate mind

⁶⁰"Additional Locals," RR, 14 December 1922, 8; "Methodist Church Notes," YD, 28 December 1921, 1.

⁶¹"Dr. Evans Speaks at Lahoma Club Meeting," SAD, 16 November 1922, 4-5; "Pure Americanism," RR, 28 December 1922, 1; "Of Interest to Rural Readers," SAD, 18 January 1923, 4; "Dr. Williams Lecture," RR, 18 January 1923, 1; "Additonal Locals," RR, 3 May 1923, 8.

is "fertile soil for the sowing of seeds of communism, bolshevism an other insidious propaganda." Next, they pushed flag respect, though he noted that this was new and older people probably cannot be taught it since they are "not accustomed to it." Finally, they wanted to force all alien residents to become citizens, an obligation for them because they enjoyed the benefits of the nation. If all this was done it would help block Bolshevism and radicalism.⁶²

The ideas the county had about Americanism had at least two strong traditions in its background. One was the tradition of the pioneers in the area.⁶³ This was not something dragged out all the time, but there was a mythos surrounding that early settlement period. At a certain level, the county still saw itself as a frontier. There were pioneer picnics and other such theme events, but the most frequent reminder of this myth was in the obituaries.

Mrs. [George] Michels came to Oklahoma with her husband at the opening of the Sac and Fox country. They settled on a farm a few miles east of the city. Here the wife and mother labored with her husband to build up a home in the new country.

* * *

Cam Dysart Died at his home, near I.X.L., Friday, March 9, 1923, aged 71 years. Mr. Dysart came to this country in an early day. He with his wife came to the farm which has been their home ever since, when this country was only a lonely prairie, surrounded by a wilderness of timber, with only a log house to be seen. To people like Mr. Dysart we owe our highest tribute of respect. Only they know what it is to develop a raw, lonely country to the country that it is now. He leaves his companion, who was Clara Enslow. Mr. Dysart was a man whose word was as good as gold. The floral tributes at his funeral told of his many friends. Funeral services were held at the Quaker church at 2 o'clock Saturday by William Coats of Coyle. Burial was in the Oak Grove (Johnson) cemetery.⁶⁴

Those values that were esteemed by the county community were distilled into the mythos of the early settler: family, hard work, honesty, struggle and success. It was a white image and overlooked the expropriation of the country from native americans. As the years went by these invaders, foreigners to the land they claimed, came to be portrayed as the natural inheritors of the

⁶²"American Legion Has Very Good Meeting," YD, 10 May 1923, 7; "American Legion," YD, 31 May 1923, 1.

⁶³This myth of the frontier, for our purposes, did not include native americans. Unlike some counties which had some long-term identification with a pre-Removal tribe, such as Osage County, or a county such as Lincoln County which came to be identified with the Sac and Fox, Payne County did not have a close identification with a single tribe. More to the point, there were almost no references in newspapers to the times before the run of 1889. The implication from newspaper sources was that civilization dated from 1889.

⁶⁴"Death Comes At Last," CC, 13 July 1922, 1; "News of the Neighbors," SG, 16 March 1923, 7.

land, and the pioneer was made something of an icon for American values and for being an American (as opposed to being a "foreigner"). And these values were assumed to oppose those of socialists, Bolsheviks, or I.W.W.

A more recent pillar of Americanism was World War I. The countians in the early 1920s had mixed feelings about events since the War and about some of the nations the United States "saved". But it paid much more than lip service to those who fought. They were reminded of the War into the 1920s by the very public activities of the American Legion, and by the bodies which continued to filter home from France. In April of 1922, with the return of the body of Fred Davson, Stillwater thought it had handled the last funeral of the War. But in June of that year Corporal Willman's body was scheduled to be sent to his father, J.B. Willman. Some died after the War, such as Leonard R. Tuttle, thirty years old, wounded in World War I and a late member of both the American Legion and the Masons. And then there was the "Wild Man" who roamed eastern Payne County.

In the rocky, blackjack hills of eastern Payne county, Floyd Leroy Fredericks, 35, a veteran of the fighting of Chateau-Thierry and wounded at Vichy, lived for two weeks as a wild man, half naked bearded and soaked by frequent rains. He ate eggs and milked cows at farm houses.

After a Sheriff's posse caught him, he was "bathed and clothed at jail" while the America Legion and Dr. Sexton, acting assistant surgeon of the US Public Health Service, worked on his case.⁶⁵

But there was also another side of remembrancing with the War. The War had been a time of repression for some people. Statewide the newspapers tended to print the most inflammatory remarks of the President and top officials, both heightening the feeling of crisis and identifying enemies. James H. Fowler said that this was not a question of party lines. The German-American Alliance movement in 1916 which opposed Wilson's election was a target, as was most opposition to Wilson. With the War's beginning came intolerance towards any dissent, any hesitation to leap into the fray individually or as a nation. Conspiracy theories abounded from the Spring of 1915

⁶⁵"Leonard R. Tuttle," CC, 27 April 1922, 1; "'Wild Man' Was Victim Of Shell Shock In War," YD, 19 May 1922, 5; "'Wild Man' Was Victim Of Shell Shock In War," SG, 19 May 1922, 1.

onwards. Although there was evidence the War acted as an excuse to carry on attacks by the business community on the I.W.W., "...most other repressive incidents were unrelated to class-conflict. Instead, Oklahomans tried to defeat an ill-defined enemy within their midst."⁶⁶

One of the mechanisms of repression in the state used were the Councils of Defense. These extra-legal bodies flourished in Oklahoma, the State Council receiving its orders from Washington, D.C., and passing them on to county Councils. They promoted such things as War Bond Drives and recruitment. But they also harassed people, built on conspiracy theories, identified "slackers", i.e., opponents of the War, and seemed to often forget that they had no legal powers. They were patriotic vigilantism. Hilton said the State Council did not seem to rein-in the more extreme of the county Councils either by orders or by example, and that the whole Council structure promoted unfounded conspiracy theories that often inflamed the public. They also often exceeded legal bounds in their quest for national unity.⁶⁷

There was a sparse record of discrimination in Payne County during the War. The German-Americans of the Friedemann Church did sense hostility and at least one overt act challenging their patriotism. They had never been really integrated into their rural community northwest of Stillwater because they went to a different church "and by going to a church that was theirs exclusively". The neighbors thought the German-Americans had chosen to be separate and did not understand that these Germans had been residents of Russia before coming to North America. This in turn may have deepened the Lutherans' disgust at the prejudice, for they probably likened it to the repression they had faced in Russia.

⁶⁶James H. Fowler, II, "Creating an Atmosphere of Suppression, 1914-1917," Chronicles of Oklahoma 59 (Summer, 1981): 202-23. Note that Fowler only consulted six major state newspapers so the results can be critiqued for their limited sample. For the effects of World War I on Oklahoma, see also Michael W. Casey, "The Closing of Cordell Christian College: A Microcosm of American Intolerance during World War I," Chronicles of Oklahoma 76 (Spring, 1998): 20-37; Charles W. Smith, "The Selling of America in Oklahoma: The First and Second Liberty Bond Drives," Chronicles of Oklahoma, 73 (Winter, 1995-96): 438-53.

⁶⁷O.A. Hilton, "The Oklahoma Council of Defense and the First World War," Chronicles of Oklahoma 20 (March, 1942): 18-42. Hilton wrote this article as a lesson in caution from the last War to the current War. Possibly the only extant records in the state of a local Council of Defense are currently being accessioned by the Payne County Historical Society in Stillwater. Preliminary viewing seems to indicate that there was some high-handedness in this Council's work and possibly even some personal gain by members. The papers await their historian.

Early in the War, a rumor spread in the majority community that Robert Friedemann, a leader of the Lutherans, had a German flag in the front of his house. "Marching on the scene in the name of patriotism, a group of extremists were amazed to encounter at the Friedemann house the same red, white and blue Stars and Stripes they had sworn to defend. It was a weak anticlimax, but the confrontation ended with a raid on the Friedemann family smokehouse." Three of the church families eventually had members who were in the military.⁶⁸ Such strong-arm tactics were not foreign to the oil fields in Payne County and it is likely that any physical repression in the County during the War years -- and a thorough study would likely uncover more -- could be looked upon as continuation of a policy by some leaders of the county to deal physically with opponents.

The World War thus gave two legacies to the county -- the idea of the patriotic sacrifice of the nation in a foreign war, and the legitimization of labeling opponents as unamerican and even acting against them. The former was another way of defining who is an American, again as opposed to being a "slacker" or a "foreigner," and the latter legitimized actions taken against the perceived threat of the foreign, the unamerican.

Attacks on things perceived to be foreign took many forms. Attendance at a conference of nations in Geneva, Switzerland, were criticized, along with the Democrats who proposed sending a delegation, in an editorial in the Stillwater Gazette. In attacking that idea Mr. Brown attacked Europe in general. Europe was in bad economic condition because it had lost the ideas of "hard work, frugality and an honest determination to meet their obligations." European nations are infected with the "virus of state socialism." Thank goodness for Harding and the Republicans who were refusing to legitimize the conference by sending delegates.⁶⁹

⁶⁸Jene Friedemann, Bread for the Third Generation: An Early History of Salem Lutheran Church, Stillwater, Oklahoma (Stillwater: Western Publications, 1987): 109-110. The Friedemann Church closed in 1936 due to the creation of Lake Carl Blackwell which engulfed much of their farm land. The cemetery remains and Salem Lutheran, the Church they founded in Stillwater, still uses the cemetery. For repression of German-Americans in the state during the War, see Edda Bilger, "The 'Oklahoma Vorwärts': The Voice of German-Americans In Oklahoma During World War I," Chronicles of Oklahoma 54 (Summer 1976) 245-60.

⁶⁹"A Clear Note of Americanism," SG, 17 March 1922, 2.

A year and a month after this, the generally moderate Republican editor attacked various organizations, including business organizations, for having foreign speakers.

Why doesn't some convention or conference try something new by featuring an American citizen who believes in our institutions and government and who is not afraid to stand on his feet and preach the good old gospel of Americanism and minding our own business by the practice of which this country became great and respected? Is it not time for the various merchant associations, chambers of commerce, industrial conferences and those club organizations national in their scope, as well as purely local clubs, to stop featuring the foreign propagandist who comes to our country only to find fault with it and belittle it?

Instead of bringing about a better understanding they are spreading the gospel of class and racial hatred in this country. They are getting a large class of people, otherwise intelligent, in the belief that something, after all, is wrong with American institutions and American ideas. They are keeping alive in all European countries the false and viscous idea that we have not done our duty to European countries.

It is high time to stop this sort of propaganda. America today is playing by far the best, the highest and most constructive part in the community of nations in the work of bringing the world back to sane viewpoint and normal prosperity.⁷⁰

A month after that attack, he attacked, "Our hyphenated fellow citizens" for "clamoring" for the United States to do something for Europe's economy.

Well, we loaned Europe \$11,000,000,000; we extended commercial credits to the extent of some billions; we donated hundreds of millions of dollars worth of supplies to the needy of Europe; we sold European countries surplus war supplies at a small fraction of their cost or their market value; we left our markets practically wide open under the democratic tariff laws for four years after the war, we let the allies collect and retain money that was due us from Germany on account of the cost of keeping our troops on the Rhine. After we had done all that, and then tried to help in the Near East by encouraging American capital to go there and build railroads and dig oil wells, the same hyphenated Americans throw up their hands in horror and protest. You simply can't do enough for Europe or the rest of the world to please them.⁷¹

These last two editorials were written immediately before Sgt. Webber appeared on the scene preaching xenophobia.

A more concrete attack on foreignness was contained in anti-immigrant ideas. These ideas were rather common in the county. For example, in December of 1923, the Happy Valley Literary Society had a young people's debate. "Resolved, that the manure spreader is more valuable than

⁷⁰"The Most Just Nation," SG, 27 April 1923, 2.

⁷¹"Mephitic Critics," SG, 11 May 1923, 2.

the automobile. The negative won the debate the question for the next night is on the further restriction of immigrants."⁷²

There were more organized campaigns against immigration, and the American Legion's stood out. In 1923 the National Commandant spoke in Oklahoma City to a Post Officers convention. Commander Alvin Owley's speech was reported on by the Republican Yale Democrat.

Mr. Owley pointed out that the great horde of immigrants still swarming into our country is coming almost entirely from southern Europe and Asia, the lowest type to be found on the continent. He states that practically none of these immigrants can speak or understand a word of the English language. He presented data to prove that the majority of the strikes, riots, and so-called labor disturbances are the handiwork of the alien within our gates. Mr. Owley stands unqualifiedly for the complete cessation of immigration for a period of five years, in order that time may be had for the formulation of decent and adequate immigration laws. And Mr. Owley is but the National mouthpiece of the American Legion, voicing the unanimous opinion of its more than one million members.⁷³

This also was written directly before Sgt. Webber's first recorded appearance. In an interesting turn-around, the Stillwater Advance Democrat attacked the Legion a month later for a carnival they sponsored. It featured, "A group of transients, many of whom appear to be unnaturalized Americans." They included scalpers, they obstructed traffic, and they interfered with the town's businesses. That paper concluded that everything about the carnival "...is the opposite of Americanization and the ideas of the American Legion...."⁷⁴ That paper had had a few run-ins with the Legion in the past and also nominally supported Walton, though it could not say that in print in Stillwater at that time. Legionaires opposed Walton as a radical, so this was about more than just "unnaturalized" carnival workers. But, in all the newspapers consulted, none spoke against immigration restriction.

The editor of the Stillwater Gazette showed the most thought on what immigration restriction meant. Noting that the quotas for northwestern Europeans had not been filled while the southeastern European quota was bursting in 1922, Mr. Brown argued for more thought

⁷²"Lincoln Lines," CC, 20 December 1923, 7.

⁷³"American Legion," YD, 3 May 1923, 1.

⁷⁴"Blaring, Bubbling, Bunkum," SAD, 7 June 1923, 2.

about immigration since "...this country wants and needs the higher type of immigrant as greatly as it desires to exclude the poorer and lower class...." He speculated that prohibition might inhibit some northwestern Europeans from coming to the United States, an interesting observation because it came from a dedicated dry. As far as this more nuanced voice would go, though, was to argue that there are some good foreigners but we seem to get too many of the bad foreigners.⁷⁵

The anti-foreign rhetoric was always tied into the idea that foreigners represented radical ideas that were not American. The ideas which seemed at the time most contrary to "American" ideas were embodied in the Bolsheviks. The Gazette's editor defined a Bolshevik as one who "...never had anything, who never saved anything, the shiftless, the neer-do-wells, the vodka drinkers, the criminal class, the vagabonds, demagogues and agitators." He went on to attack Sen. Caraway (D., Ark.) who wanted to lower the wool tariff at the behest of the wool lobby and the importing interests. These latter "...are growing enormously wealthy by importing pauper-made goods and selling them to the American public at fabulous profits ranging into thousands of per cent."⁷⁶ The connection between Bolshevism and cheap foreign labor seemed clear to the editor at least. What is again interesting was the way the editor attacked Bolsheviks, sliding easily between the political, the economic, and the moral. These fears were at some level a whole.

The fear of Russia was again shown in an ad by the First National Bank of Stillwater titled, "What Is A Bolshevik."

He is a fellow who believes that the world is upside down and it is his business to right it.

That all organized society is against him and that he must fight for his existence. In other words, bolshevism is largely a state of mind, or a lack of proper training of the mind in those things which go to make up the conservative, well balanced American citizen.

How to eliminate bolshevism?

Home ownership will do it.

How secure home ownership? Encourage regular deposits in savings accounts, building and loan stock, or monthly payments on a home.

That is the answer to bolshevism.⁷⁷

⁷⁵"Immigration Problem Puzzling," SG, 1 September 1922, 6.

⁷⁶"Is It A Crime To Own Property," SG, 11 August 1922, 2.

⁷⁷"What Is A Bolshevik?" SG, 11 August 1922, 8.

One of the interesting things about nativism is how malleable it was and still is. The bank would likely call the above ad a public service: the more cynical would see the manipulation of symbolic language for private gain, the linkage of profit to patriotism. It was also interesting that almost always the accounts of Bolshevism did not talk about "Godless Bolshevism" but did talk about jobs and, especially, property. That easily got transfigured into accusations that the Bolsheviks were actually lazy or no-accounts, probably of degenerate stock.

At the time, though, all radical ideas were considered "foreign", not simply Bolshevism. In a rambling editorial about the upcoming elections, the reactionary editor of the Cushing Citizen strongly advised the voter of either party to "forget sentiment" and vote for "the public good."

And no matter how able a candidate may appear, no matter what special qualifications he may have, if he advocates any of the wild theories transported from Europe or any of the seemingly helpful but utterly false and destructive ideas put forth by detected and disgraced political schemers, put him or her off the list of possibilities. Results are the only proof of the correctness of a theory. If these practices bring benefit and better conditions the theory becomes a principle, if not a disaster. The effect of these visionary schemes, in which you are promised gold, diamonds and lands without other efforts of yours than voting for the candidate who promises them is very easily ascertained. What this effect has been it will be anywhere. Do not permit yourself to be deceived. Do not think that because a man is asking for a county office only, it does not matter.

The man pretends to be guided by such deceitful, dishonest, destructive principles is himself a deceitful, dishonest, absolutely unsafe person. Throw him down.⁷⁸

All of this in an editorial about elections for County office. At the time the attorney, Walter Mathews, was a Republican candidate for a county office. At various times Mr. Green, the editor, vilified him and accused him of being a Walton supporter, which meant a socialist and radical. It must be his hated nemesis and fellow Republican, Mathews, about which editor Green was trying to warn his fellow countians, although the ambiguous Green never disclosed his target.

Radicalism

It was difficult to separate radicalisms into foreign and native since, in the eyes of the critics of radical in the county, "radical" ideas were, by their very nature, alien to the true American and

⁷⁸"Choosing Your Servants," CC, 6 July 1922, 1.

thus had to have foreign sources. This was a county which had experienced activities by people whom these editors, the majority of county citizens, and the Klan would call "radicals".

The oil fields were the source of radicals as far as the county elite was concerned. Very soon after the Cushing field was founded, the I.W.W. sent two organizers in who founded I.W.W. local 583, the first in the Cushing Field. Established in 1913, by April of 1914 the I.W.W. local had 300 members. Concentrating on the pipeliners, whose isolated camps, strenuous labor, bad working conditions and low wages made them the most viable targets, early organizers had some success. But these crews were usually run by large corporations, such as Standard Oil, and employed low-skill labor which could readily be replaced by the large pool of out-of-work men who flooded the oil fields.

The workers in general proved hard to organize. The high-skill workers, tool dressers and riggers, even tank builders, got better wages and took great pride in their work. Laborers in the Field were a migratory labor group, but one different from the migrant workers the I.W.W. had dealt with in agriculture since they did not follow set yearly routes. Oil workers' ranks were swelled by underemployed farmers, another group hard to organize. But what really hurt this first organizing effort was a price drop due to high production, with a resulting agreement among small producers to cut production and attempt to pry higher profits from both the international market and the monopolistic pipeline owners. This dropped the demand for labor and was a greater set-back for the I.W.W. than attempts by cities to restrict their free speech rights.

In 1915, with new hope, a new local, now of the I.W.W. controlled Oil Workers Industrial Union, was formed in Drumright. Their organizing efforts that year were not a success and local authorities picked up organizers on charges of vagrancy and trespassing, in one case without a warrant. At trial, the men were without counsel and were denied the right to testify in their own defense.

In 1916, Harry Sinclair had broken the Standard Oil pipeline monopoly and prices gotten by the producer were better. At the same time, the War in Europe put great demand on petroleum production. The O.W.I.U. opened a new local in Drumright where it cooperated with

and shared the workers, often literally, with an A.F. of L. local. Police harassment began with the increased Wobblie activities. The activists gained some initial successes organizing pipeliners.

The declaration of War changed the nation and the fortunes of the I.W.W. in the oil patch. Oil became a strategic material for the government and the continuation of its supply a patriotic act. This paralleled the owners' desire to control the workers and crush unions. The companies hired spies and provocateurs, the oil town elites were in alliance with the companies, and both knew the Federal government was on their side. The I.W.W. was accused of complicity in the failed Green Corn Rebellion of September, 1917. Wobblie offices were raided nationwide, and many leaders were arrested. Although taking no stand on the War, the I.W.W. was generally accused of opposing the War and attacked with patriotic fervor. In Oklahoma in November, 1917, a series of vigilante actions in Tulsa were carried out by business leaders and government officials wearing black hoods and robes which broke the leadership of the I.W.W. in that city by lash, tar, feathers, and threats.⁷⁹

In the oil fields the I.W.W. was broken by the War. In the Cushing field it was also broken by the fact that by the early 1920s the pipelines had been laid, drilling had settled into a much less frantic pace, the hordes of job-seekers had departed, and the petroleum jobs were now mostly sedentary ones, maintaining pipelines and storage tanks, and operating refineries.

The Agricultural Workers' Industrial Union did mount an organizing campaign in the early 1920s aimed at the harvest workers, but it did not impact Payne County since it targeted itinerant workers on large farms.⁸⁰ Payne County had farms of much smaller size. The A.W.I.U. also missed another chance in Payne County since it would not organize tenant farmers, seeing them simply as nascent petite bourgeois.

Despite the fact that the incarnation of radicalism in the County's collective mind was beaten and no threat, evoking the I.W.W. in news articles carried memories and fears. There

⁷⁹Nigel Anthony Sellars, "Oil, Wheat, and Wobblies: The Industrial Workers of the World In Oklahoma, 1905-1930" (Norman, Oklahoma: Dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1994): see particularly chapters three, "Organizing 'Oily Willy'", and five, "War and Repression," pp. 162-213, 259-325.

⁸⁰Sellars, "Wobblies," 102-03.

were no known news reports of I.W.W. organizers in the early 1920s in Payne County, and only sporadic evidence that I.W.W. members existed in the county. When papers reported on the I.W.W., which was infrequently, it was almost always outside the county, often from a different state.⁸¹

The fields were controlled by industrial police allied with local officials and the local constabularies. It was likely that they were at some level connected to the Klan. Although there was a resurgence in recruitment by the I.W.W. in oil fields among tank builders (i.e., those who built oil storage tanks), hitting as close as Tulsa, this thrust did not seem to affect Cushing or Drumright. And the O.W.I.W., when it appeared, ran into the civic leaders' anti-radical wall. "For example, the Empire Refinery of Cushing only hired men sent by candy store owner E.C. Kerns, who was a local Klan 'cyclops.'"⁸² Earlier, Sellers claimed that "...oil town businessmen proved particularly eager to form Ku Klux Klan units, and local police repeatedly clashed with workers."⁸³ That was likely true in Payne County and will be argued, but it must also be argued that in the County from 1921-1923 there was no substantive threat by the I.W.W. and there was no known attack by the Klan specifically against oil workers or agricultural laborers. This lack of threat was due largely to the changed structure of the oil industry in Payne County. We know civic leaders were involved in the Klan, especially in Cushing, and in the one violent incident associated with the Klan, Mr. Mathews' whipping, the attackers were from Cushing and Oilton (Creek County), both oil towns. But the years passed and there appeared in the county no substantive threat. At the same time, businessmen had found the civic clubs to be much more effective organizations for exerting power and shaping their communities in pro-business directions. Rotary was modern, while the violent threat or a violent Klan were of an earlier time.

⁸¹See, for example reports from both Enid and Alfalfa County of arrests of A.W.I.U. members in 1923: "Oklahoma State News," SG, 1 June 1923, 1; "Oklahoma State News," SG, 8 June 1923, 1; That paper also ran another syndicated column that noted that ten of twenty-four Wobblies imprisoned in Leavenworth for draft evasion had refused commutations: "Glimpses of Earth," SG, 29 June 1923, 1.

⁸²Sellers, Wobblies, 444.

⁸³Ibid., 176.

Political “radicalism” was never a real threat in the County after statehood. There was never a threat from Socialists in the county. In elections from statehood to 1924, nearly the highest percentage of county votes that more radical parties got was the 1912 presidential election wherein Socialist Party and Progressive Party votes combined totaled 20.1% of the vote, while the Socialists garnered 18.6% in the US senatorial race. In the 1914 gubernatorial election the Socialist Progressive plus independents got 30.7%, a high percentage for candidates from parties other than the two major parties, but an election result muddied as far as measuring socialist vote by the groups listed. In that same year the US senatorial race saw more votes go to the Socialist Progressive candidate (28.5%) than to the Republican (25.3%), but the Democrat, Thomas P. Gore, won the county with a decisive 46% of the vote. In the 1916 presidential election the Socialist Progressive and the Prohibition Party garnered 18.7%. In the 1918 gubernatorial elections, the Socialist Party got 4.4% of the county vote, 5.9% in the US senatorial election. In 1920 the Socialists got 6.4% in the presidential election, 5.9% in the US senatorial election. In Payne County the 1922 Socialist vote for governor was 0.7%. In the 1924 presidential election, the Socialists plus Farmer Labor got 7.7%. In that year’s US senatorial election there was no Socialist candidate⁸⁴ Overall, these election results do show minority willing to vote for either the Socialist Progressive or the Socialist Party. This was always a minority vote, one growing smaller as the county entered the 1920s. It would also be debatable whether a vote for either party really constituted radicalism.

The problem election for this study was really at the heart of our period, the gubernatorial election of 1922 pitting Jack Walton, Democrat, against John Field, Republican. Although Walton was unpredictable and, as nearly all his supporters found, unreliable, he identified in the campaign with the Farmer-Labor Reconstruction League and their Shawnee Platform. That creed was roundly labeled as socialist by people outside the movement. Walton’s identification with the

⁸⁴Oliver Benson, Harry Holloway, George Mauer, Joseph Pray, Wayne Young, Oklahoma Votes, 1907-1962 (Norman: Bureau of Government Research, University of Oklahoma, 1964): 62-4, 78, 83, 111, 114, 117.

Shawnee Platform splintered the Democratic Party. Though Walton won the election, he lost to Fields in Payne County.⁸⁵

Walton's odyssey was very complex, bringing in elements of race, old style populism, ineffectual leadership by the governor, some real violence in the state, and the stretching of the state Constitution. For Payne County it also meant a direct threat and crisis at their main state institution, the College in Stillwater. Walton's saga will be covered in the next chapter on the Klan; It must simply be said now that his election does not indicate great support in the county for the Shawnee Platform. The votes he garnered possibly came to him because the Farmers' Union flirted with, and initially endorsed, the Shawnee Platform and Reconstruction League. They could also be a response to the populist touches of Walton's campaign such as his touring jazz band and the huge barbecue he promised to throw (and did) after his inauguration. Walton's loss was made more glaring since the Democrats swept the County offices.

In short, there was never a strong Socialist Party appeal in Payne County. By the early 1920's, aside from the tangled, over determined fear of Walton during his brief governorship, there was no substantive "radical" threat in Payne County. It is quite likely that one of the main reasons the Klan in the county was not remarkably violent was the fact that there were not substantial groups of "radicals" in the county to attack.

Having said that, it must be noted that much rhetoric and fear in the county was aimed at the mildly socialistic Shawnee Platform of the Farmer Labor Reconstruction League. The fear of this organization was due to some degree to its stated goals, to some degree to the example of the Nonpartisan League activities in North Dakota, to which it was constantly compared, and to the leadership of the party, many of whom had some links to the Socialist Party and came to surround Walton. Even though radicalism, either working class or political, had little real presence in the County in the period of the hooded Klan, images of the threat of radicalism were alive in some minds.

⁸⁵Neuringer, "Walton's War," 157-59; Benson, *et al*, Oklahoma Votes, 83.

Conclusion

In important ways you can tell much about a place when you understand what they fear. This basic fact was used by the Klan to its own advantage across the United State. Without taking polls it is difficult to numerate and order the fears of an area. That type of exactitude is not needed. Payne County in the early 1920s was not that unlike other counties in the United States of about that time and size. It is likely its fears were not that much different from many other counties.

In the previous chapter it was noted that the white, protestant evangelical majority had an evolving sense of community, with power moving more to the cities, but that this dominance by white male Protestants included a paternalism. This paternalism accepted the challenges of modern times to traditional mores. It also accepted some changes in the status of women, and accepted the position of non-Protestants and non-whites who accepted the status quo.

But some fears, even when there was no immediate threat, still caused distress. There was a fear of crime, a broad topic at the time. There was robbery on the highway and crime in the streets. Prohibition laws were a frequent source of law breaking and policing. Although there was one whipping in the county during this time, and at least one in Creek County, Walton's claims of an epidemic of whippings must have been based on other counties if they were factual at all. There were murders in the Payne County in the early 1920s, but they were neither common nor unusual in their circumstances. There were no lynchings in the county at any time.

There was much concern about patriotism and "Americanism", and fears of radicals and Bolsheviks were abroad. Memories of labor unrest and the IWW in the 1910s kept the concern alive for some. There was some anti-foreign feelings, venting itself in disparagement of Europe's recovery and in anti-immigrant ideas. Anti-Catholicism and anti-Semitism were both in the county at some level, but they never erupted into any violence or even public verbal abuse, other than a rude anti-semitic joke or two in the papers and several anti-Catholic speakers.

Amid all these fears was a certain moderation. The economic situation was bad and many farmers may have felt in their hearts that middle-men conspiracy did exist, but they then put their

faith in the various cooperatives, especially the Farmers' Union, that grew rapidly after the War. Businessmen in the cities were also hurt, but they found aid in the service clubs and Chambers of Commerce. Countians had faith in organizations.

Citizens of Payne County may have feared crime, but the lack of whipping parties seemed to indicate both a high threshold in the county for vigilantism and a lack of a sense of crisis about crime. Big city morality, petting parties in automobiles and risqué motion pictures may have frightened citizens, but there seemed no public moral crisis. Women in the nation may have seemed militant, pushing aside boundaries, but the overwhelming majority of the women of the county were quite conventional in their actions and aspirations. 100% Americanism may have been a loud cry, but it was a confused cry and there was no indication of any actions that resulted from it after World War I.

Political radicalism was another concern in the abstract, for there seemed to be little in the county, a county which had always voted very lightly for Socialists even in the 1910s. The industrial laboring classes seemed content or under control at this time, despite having been seen in previous days by the establishment as the immediate "radical" element. Anti-foreigner rhetoric existed, but the foreign-born represented a very small minority in the population. There were virtually no Jews, and the Catholic minority was established and accepted. Race, a potentially very divisive topic, had been determined in law and those Jim Crow laws were generally accepted by all, even by a black minority who suffered their consequences. Whites had the upper hand and used it, but to those local, known blacks who lived under the laws there was extended the title of "good" coloreds by the majority, and they were given a certain level of paternalistic protection.

Where did the Klan fit in this mix? In all cases there were groups or laws concerned with the fears. In Payne County the Klan was not a unique voice. And the Klan of Payne County did not seem to be a violent Klan, despite the whipping of Walter Mathews and the ambiguous case of the shooting of H.F. Heflin, which will both be discussed in the following chapter. In a County in which the fears seemed vivid but the enemies were not immediate, Klan violence could not

thrive. Whether this was due to an innate moderation in the majority white population of the County, or simply the lack of an immediately perceived threat, cannot be determined. What shall be shown is that the public support shown the Klan was probably based upon the draw of spectacle as much as upon ideology. And the momentum of early membership in the Klan may have diminished as the Klan struggled to find a unique voice in the County.

Chapter VII

The County and the Hooded Klan

The Klan arrived in Payne County sometime in the late spring or summer of 1921, likely in the form of one or more recruiters. They either journeyed up the rail lines to Cushing from Oklahoma City, or came in from the east through the oil fields of Tulsa and Creek Counties.¹ Blue Clark, in his important dissertation on the Klan in the state, first placed the Klan in Oklahoma City in the early summer of 1920.² It is certain, though, that the county knew of the Klan long before then.

The attitudes that Payne countians would have had from the newspaper reports of the Klan in other parts of the country prior to the Klan arriving in the county are difficult to gauge. Reports about the Klan were always a mixed lot, ranging from reports from congressional hearings to trials. It is also difficult to characterize the attitudes of the editors of the major papers in the county towards the Klan by the national news they printed. This news was purchased from unnamed news agencies. In any case, it must be assumed that all citizens of Payne County could have heard of the Klan.

In addition to newspaper articles about the Klan of the 1920s, people might have had images of the Reconstruction Klan. This would not necessarily have been a negative image, it

¹ Newsom claimed a recruiter arrived in Drumright in the spring of 1921, sold memberships, and moved on. He gave no information concerning his origins. The Drumright Klavern formed at the same time as the Yale Klavern, December, 1921. See D. Earl Newsom, Drumright: The Glory Days of a Boom Town (Perkins, Oklahoma: Evans Publications, 1985):108.

² Carter Blue Clark, "A History of the Ku Klux Klan in Oklahoma" (Norman: Ph.D. diss., University of Oklahoma, 1976): 42-3.

being the era of historians of a white southern perspective and of the movie, "Birth of a Nation."³ Most who knew of the Klan knew it was associated with violence and secrecy.

Chronicling the Klan

The spate of fine revisionist studies in the past two decades has both helped Klan research and hindered it. Their use of Klan rolls has shown the Klan to be a typical cross-section of white males, not an illiterate mob of southern fundamentalists. But these rolls have also increased expectations of the type of evidence considered necessary for a Klan study and have probably discouraged some from studying the Klan who had no Klan rolls. The very rarity of the rolls is often forgotten, as is the fact that knowing the social and economic status of Klansmen generally does not explain why a man joined the Klan. Klan rolls also do not explain how the Klan actually functioned over time within the local community. Klan membership changed with time. To be accurate in drawing conclusions from Klan rolls the researcher would need a series of rolls.

One purpose of the present study is to show that much can be learned about local klaverns, their activities and their goals, without having access to rolls. Understanding how the Klan functioned in a particular place is the goal of this study, not discovering the structure of the membership at one point in the Klan's existence.

Chronicling the Klan in the county presents certain difficulties for the Klan was a secret organization. One cannot even be certain of how many Klaverns existed. Cushing, Yale, Stillwater, and Ingalls had Klaverns. It is likely Ripley also did, with the possibility of organizations existing also in Quay and Mehan. There are no known extant rolls from any of the Klaverns in Payne County. The County Klan's membership number -- 1800 -- was claimed only in 1922, early in the life of the Payne County Klan. No independent numbers were ever suggested by newspapers, and even their numbers for crowd sizes and numbers of Klansmen in parades varied. It would be of great interest to know membership numbers how those numbers fluctuated

³The "Birth of a Nation" was shown again in February, 1922, in the Grand Theater in Cushing. The editor included a glowing review in the Cushing Citizen, noting that the movie contained "the celebrated 'rides of the Ku Klux Klan.'" See "Magnitude That Almost Appalls," CC, 9 February 1922, 5.

over time. But membership lists and numbers would only add to the central question of how the hooded Klan functioned in Payne County.

To find how the Klan functioned in the County we must consult newspapers, the major public forum in the County in the early 1920s. The creation of a chronology of Klan activities was a first result of the newspaper search.⁴ The ideology publicly spoken by the Klan in Payne County must next be examined, but, with the exception of the first ad in Yale papers in 1921, ideology was always presented in the context of a public event. An analysis of the public events staged by the Klan and the meaning of those events for the Klan and to the public must also be done. Consideration also has to be given to the limitations on the actions of the Klan in the County, limitations due to the self-imposed anonymity of the hooded Klan and limitations due to the ideas of community and paternalism found in Payne County.

Klansmen

We know about less than twenty Klansmen. That does not qualify as a statistically significant sampling for an organization claiming 1800 members in 1922, but it is an interesting group nonetheless.

Evidence for membership came in several forms. One person was identified by living family members. Two of the three ministers on the list were identified by their appearance on the stage with robed Klansmen when a national Klan spokesman came to Stillwater. One man was identified in a national socialist labor magazine and noted by Sellars in his work on the I.W.W. The owners of the Yale Garage were identified by their garage sporting a fiery cross on a night when the Klan lit such crosses statewide, ostensibly in mourning for President Harding. Sgt. Webber was included because he spoke at a Klan rally, something not usually delegated to outsiders, and because his ideology exactly matched that of the Klan (and was close to several other organizations). Mr. Fred Peery of Stillwater was the unrobed driver of the car transporting

⁴See Appendix I, "Chronology of Klan in Payne County, 1921-1924."

Klansmen to a funeral. The largest group of Klansmen were identified because the Klan claimed them as brothers at their funerals.⁵

Virtually all the group are business or professional men. Mr. Foster was a banker and early businessman in Cushing. Mr. Peery ran a business in Stillwater. Mr. W.L. Learned, claimed by the Yale Klan, seemed to be middle management in a oil company. Mr. Murphy of Stillwater was a real estate agent and possibly a lawyer. The two owners of the Yale Garage were independent business men, repairmen and new car dealers. The ministers, a rather prominent and identifiable group, were professionals, with two in the Disciples of Christ and one in the Methodist denomination. The presence of so many business and professional men cannot be taken as a sign that these men predominated in the Klan's membership. It does indicate that the Klan in Payne County was not made up only of men of lower classes. The fact that so many business and professional men appear

The fact that an organization claiming to enroll possibly as much as a quarter of the eligible males in Payne County appeared at so few funerals seemed to indicate that the Klan was populated with young or middle aged men. It is unlikely that the Klan would pass up a chance for positive publicity by only showing up at funerals of important members who died, and it would have also countered the Klan's claim to be a democratic institution. Mr. W.M. Davis, killed in an auto accident near Kaw City, seemed to be the oldest of our group at 65 years. We don't know the cause of death of Mr. Ross Lyndon Wiley of Stillwater. Two others died in auto accidents and Mr. Foster died of natural causes.⁶ Overall, the Klansmen we know about do confirm that the Klan was not simply lower class men. Some powerful leaders within the communities in its membership.

The two men who may have been the most prominent leaders identified were Mr. John Foster of Cushing and Rev. Vertes Williams of Stillwater, both older men and long-time residents. There is clear evidence Mr. Foster was the head of the Klan in Cushing, and quite compelling evidence that Rev. Williams at least helped found, and possibly ran, the Klan in Stillwater.

⁵See Appendix II, "Known Klan Members in Payne County."

⁶For a summary of all known Klansmen in Payne County, see Appendix II.

When John Foster of Cushing died, the Cushing Citizen devoted nearly the entire first page to the man and his funeral, an extent of coverage unprecedented in the county at the time. Even President Harding's demise only merited large double columns on part of a page. Mr. Foster was 58, born near Kansas City, Missouri. He came to Oklahoma Territory in 1892. He settled in Lincoln County and associated with several others to set up a general store which was eventually moved to Cushing. Later Foster helped found a bank and was cashier and manager. It eventually became Cushing's second largest bank, the First National Bank of Cushing.⁷ In 1895 he married, eventually having six children with four living when he died. He was instrumental in attracting the Santa Fe to town, then was a leader in the migration of businesses into the "New Town" district.

He was a Mason, a Rotarian, and a member of the First Christian Church. As a Mason, he had "held most if not all of the principal offices of the order" and "at the time of his death [was] Eminent Commander of Cushing Commandery Knights Templar." He was an officer of the city's Benevolent Society and was active in promoting Cushing public schools, overseeing all but the latest building to be constructed with an impressive record.

He was described in the Klan's "Resolution of Condolence and Respect" as "our esteemed Exalted Cyclops and Fellow Klansman." The editor's obituary described his Klan involvement: "Always a loyal citizen and believing in America first, last and all the time he was instrumental in the organization of the local Ku Klux Klan and was at the time of his death principal officer."⁸

⁷As of the end of March, 1923, the banks in Cushing, in order of total funds, were: The Farmers' National Bank, \$983,298.70; The First National Bank, \$848,423.60; The Cushing State Bank, \$343,667.57. See Cushing Citizen, 8 September, 1922, 2,6 [hereafter "CC"]. The first two were the largest banks in the county. In Stillwater banks, reporting a quarter earlier, claimed the following: Stillwater National Bank, \$796,543.13; American National Bank, \$710,741.61. See Stillwater Gazette, 19 May 1922, 3 [hereafter "SG"]. The Stillwater paper boasted that their banks had fine capital stock. "There are not many towns of less than 5,000 inhabitants which can beat that record [of capital stocks]." See SG, 12 May 1922, 2.

⁸"Death Loves a Shining Mark," CC, 12 April 1923, 1; [Obituary], "Resolutions of Condolence and Respect," CC, 12 April 1923, 1.

The services were led by the Masons and Rev. Bert Salmon, a friend and fellow Klansmen. The Klan was at the funeral. The Cushing Citizen stated that "...about 300 members of the Ku Klux Klan, of which the deceased was the chief official, in hood and gown perfect [sic] silence, also marched through the street on their way to drop the red rose into the grave of their loved brother. This parade was a most impressive one also." In a variation on that, a syndicated column in the Stillwater Gazette claimed that, "Sixty-four automobile loads of Ku Klux Klansmen led the burial procession." It was claimed the whole procession was the longest funeral procession in Cushing's history.⁹

He was highly praised. "Mr. Foster was one of the best citizens of the county and his death is a distinct loss to Cushing and Payne County," said the Ripley Record. The Cushing paper was more effusive.

Mr. Foster was one of the really public spirited men of Cushing. He loved his town and was always ready to give his best effort to the advancement of its interest. No public project was attempted without consulting him and no work carried out in which he was not a prominent figure.¹⁰

So Mr. Foster was buried amidst mounds of floral tributes including, "...a symbolical [sic] wreath of the Cushing Rotary club...the emblematic wreath of the Blue Lodge Masons and the immense cross of red roses, which was the offering of the Ku Klux Klan and represented the Fiery Cross of the order."¹¹

Rev. Vertes Williams may possibly have been the founder of the Stillwater Klan just as he was the founder and, up to 1924, the only minister of the Church of Christ in Stillwater.¹² Rev.

⁹"Death Loves a Shining Mark," "Dust To Dust," CC, 12 April 1923, 1; "Oklahoma State News," SG, 13 April 1923, 1.

¹⁰"Local and Personal," Ripley Record, 5 [?] April 1923, 1 [hereafter "RR"]; "Death Loves A Shining Mark," CC, 12 April 1923, 1.

¹¹"Dust To Dust," CC, 12 April 1923, 1.

¹²Conversation with Dr. Ted Agnew (Summer, 1999). Dr. Agnew knew Dr. Beeson, a long-time teacher and administrator at Oklahoma A. & M. College in Stillwater, and Dr. Beeson told Dr. Agnew that Vertes Williams was the founder of the Klan in Stillwater. From discussions with several other people who knew Dr. Beeson it may be assumed he was generally honest and well informed.

Williams was quite popular and something of an institution. He was never the flamboyant showman like Rev. Mallory of Yale, but he did build a solid church with a large physical plant.

Early in the fateful year of 1923, notice was given that a Klan speaker from the national organization would be in Stillwater at the Isis Theater to clarify the Klan's ideas for the public. The event occurred Thursday, April 20, 1923.

With a background of six robed klansmen, and Rev. Vertes Williams and Rev. S.G. Rogers seated on the stage, Dr. Newton of Atlanta, Ga., a speaker for the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, kept a capacity audience in the Isis theater at a high pitch of interest for an hour and thirty minutes Thursday night. He talked about the purposes and accomplishments of the Klan.

The speaker was introduced as "Dr. Newton" by Mr. Williams. Mr. Rogers made an invocation.

Standing beside a flag-draped table, Dr. Newton said: "If you have come to hear blood and thunder talk, get your hats and go."

The speaker described the Klan as an organization of native-born, white Protestant Americans. He disputed charges of crimes and outrages attributed to it, described reasons for its secrecy of membership, and made an appeal for "American for Americans."¹³

One immediate point of interest was the fact that the speaker, if the report was correct, made a major point of disputing Klan vigilantism and violence. This was probably both a state and national policy to gain better publicity for the Klan. But it followed by only a few months the major incidents of possible Klan violence in the County. The report of the crowd sitting on the edge of their seats through an hour and a half speech might indicate this was essentially a Klan gathering, the act of preaching to the believers. It must be assumed the two ministers who participated were Klansmen. It is likely the "capacity" crowd was also peppered with Klansmen.

Mary Alice Foster, a member and historian of the Stillwater Disciples of Christ Church founded by Vertes Williams, stated that in the Fall of 1924 the church's board requested Rev. Williams preach two sermons on the political conditions of the times, particularly condemning statements (unnamed) attributed to the Democratic senatorial candidate and former governor, J.C. Walton. She believed the congregation was splitting over this issue and that part of the

¹³"Klan Speaker Draws Full House At Isis," SG, 20 April 1923, 5. This is reprinted in full. The Stillwater Advance Democrat did not carry anything on the meeting, it being nominally allied with the Governor and probably not wanting to publicize Walton's foe. No other County paper mentioned the meeting.

controversy was about the Klan. The following September, Rev. Williams suddenly announced he was retiring. He cited personal reasons but made an oblique reference to controversy in the church.¹⁴ If there was controversy and Rev. Williams became a center of it, it would not only be a case of Klan affiliation possibly hurting a man but, if that was the case, an indicator of the opposition to the Klan that did exist in the county.

It should be expected that leadership in the Klan was held by rather prominent local men. Although our list of known Klansmen is limited and anecdotal, it gives support to the contention of this study that the Klan was heavily populated with businessmen and professionals.¹⁵ And the fact that all of these men about whom we have information are townsmen reinforces the claim that the Klan in Payne County was largely an urban movement.

The Klan's Public Face

Klan activities in Payne County are certainly not all known at this time and possibly will never be known. Virtually all the known activities discussed in this study were mined from the newspapers of the county during the era.

The Klan wanted publicity. That publicity seemingly was selectively aimed at recruitment and the shaping of the public image of the organization. Always part of the Klan's power was that its existence and the activity of the Klan stimulated the curiosity of the non-Klan public. That gave power to the Klan to expose itself to the public when it wished in the format it desired. The Klan's public events were consistently planned, solemn, militant, disciplined, and great spectacle. In Payne County, with two papers in two cities, and three other papers besides, all clustered in the eastern half of the County and many sitting in oil field towns, the Klan knew that any overt act would be reported. If the Cushing Citizen rarely mentioned the local Klan despite the rather

¹⁴Conversation with Mary Alice Foster (c. July, 1998); Ms. Foster provided the following: "Minutes of the Board of the Christian Church, Stillwater, Oklahoma" (October 5, 1924); "Minutes of special committee of Board of the Christian Church of Stillwater, Oklahoma" (October, 1924); "Vertes Williams Will Resign As Church Head," SG, September 1925, 1.

¹⁵Newsom agreed with the claim the Klan was dominated by businessmen. "In Drumright, Oilton, Cushing, Shamrock, and Bristow, the KKK membership included leading business and professional men, school men, and public officials, in addition to many oil field workers. It was, in modern-day terminology, the 'in thing' to do." See Newsom, Drumright, 107.

reactionary editor of that paper, the Ripley Record, the smallest paper in the county, constantly reported on Klan activities throughout the county and in neighboring counties because its readers seemed to have an insatiable curiosity about the Klan. The Perkins Journal largely ignored the Klan and Andrew Show was the only editor to publicly reject the Klan, but it stopped publication after its long-time editor sold it in the fall of 1922.¹⁶ The other county editors included some coverage of the Klan. It must be assumed that most public Klan activity in the county did get reported by the editors or by their rural correspondents.

The Klan's great advantage in shaping its image was its secrecy. The Klan chose what it would reveal and how it would appear. The Klan's public events were consistently planned, solemn, militant, disciplined, and great spectacle -- with an eye to publicity, ironically.

The Klan's self-imposed anonymity limited what the Klan could do, but secrecy also worked in the Klan's favor. It is easy to image that the anonymity of the hood and the military display of the Klan created a sense of menace, the implicit threat, which was probably the most distinctive and universal reaction to the Klan by those not in it. Silent, disciplined, anonymous marching men, be it in a church or on a street, evoked a sense of latent power. The anonymous garments also made the Klan seem classless, like a fraternity but unlike the new service clubs which were ascending to the power. Those service clubs, which held great influence in communities around the nation during the coming century, were strongly identified with a class, the business and professional men. The seeming classlessness of the Klan helped bolster the Klan's claim that they served no special group, and that Klansmen were for America and were like America. They promoted an image of radical democracy at the same time as it was, in fact, probably the most controlled organization in the county: military hierarchy and discipline wrapped in the garments of Christian fraternalism.

¹⁶Whewey! Don't hand us any Ku Klux-Klan [sic] in Perkins. We might stand que, but please don't klan any klux. Here's what our [print] devil says: 'How would you look strung up on a hook, with a sack pulled over you bean? Don't klan us any klans nor 'ku' us any beans, they're stuff that always looks mean.' See Perkins Journal, 7 October 1921, 8 [hereafter "P.J"]. Note that this obscure recitation fits the editor's penchant for breaking into poetry, and it comes before any formal announcement of the Klan in the County. The editor of the Stillwater Advance Democrat also had misgivings about the Klan: "Summing up, the principal objection to the invisible empire seems to be that it is too visible." See SAD, 25 October, 1923, 2.

But the garb of anonymity also posed problems for the Klan. The apparel was not well suited to activities beyond marching and participating in rituals. The robes would have been hot and burdensome, especially in the summer months, something to be worn for an hour for a parade (and all such parades were done at night for effect, when it was, coincidentally, also cooler) or for brief periods when a church needed to be visited. Even driving a car in a robe could be difficult due to the large cuffs and many levers and gears within cars of the era: at the funeral in Stillwater in 1922 of Ross Lyndon Wiley, the driver of the car, Mr. Peery, was the only one not in robes.¹⁷

The attire also excluded the Klan from large areas of social and civic activities, this in an era when such activities were frequent. The Klan could not help clean-up parks or do other voluntary civic activities as a group since physical activity in the robes and hood was really not feasible. This was particularly true in summer, the very time many of these outdoor civic projects took place. Raking leaves in a park with non-Klansmen whom you might know would have likely given away a Klansman's identity. Despite this inability to participate in these normal activities for civic-minded organizations, the Klan wanted anonymity and almost always kept a distance between robed Klansmen and their viewing public. It was part of their mystique.

They could not be represented in Chambers of Commerce, or in the service clubs or, really, before the city and county governments as a group. It is striking, in fact, that with all their visits to churches and funerals, and all their parades, there is no reported incident in the County in which a Klansman went to a city council meeting, a civic club meeting, a County Commissioners meeting, or any other public civic forum other than those they marched in.¹⁸ That meant that discussions of major issues, such as roads, city beautification, coping with automobiles, planning public functions and celebrations, and more, were done without the official Klan input and

¹⁷"7 Klansmen Put Cross on Casket In Church," SG, 8 September 1922, 1. But it was likely that Klansmen could drive in robes: note the many cars of Klansmen reported at the John Foster funeral.

¹⁸I know of no reports in the state wherein Klansmen or the Klan organization came to such meetings. They strictly limited their visits to churches, where they could keep a distance from the audience, and outdoor events such as parades and naturalizations, places which, again, there was a distance from the crowds. The Klan characteristically liked to control their public occasions.

without the resulting publicity for the Klan. That did not mean that the Klan, through its members, did not participate: It simply meant that the Klan itself could not openly participate or garner any credit for its efforts. The one exception to this was the benevolence campaigns ("Good Fellows") in 1923 in Yale, and similar campaigns in other cities. But even there the Klan was only reported giving and delivering goods. The Klan was not noted attending meetings or even mingling with people who also worked on the project.

In rural areas, the Klan could not respond to the economic difficulties of the time. The Klan never appeared at any event in any purely rural community. The Klan never sponsored any event for farmers or rural people specifically, though rural correspondents to the newspapers report their constituents attending general Klan events, such as parades and naturalizations. The Klan could not found and operate cooperatives for farmers like the Farmer's Union, and the Klan had no economic message about agriculture during bad economic times. In fact, the Klan's economic message spoke more to support the very system that the Farmers' Union pointed to as the culprit, the middlemen in the cities.

In a society which emphasized the personal and social, such as Payne County, the Klan could not schedule social events. Service clubs were constantly having dinners, often with spouses invited. The fraternal organizations were also holding more picnics and indoor dinners for wives and families. Church groups, women's social groups, the American Legion, the W.C.T.U., all had social events including families. The only known organization which could not simply hold a picnic in a park or along the banks of the Cimarron like normal, unmasked and UN-robed, organization, was the Klan. It could not even sponsor a carnival or street activity. In fact, in all of these areas where other organizations rather casually participated, the Klan was self-excluded as an organization. The Klan was thus an organization which preached the value of traditional family morals but could not sponsor a meeting for their own families. It was an organization which existed in a time and place which valued community but which could not participate in the majority of community events.

The one way in which this anonymity worked for the Klan was that it ensured the Klan's mysteriousness. Overexposure could have killed the mystery. But, due to restrictions of anonymity and of the particular mystique it wished to project, there were only a select group of venues in which the Klan publicly appeared. These can be roughly divided into parades, church activities, and "naturalizations" (initiations). Closely related but not public in the same way were the recorded cases of benevolences. All of these public occasions were the province of the "good Klan", the positive image of the Klan which the organization wanted the project. They countered the image of the "bad Klan", the violence prone vigilante group of legend and of some current news reports.

The Public Klan

The Klan could largely control what the public knew about the Klan. Through its secrecy and the selective nature of its public appearances, the Klan could help shape public opinion about itself. Above all, the Klan wanted legitimacy within the particular community. With legitimacy came acceptance, greater membership, greater income for the organization and its recruiters, potentially greater influence within the community, and possibly a little forgiveness if its tactics were outside the norm. Public appearances also functioned to legitimize the Klan by identifying it with the established religious and fraternal institutions. They functioned to reinforce the Klan's stated messages: nativistic patriotism, alert anti-radicalism, ardent Protestant Christianity, and traditional mores and family values.

The most accessible public display of the Klan in the County were the three Klan parades. They were the events with the largest audiences. Virtually everything public that the Klan did was a form of spectacle, and parades were quite spectacular. Always held at dusk or night and occurring during the warm months, they were great, exciting attractions. People traveled miles to witness such a parade. Towns took on a festive air with the crowds. "One of the largest crowds ever assembled in Oilton [Creek County] came to the trades day this week. A night attraction was

a parade of the Drumright and Oilton Ku Klux Klan."¹⁹ Oilton was a center for Klan activities in Creek County. So was Pawnee in Pawnee County, where a parade of 500 Klansmen in October of 1922 drew residents from Ripley who stated that crowds were arriving by 2 p.m. and that it eventually numbered about 10,000. As the Ripley editor noted, "One thing seems certain a Klan parade seems to bring out the biggest crowds of most any event nowadays. It is said there were about 500 Klansmen in the parade."²⁰

The parade was a spectacle, a display. In a county with few regular amusements and which loved the spectacle of the revival or, in a more limited venue, the spectacle of fraternal rites, a Klan parade was worth about a three hour drive. That would have been the case for some Stillwater people who journeyed to Perry to see the Klan in 1922. The speed limit of 35 mph and the bad roads would have meant a rather tedious trip. "Those who went to Perry [Noble County] Saturday night to see the Ku Klux Klan parade were Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Weathers, Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur Bilyeu and Children, Miss Ruby Ham, and Miss Juanita Bilyeu."²¹

The Klan parade explicitly and implicitly reinforced the image of nativist patriotism the Klan cultivated. Flags were always prominent in Klan parades. Banners spoke to either national or local issues, and they signaled the Klan was a concerned citizenry.²² And the sight of marching men probably reminded many residents of their sons who'd marched to War a half decade before. If the Great War itself was a bittersweet memory to many, the marching ranks of soldiers going to train depot or participating in the Fourth of July still had to be a strong, probably very positive, memory. The uniformed men, marching steadfast for high-principled causes, marched by in strict ranks, eyes forward, their footfalls sounded on the streets. That description could fit either doughboys or Klan.

¹⁹"Oklahoma State News," SG, 26 May 1922, 1.

²⁰"Additional Locals," RR, 12 October 1922, 8.

²¹"News of the Neighbors," SG, 16 June 1922, n.p. It would have also taken the above-mentioned Ripleyites who traveled to Pawnee for a parade about three hours round trip.

²²Ironically, as noted below, newspapers seemed generally oblivious to the specific messages displayed on Klan banners in Klan parades.

But there were two major differences between the men of 1917 and those of 1922, the year in which all three Klan parades in Payne County occurred. As the soldiers marched you could see their humanness in their faces. When the Klan marched you could not see their faces. And the doughboys marched to cheers, the Klan to silence.²³ It is impossible to tell whether the crowds at the Klan parades thought most about the similarities or the differences.

In the county the parade was often the first appearance of the Klan. The Klan likely took Drumright earlier and more thoroughly than its symbiotic neighbor, Cushing. In Payne County, Cushing probably had the largest Klanclave. On May 24, 1922, at the second public occasion of the newly formed Klan in Cushing was a parade.

On Thursday night Cushing people and those from towns and country for miles around witnessed one of those spectacles, which have lately attracted attention elsewhere, a parade of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. And it was a sight long to be remembered.

The hour for the parade had been announced as nine o'clock, but long before that hour the crowds of spectators had reached the thousands. All along the line of march automobiles were parked. On East Broadway for blocks, on North Steele Avenue from Broadway to main, they stood two and three deep on each side of the street. On Broadway as far as Steele they were generally occupied by waiting onlookers. The sidewalks all along the line were crowded with good humored but jostling crowds. It was one of the largest crowds Cushing has seen during the last year.

Promptly at nine the trumpet sounded and the parade started on South Cleveland, turned east on Broadway to Steele, then north on Steele to main, then west and south to the point of starting. The side walks were lined with anxious spectators, who seemed to be waiting for 'something to happen.' But nothing did happen. Only the sound of footfalls upon the paving broke the silence. On and on went the white robed figures. No word was spoken, the spirit of silence prevailed even the onlookers. The quiet was impressive and awing.

Horsemen on draped horses, led the procession, then came an automobile--muffler tightly closed²⁴ -- the inmates carrying the standards of country and the order. Then came about 600 white robed pedestrians, looking neither to the right nor left, silent, marching, just marching, some bearing banners which indicated the objects of the order.

As almost every man living in Cushing was on the walk it would seem to the outsider that the paraders came from abroad. And we have been told that they did come from Oklahoma City, Guthrie, Tulsa, Drumright, Yale and elsewhere but we don't know, neither does anyone else. But it was a great and impressive scene.²⁵

²³Note the accounts of silence at Klan parades below during the Cushing parade, and in the "Preface" during the Stillwater parade. This quiet is also intriguing given the size of the reported crowds.

²⁴Many cars at this time had "cut-offs" that could be opened to allow exhaust to escape from the exhaust pipe before it reached the muffler. The reference to the mufflers being closed likely indicated the cars were run at their quietest.

²⁵"Ku Klux Parade Attracts Host of Spectators," CC, 1 June 1922, 1.

This is the most thorough description of a Klan parade. They were a group that looked “neither to the right nor left, silent, marching, just marching....” This possibly brought to the minds of the spectators the image of the soldiers past. And silent marching groups denoted discipline and, with their association with military formations, an implicit threat of violence. Notice that it is the spectacle of the event that held the Cushing editor’s attention: he noted that they held “banners which indicated the objects of the order,” but the editor did not even bother to state what “objects” were written about on the banners. As far as is known, all those spectators came only for the Klan parade: there were no other events noted on that day.²⁶

It is interesting to note the difference in tone that editor Green of the Cushing Citizen gave to a similar display in Drumright just four months before the above:

Last evening in Drumright at 8 o’clock, just as the streets were beginning to take on a festival look, folks were in fancy dress for the masquerade dance, a solemn and weird looking mass of Ku Klux carrying a fiery cross, came over the hill, paraded for a short while and departed over the hill as mysteriously as they had come.²⁷

This negative, rather mocking description of the Klan by the editor may simply be because it was prior to a big Klan display in Cushing, although you can note that the editor was inclined to believe that the display in Cushing was made up of non-Cushing people. It could also be because he somehow saw the Klan in Drumright as more menacing, a Klan that would do violent acts. It was also likely due to his town chauvinism: Cushing was better than Drumright to the editor. Editor Green displayed a bifurcated attitude towards the Klan, reporting on some Klan doings in Drumright but ignoring Klan naturalizations in Cushing. He generally seemed to ignore the Klan whenever possible. And he made no reference to either of the other two Klan parades in the County, even though both drew huge crowds: the June 30, 1922, Klan parade in Yale and the July 4, 1922, Klan parade in Stillwater.²⁸ It was likely that editor Green was too much an old Republican to feel easy with the Klan, even when that group held many of the same views.

²⁶This is nearly the only time the Cushing editor took note of a Klan event.

²⁷“Local News,” CC, 16 February 1922, 5.

²⁸It must be noted that this is an editor who held very conservative views and yet did not report on known Klan events in the town. This may be due to the fact that we have only his weekly

It is likely that some who saw Klan parades thought the participants "weird". It is likely some who saw Klan parades thought of their differences from the parades of a half-decade previous. But it is probable that most people were impressed by the martial air and discipline, by the implicit power of the marching organization. The Klan parades of 1922 were all well attended.

It is difficult to explain why big Klan parades ceased in Payne County after 1922. Some Payne Countians went to parades in other places in the coming years, but after July 4, 1922, not even a year after the Klan entered the county, there were no more Klan parades. It is possible the Klan saw parades as the best form of publicity for membership drives and that after 1922 the Klan felt secure enough in numbers to no longer need parades. It is also peculiar that only one of the three parades occurred on a holiday, the July 4 parade in Stillwater. This could be because Klansmen wanted to be with their families on holidays, or that the County Klan staggered such events so that Klansmen from the various towns could march in all three parades both to bolster the Klan spectacle and to give Klansmen the thrill of being part of a parade. But it could also indicate the patriotic and civic organizations which planned such events wanted to maintain some distance from the Klan. In 1923, after the huge crowds of 1922's celebration of the Fourth of July, the businessmen in Stillwater decided not to have any celebration at all. They gave excuses concerning their employees wishing to celebrate with their families, but it still seemed peculiar unless it was also a reaction against the prominence of the Klan in the 1922 occasion.²⁹ In any case, Klan parades allowed the Klan to state their concerns in a very public way, gave a chance for their members to show their camaraderie and discipline, and attracted huge crowds largely on the basis of the pure spectacle of the event. They were also Klan controlled events which allowed the Klan both publicity and anonymity. They were excellent publicity vehicles for the Klan.

newspaper. He also published a daily during the week (until 1923), but there seems to be no extent run of these papers. It is possible he discussed the Klan in these lost issues.

²⁹After discussions involving the Chamber of Commerce and the service organizations, they canceled any city-wide celebration citing lack of interest by farmers, a desire to spend the funds to bolster the free fair, the fact that the Chautaugua would be in town, the desire of merchants and others to close their stores "and go to the country for the holiday," and the fact that it would give other town a chance to have big Fourth. See "Call Off Plans For July 4 Celebration," SG, 15 June 1923, 1.

Klan "naturalizations", or initiations, were another grand spectacle staged by the Klan. There were several of these held in the county during the period of the hooded Klan. They occurred exclusively in Cushing and in Yale, the two largest cities in the Payne County's part of the Cushing Field. None occurred in Stillwater, which was outside the Cushing Field. This was another indication that the majority of Klan membership was in the area of the Cushing Field.³⁰

These events were solemn, full of ritual, and included a speaker. Held at night, they included robed figures moving through the darkness, kneeling figures before a cross, solemn language pledging adherence to high values, and strong speeches exhorting both initiates, Klansmen, and onlookers.. And always central to the vision was the flaming cross in the night.

Naturalizations were great spectacle and drew crowds of on-lookers. In August, 1923, the Ripley editor wrote that, "A large number from here went to Cushing last Thursday night to attend the open air naturalization meeting of the K.K.K. The speaker was pronounced by the thousands present to be among the best ever heard on such an occasion in this county." If the ever-itinerant Ripley people are any measure, people traveled some distance for these events. Besides to Cushing, Ripleyites are recorded going to Pawnee and to "Belle Isle near Oklahoma City."³¹

The best documented naturalization in Payne County was one sponsored by the Yale Klan at Twin Mounds west of the city. It was well reported because of the advance publicity for the event, and because it was the most spectacular naturalization to occur in the County. On that early October, 1922, day two "aeroplanes" advertised during the day by dropping handbills. One plane flew at night, a fiery cross glowing from its side. Possibly as many as 5,000 spectators came, though they were kept at a distance from the west mound where the events took place. Atop the west mound the Klan lit a fiery cross. The crowd, kept in the saddle between the mounds, could not hear the words of the rite or the speaker from Tulsa, but they could see the initiation. Seventy-five men were naturalized that night.³²

³⁰The early membership was probably naturalized before the Klan publicly revealed itself.

³¹"Additional Locals," RR, 16 August 1923, 8; "Local and Personal," RR, 26 July 1923, 1; "Additional Locals," RR, 12 July 1923, 8.

³²"K.K.K. Initiation," Yale Democrat, 5 October 1922, 3 [hereafter "YD"]; "Ku Klux Initiation," RR, 12 October 1922, 8.

The naturalization evoked the symbol of Christianity and used fraternal rites. It was more solemn than a parade, though virtually all public Klan events had solemnity about them. Like the fraternal rites, the naturalization physically symbolized the rebirth of the male individual into a society which claimed to an exclusively male moral order. This is exactly how Carnes interpreted the draw of the fraternities in America from about 1865 to 1920.³³ It was also a Christian tableaux, kneeling figures before a cross, a harking back to images of medieval crusading knights. And, like a parade or a religious revival, it was grand spectacle and it drew crowds.

Naturalizations came sporadically and really give no evidence about the health of the local Klan's membership. There were naturalizations in the County throughout the period of the hooded Klan, indicating they continued to draw new members. We do not know whether there were secret naturalizations, and how many men left the Klan. From the information it is impossible to determine whether the Klan was maintaining its membership.

Another aspect of the "Good Klan" was benevolence. In Stillwater there was no record of the Klan giving benevolences, one of the many signs that the Klancave there never really took off. Benevolence could be given either to individual families or as part of a larger, city-wide fundraising effort for the relief of the poor.

Ripley provided examples of the former. An illness in the family of Mr. W.V. Hook, a drayman, led to great hardship despite his hard work. Klan 97 Realm of Oklahoma decided to help. They contributed \$20 to the family and then alerted the Red Cross. That latter organization gave "a liberal contribution of clothing". The Ripley paper, always sympathetic to the Klan, commented on this:

³³Mark C. Carnes, Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989): 119-22, 125. "In previous chapters I analyzed fraternal ritual as an implicit though coherent theology, arguing that, in contrast to a 'feminized Protestantism,' the rituals emphasized man's inherent deficiencies, offered the transformatory magic of a sudden and emotional conversion, and evoked an impersonal and foreboding deity." "This developmental path to religious meaning was identical in structure to the emotional quest for masculine adulthood.... After (1) the initiate was shown to be innately sinful; he (2) commenced a difficult pilgrimage for religious truth; which (3) culminated, through a wrenching conversion experience, in his death; and thus (4) led him to an understanding of a distant God." Ibid., 126.

From what we have heard, this assistance of the Klan was simply a regular feature made in accordance with an inquiry made at each meeting regarding persons who are sick or in distress. It is said that this Klan maintains a regular fund for this purpose and during the past year had contributed nearly \$800 for the relief of the poor and distressed in this section of the county.

In a separate letter to the Ripley Record is a card of thanks from Mr. and Mrs. Hook for the important contribution during their time of need at the "sickness of our little baby."³⁴

The Klan also aided larger drives. In the Christmas season all the towns mounted charity drives. The brand new Cushing Klan was prominent in their town's fund in 1921. The Benevolent Society reported their goal to be \$1,000 for the year and declared they had made \$799.22. The largest donors, in order, were Rotary (\$200), the Klan (\$128), the Masons (\$100), Christian Church (\$66.55), American Legion (\$50), Lions Club (\$50), Eastern Star (\$50), the Baptist Church (\$46.35), the Roman Catholic Church (\$45), the Christian Sunday School (\$12), the Methodists (\$11.80), and the American Legion Auxiliary (\$10).³⁵ It is a rather interesting list. The size of the Klan donation might denote the enthusiasm of men in a new organization. But it probably indicated the Klan consciously tried to raise a large contribution for the publicity. In 1922 there were no Klan donations mentioned, and in 1923 there was no listing for the Benevolent Society around Christmas time, while there was a note that both the Hypatia Club and the Lions were making certain the poor had some relief. The Klan was not mentioned as donating anything. This could have been due to some strategic thinking on the part of the Klan or simply the oversight of the newspaper. It could also have been due to the fact that John Foster, head of the Cushing Klan and member of the Board of the Benevolent Society, had been sick through much of 1922 and had died in 1923.

A somewhat different pattern was followed in Yale. In the 1921 Christmas season, when the Klan first announced itself to the community with an ad, it also made a large donation to the "Good Fellowship Fund". The Klan gift was \$100, while the Yale Garage and the Sun Oil

³⁴"A K.K.K. Donation," and "Card of Thanks," RR, 9 August 1923, 8. For a similar donation, simply another of several noted in the paper, see: "Additional Locals," RR, 20 December 1923, 8; "Yale Ku Klux Assisted Distressed Family," YD, 28 September 1922, 7.

³⁵"The Benevolent Society Quota Almost Reached," CC, 5 January 1922, 1; "Benevolent Society To Do New Work," CC, 9 March 1922, 1.

Company each gave \$25 and the American Legion \$10.³⁶ In 1922 the Klan gave no recorded donations in Yale, just as in Cushing.³⁷ But in Yale that changed during the tumultuous year of 1923. During that Christmas season the Yale Klan distributed 98 baskets of food, two each to 49 families.

Each family was provided in the baskets with a peck of potatoes, a peck of apples, a peck of turnips, sugar, coffee, flour, cornmeal, lard, canned tomatoes, canned corn, rolled oats, a large head of cabbage, onions, bacon, bread, chicken, celery, cranberries, oranges and candy. The Klan also furnished clothing where it was needed and also distributed the toys to each child in the families, these being furnished by the Good Fellows.

This was a very extensive benevolence, far more than any other group that year.

A detailed report of the total amount collected and promised has not yet been completed, but unofficially it is reported that it is approximately \$720 in cash; just a few dollars less than the total of the last year, out of which last year came the expense of the baskets, the tree and other things which this year a greater portion was done away with by the generosity of the Ku Klux Klan and the church organizations.³⁸

The Yale Klan exhibited all the elements of benevolent Klandom. It gave to families and it gave to community efforts. In 1921, it gave a good amount as a way to announce its presence. In 1922, after a controversial election but in a period of relative political quiet, the Klan gave nothing as far as the records we have. In 1923, after a year that saw the Klan accused of innumerable floggings and acts of violence in the state, martial law imposed all over the state, a governor impeached and convicted, and at a time when both a de-hooding law and a law requiring exposure of roll books was being debated in the state legislature, the Klan gave at record levels in Yale. The sporadic nature of their Christmas giving in both Yale and Cushing seemed to confirm that Klan giving, as with all public Klan activities, was planned.

At the time, cynicism about Klan motives and the function of benevolences in the Klan's scheme were not evident in the County press. The Ripley Record noted that:

³⁶"Good Fellowship Fund Still Growing," YD, 14 December 1921, 1; "Undesirables Given Warning By The Ku Klux Klan," YD, 16 December 1921, 1.

³⁷"Good Fellows Coming Strong," YD, 21 December 1922, 7.

³⁸"Happy On Christmas," YD, 27 December 1923, 1.

It is said that the K.K.K. in one of the towns of this county has paid out about \$700 in the last six months for the help of the poor and needy and the sick of such town. This money has been given too, without regard to the sentiments of the recipients on religion, politics or any other question. In some instances a few dollars have been given for the benefit of the churches but this has been criticized by the prejudiced, while the first mentioned benefactions, if heard of at all are not mentioned by the critics.³⁹

In her excellent book on the Klan in Athens, Georgia, Nancy MacLean linked charitable giving to a broader ideology in the national Klan against socialism. The Klan preferred the older traditions of private charity not only because of the example of the long-established fraternal organizations, but also because the Klan opposed public welfare. They gave to the "worthy" poor and did so in their robes. Their giving fit an ideology emphasizing "private paternalism in an organic, hierarchical social order" which opposed reformers and radicals who urged entitlements for the poor.⁴⁰ This argument fits with her nuanced but ideological interpretation of the national and Athens Klans. But it does not seem to fully fit with the Klan in Payne County. There was likely some element of anti-radical thinking in their giving, but several things seem more apparent in the Payne County giving. Klan giving gave legitimacy to the Klan by letting that organization associate with the major legitimate organizations in town. This was particularly underscored by the Klan's gifts in 1921 when it was new to the county. Secondly, such giving did fit into the existing ideology of the county and of the Klan: legitimate organizations were in part legitimate because they gave to worthy civic projects. But the timing of the Yale Klan's example seemed to coincide with periods when the Klan most needed positive publicity. This did not explain the absence of giving during some years by the Cushing Klan nor the absence of public giving by the Stillwater Klan. The simplest way to explain this is that the Klan viewed benevolences as a functional instrument for good publicity and legitimacy at least as much as a moral obligation.

Another major activity of the public Klan was the church visit. The Klan self-identified as a Protestant Christian fraternity. It never identified itself specifically with any denomination. In

³⁹"It is said....," RR, 12 July 1923, 8.

⁴⁰Nancy MacLean, Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994): 83-4.

Payne County it publicly associated with only three denominations: Southern Baptist, Methodist, and Disciples of Christ (Church of Christ). In Payne County most visits were with Church of Christ and Methodist congregations, the denominations with the largest memberships. There were no recorded visits to Presbyterian or Episcopal churches, nor with Evangelical Brethren, Pentecostals, or any other denomination from the low church end of the spectrum. Of the three ministers who were members of the Klan, Rev. Vertes Williams (Stillwater) and Rev. Bert Solomon (Cushing) were Disciples of Christ, and Rev. S.G. Rogers (Stillwater) was Methodist. It can be assumed that churches visited by Klan were served by ministers sympathetic to the Klan or members of the Klan.

The visits to church functions took several forms. The most prevalent was the visit to a church service. There were also several funerals at which the Klan appeared to salute a fallen Klansman, one visit to a Sunday School class, and one visit to a revival service. In all but the visit to the Sunday school class, the Klan acted rather formally.

The standard church service visit was a well timed affair. Here are two accounts of the same visit in December, 1922.

About fifteen robed and masked representatives of the fiery cross called at the Methodist Church [in Ingalls] and left a donation of \$100.

This account, from the Stillwater Advance Democrat, was followed in the next issue with a note from the Ingalls correspondent: "The Methodist Church has purchased a new piano." The Ripley Record gave a bigger account in several ways.

While Rev. Nail was conducting his regular services at the Methodist Church at Ingalls last Sunday evening, the Church was visited by about thirty citizens of the Invisible Empire. When they had filed in, one of the members delivered a short address after which he presented the pastor with an envelope. This contained the endorsement of the good work being done by the Church and the best wishes of the Klan for future betterment.

To this note was pinned a \$100 bill given by the visitors to the Pastor and the Church.⁴¹

⁴¹"Of Interest to Rural Readers," Stillwater Advance Democrat, 28 December 1922, 3 [hereafter "SAD"]; "Of Interest to Rural Readers," SAD, 4 January 1923, 3; "Ku Klux Visits Ingalls," RR, 21 December 1922, 8.

The silent entrance, the brief pronouncement, the envelope with note and money, the silent exit: that was the formula for the church service visit.

The fullest description of such a visit was that of the Klan to the Methodist "Tabernacle" in Yale in June, 1922. The Rev. D.C. Mallory, the flamboyant man who was often published in the Yale Democrat (whose editor seemed to have at least attended some of the events), began discussing the Klan in December, 1921, immediately after the Klan placed its famous ad in the papers of Yale. In the December 28, 1921, paper the editor discussed the previous Sunday's services. The evening service was when Rev. Mallory always talked about current concerns, and on this evening his topic was quite current.

At Night a message was delivered on "What is 100 per cent Americanism." The Church was filled with the discussion of whether we need the Ku Klux Klan here in Yale was [sic] discussed for near an hour while one could hear a pin drop any time during the service. The people were tremendously interested in the discussion. The fact of Americanism was thoroughly discussed. The meaning of the word was given and the nations history developed around that word. It was frankly declared that Americanism means no more and no less than that pure allegiance to the doctrines of the United States, its laws, customs and usages, which distinguish the real American from all others, some of whom may be living in America but are not of America. It was then shown that anyone who did not meet these requirements can not rightly be called an American who is one hundred per cent, even though he was born in this country and grown to manhood here. The speaker listed Unbelievers in God, Bootleggers, Gamblers, ussers, Immoral Libertines, male and female, tinhorns and all undesirables as failing to grade one hundred per cent. He took time to express himself with reference to some of the prevailing modes of dress and traced the connection of these things with the moral condition of the city. He declared that some found fault with his attacks upon the manner of dressing or rather undressing of the women and girls, and suggested that he jump on the men and boys awhile. To this the reply was made that when the men and boys got to dressing like the workmen and girls, it would pay to come out to hear what he had to say.⁴²

But the Reverend did not stop there: It seemed a topic he could work-over again. On Sunday, December 31, 1921, he spoke about the Klan. Here is Mallory writing in the paper.

Sunday night witnessed a tremendous crowd. All the space available and the seats were occupied. Scores of person who had never been in the habit of attending church services were present and the way they opened up and sang showed that they were really enjoying themselves. The subject "The Ku Klux Klan, from the viewpoint of an outsider" was presented and made perfectly clear that if the Klan intends to live up to the notice recently published in the Yale Democrat, that all decent and law abiding citizens would necessarily find time to say a good word for any effort made to clean up the community.

⁴²"Methodist Church Notes," YD, 28 December 1921, 1;

A discussion of the activities of Klan as presented from time to time in the daily papers was clear and it was found that in every case where they had tried corrective measure, that it was clear that the object of their efforts was not a desirable citizen, but one who had been preying upon the decent citizenship for his own illegal gain. It was also shown that the institution of this organization in the community has resulted in good. That they are seemingly benevolent and desirous of seeing that the law is rigidly enforced.

However, the law will be enforced only as the public conscience is aroused to see the need. There is no use to condemn the officers of the city and the police department so long as the people in general do not care whether the law is observed in many particulars or not. Therefore the first move should be along the line of concerted effort to arouse the public conscience in order that unlawful and viscous practices in this community might be clearly disclosed and dealt with accordingly. The minister at the Tabernacle Church wants it clearly understood that when the public does get its eyes open that he believes that they will act with speed and a new day will be upon us. If the Klan means to carry out any such program as this every good man is for them.⁴³

The references to "corrective measures" is unclear: Were these taken in Yale, or were the newspapers reporting on them from elsewhere? In either case, the Rev. Mr. Mallory's approval of the Klan, on the front page of the paper, had to help make the Klan a legitimate organization to many Yalites.

The outspoken Reverend continued discussing the morals of every-day life in the 1920s.

The culmination came on the first Sunday of July, 1922.

Sunday night Rev. D.C. Mallory preached to a full house on the subject "Turning the Ku Klux Klan Inside Out" or "What Is on the Other Side of the Fiery Cross."

During the sermon ten men dressed in the robes of the Ku Klux Klan entered the church formed themselves in front of the alter, asked that the minister pray for them, handed him a letter and quietly walked out of the tabernacle.

When Rev. Mallory opened the letter he found fifty dollars in currency with the following communication:

Yale, Oklahoma, July 2, 1922

Rev. D.C. Mallory,
Methodist Minister,
Yale, Oklahoma.

Dr. Mr. Mallory:-

Having observed your work among the people of this city during the time you have been minister of the Methodist Church, and having observed your activities among the men of the community and in various ways, and having heard some of your expressions in reference to the Ku Klux Klan we are desirous of saying to you that we are back of you to a man. You are expressing for us as no other minister of the city has done, those principles upon which we have organized to save this land of ours for ONE HUNDRED PER CENT AMERICANS. We are more than three hundred strong in this city, and within our ranks will be found the most respected and honored men. Men who put the principles of this organization above every other consideration and who are willing to back these ideals with their life blood.

Without violating our most solemn and sacred oaths we desire to say to you that we believe in the--

Tenets of the Christian Religion.

⁴³"Methodist Church Notes," YD, 2 January 1922, 1.

Eternal Supremacy of the White Race.
 Protection of our pure womanhood.
 Charity and helpfulness for unfortunate women and girls who have been the
 victims of some scoundrel.
 Just laws and liberty.
 America for Americans.
 Upholding the constitution of the United States.
 Separation of Church and State.
 Freedom of Speech and Press.
 Law and Order.
 Full understanding between capital and labor with due consideration for dealing
 with foreign labor agitators.
 Prevention of fires and destruction of property by lawless element[s].
 Our motto is NOT for self but for others. To these things we have given ourselves
 without reserve. No honest man need fear us. We know the conditions in our community
 and will take care of them.
 We appreciate hearing a red-blooded man of God speak. We wish more of our
 preachers were willing to take time to investigate our claims and purposes, and as
 evidence of our appreciation we enclose you herewith the sum of fifty dollars.
 We wish again to assure you of our unqualified support.
 Yours, Non Silba Sed Anther, Klan No. 85, Realm of Oklahoma,
 Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.⁴⁴

It must be noted that Rev. Mallory never stated he was a Klansman and, in fact, in
 December of 1921, he had claimed he was an outsider. It was not that unusual for a minister to
 state he was a Klansman. For example, the minister in Coyle's Christian Church just across the
 Cimarron in Logan County preached a "Why I am a Klansman" sermon.⁴⁵

As to the Rev. Mallory, we don't know his fate. He left Yale in late-1923 under a cloud.
 His last writings in the paper was a letter attacking those who implied he had had a sexual liaison
 with a young woman in the church, and the rumors that his wife was asking for divorce. By then
 he had left the parish without fanfare. His wife, but not the Reverend, was later noted moving to
 Tulsa to live for a while with a relative.⁴⁶

⁴⁴"Ku Klux Klan Visits Methodist Church," YD, 6 July 1922, 1.

⁴⁵"A Coyle minister admitted in a sermon Sunday night that he was a member of the Ku
 Klux Klan. What a shock it must have been for those who have been lead to believe that all
 Klansmen are cutthroats, thieves and floggers." That was from a paper which had been the most
 supportive of Walton's governorship through the first half year of his term. "Editorial Chaff," SAD,
 18 October 1923, 2.

⁴⁶"Rev. Mallory Leaving Us," YD, 27 February 1923, 4; "An Open Letter," "The
 Scandal," YD, 22 March 1923, 4,6; "Mrs. D.C. Mallory....," YD, 29 March 1923, 12. The editor, a
 long-time supporter of the Reverend, placed these notes within the paper rather than on the first
 page, as he often had placed Rev. Mallory's ramblings, and the editor then attacked rumor
 mongers.

The visit to Rev. Mallory's service was very revealing. The letter was the most extensive such letter recorded and it is the best document concerning the local Klan's concerns. This visit can, in fact, be seen as simply a recruiting visit for the Klan: Great spectacle, attractive causes for the countians at this time, all in the enfolding arms--and legitimacy--of a large Protestant church.

In the message there was no mention of Catholics or Jews. The omission the Roman Church adds weight to the contention that the Catholics were a protected minority in the County. Although Christianity was mentioned, many Klansman did not count Roman Catholics as Christians. On the other hand, separation of church and state was an anti-Catholic stance of the Klan and other conservative protestant groups to counter a supposed conspiracy by Catholics to get public support for parochial schools. There was at least one Catholic school in the county (in Stillwater). But there was no direct threat to Roman Catholics from the Payne County Klan despite that Church being probably the favorite target of the national Klan.

It must also be mentioned that although there was a reference to law and order, there was nothing specific about prohibition. There were no reported cases in Payne County of the Klan actively attacking any crimes, prohibition included.

If the first third of the tenets were rather church related, and the middle section was filled with generalities about patriotism, the last three points seemed to be the real focus. By emphasizing labor agitation and raising the usual explanation for such agitation, foreign radicals, this was a call to anti-foreigner feelings and a defense of Americanism. This was also a bow to the business community since it legitimized their sometimes harsh actions in fighting labor stoppages and crushing unions during the previous decade. The enemy of the oil field owners had been the IWW, an organization always branded as foreign, socialist or communist. This inexact labeling was then used in the 1922 election to cover the Farmer Labor Reconstruction League and Democratic candidate Walton who had advisors sometimes identified as socialist.

The intermixing of all these topics in a religious context, much like what the Rev. Mallory did in his well-publicized Sunday evening services, was typical of how the umbrella of conservative protestant Christianity was stretched to cover patriotism and even business

capitalism. The American Legion was not the only flag-waving group: Rotary was not the only way to legitimize business interests and promote their perceived well-being.

The first formal appearance of the Klan in Cushing was also the only visit to a revival, the sole visit to a Baptist Church, and the only one to Sunday School class. The Klan visited a revival in Cushing, then marched across the street and visited a Thursday evening event held by a Baptist teenage Sunday School class.

Thursday night about sixty Ku Klux Klansmen, from somewhere, fully robed and hooded, marched to the Methodist Church, where revivals are being held. They entered the church just as the prayer was being begun and stood in aisles at attention during its delivery. At the close of the prayer an envelope in which was an enclosure containing a statement of the principles of the order and a sum of money was handed up to the platform.

The enclosure was read and the evangelist [Rev. Mathias] made a short talk after which the white robed visitors quietly marched out.

They next visited the basement of the Baptist church where two Sunday School Teachers were entertaining their classes and presented them with a sum of money with this statement: "We have heard of your good work and wish to give you every encouragement. You are teaching what we stand for." They marched out of the basement in a quiet orderly manner.

The whole affair was carried out in a quiet and dignified manner. However one hears amusing comments especially as to where the visitors came from. One lady is sure she recognized Drumright people. But wherever they hailed from the affair was a neat one and neatly executed.⁴⁷

The Cushing Citizen editor, a man seemingly loathe to report on the Klan, followed that article with a straight account of the success of Rev. Mathias's on-going revival, how good Mr. Armstrong's singing was, a list of the topics for coming week's evening sermons, but no mention of the Klan visit. It was left to the youngsters to make the last comment in a letter to the paper.

We the 15-year-old boys and girls of the Baptist Sunday School with our teachers wish to thank the members of the Ku Klux Klan for their visit and also the gifts presented to us on Thursday evening. Also for making known to us the fact that we have their approval and encouragement in our effort toward making better American citizens of the Cushing boys and girls.

Mrs. George Laughlin and Miss Lillian Jeter, Teachers."⁴⁸

⁴⁷"The Ku Klux Klan Attend The Revival," CC, 30 March 1922, 1.

⁴⁸"The Ku Klux Klan Attend The Revival," CC, 30 March 1922, 1; *Ibid.* The editor, Mr. Green, was older and an independent reactionary who seemed to dislike the Klan though he never declared pro or con. It is interesting that two issues later he ran a syndicated story out of Weatherford, Texas, quoting a Federal Judge, James C. Wilson, who claimed the Klan was "nothing more than a form of anarchism...." according to the news account. The Judge then

Again there was the intermingling of religion and patriotism, indicative of the rather broad acceptance of the Klan as Christian fraternal and benevolent association. This was another case where the Klan message seemed lost in the spectacle and speculations: Editor Green never stated the contents of the Klan's message to either group, and in the revival speculation about the origins of the Klansmen, not the message, seemed to occupy the congregation. Throughout the Klan orchestrated the event: even the editor, who started the account in a rather off-hand manner ("sixty Klansmen, from somewhere") ended it by grudgingly admitting it was neatly done.

Through these events at church services the Klan obtained several benefits. They controlled the situation and their anonymity: they retained and reinforced their aura of mystery. They suddenly and silently appeared, and throughout the viewer could speculate about their identity but never quite know for sure. They got a free, impressive delivery system for their message. These occasions had to have impressed the viewers: They were high spectacle and good publicity.

But the main benefit for the Klan was the association of the hooded order with the county's largest symbol of legitimacy, the institutional church. Into this normally inviolable space came another group, and no fear was shown by the congregation. They came into the space silently, respectfully. They affirmed with words and gift their support of the established church. And by their very presence in that space, by their very acceptance by those gathered, they were given the grace of legitimacy within a larger county community which still held the established church to be the legitimate voice of values.

The other religious occasion for the Klan's appearance was at funerals. Close scrutiny of obituaries in the papers that regularly carried them has produced only four funerals of Klansmen.

Almost the oldest of the group who died was Mr. John Foster, 58 year cashier of the First National Bank of Cushing and an important man in the community. "Mr. Foster was one of the really public spirited men of Cushing," according to editor Green. His was by far the most

proposed some remedies, ways of fighting the Klan. ("Federal Judge Says That If Allowed Klan Will Overrun Government," CC, 12 April 1922, 2.

elaborate of all the funerals in the County in the period of the hooded Klan. It was presided over by a minister, himself a Klansman, who would die about a year later in a car wreck, Rev. Bert Salmon of the Church of Christ.

Before the services began the Masonic orders, Knight Templars, Blue Lodge and DeMolay order, paraded the street on their way to the ceremonies and made a very impressive appearance. Later, about 300 members of the Ku Klux Klan, of which the deceased was the chief official, in hood and gown perfect silence, also marched through the street on their way to drop the red rose into the grave of their loved brother. This parade was a most impressive one.

The Klan participated at the graveside. It also sent an "...immense cross of red roses, which...represented the Fiery Cross of the order."⁴⁹ The death covered virtually the entire first page of the Cushing Citizen.

Probably more typical were the seven Klansmen who entered the Stillwater Christian Church at the funeral of Ross Lyndon Wiley. Coming down a side aisle, they "...stopped facing the casket, stood with uplifted left hands while one placed a large cross of red flowers on it, then marched out the side aisle. The audience sat silent." The short news article in the Stillwater Gazette said nothing about the deceased except his name and instead focused on the Klansmen. "The men came to the church in a closed livery car driven by Fred Peery. They approached from the north, on Husband street, and departed to the southward after leaving the church."⁵⁰ Again, the Klan was spectacle and outshone mundane news about the deceased at a funeral.

Funerals were wonderful occasions for the Klan in its search for legitimacy. Funerals anointed the Klan with two blessings. First, the Klan would again be within the space of the established church. But it would also be showing that male camaraderie that people identified positively with the fraternities, fraternities which still thrive in relative isolation of Payne County, Oklahoma.

⁴⁹"Dust To Dust," CC, 12 April 1923, 1.

⁵⁰"7 Clansmen Put Cross On Casket In Church," SG, 8 September 1922, 1.

The Klan openly mimicked the fraternal organizations at funerals in another way. It was quite common in the county in the early 1920s to find the Masons or the Odd Fellows in charge of a funeral conducted at a particular church by a local minister. The Klan took on those trappings when they paraded by the coffins of their fellow Klansmen and erected giant flaming red floral tributes.

They carried this fraternal approach further. In June, 1923, W.M. Davis died. He was a member of the Yale Klan. He was killed when a train hit his car in Pawnee and he lived, at the time, in Kaw City. The Klan put a notice in the paper in the form of a resolution, listed below above a similar resolution put out by the Masons.

Whereas: Almighty God has seen fit in His infinite wisdom, to remove from this earthly home our friend and fellow clansman, W.M. Davis, to that invisible Empire above,
And Whereas; Our Klanclaves have been bereft of his esteemed presence and kindly advice, his home of a living husband and father and the community of a worthy and upright citizen;

Therefore, Be It Resolved; That Yale Klan No. 85 of the Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, extend to his family our heart felt sympathy in this their hour of bereavement and direct them to the Living Christ, who is a Klansman's criterion of character, and who will lead them to a blessed immortality.

Be it Further Resolved; That the charter be draped for thirty days and that a copy of these resolutions be spread on the minutes of the Klan, a copy mailed to the family and a copy sent to each of the newspapers of Yale for publication.

Whereas: The Great Architect of the Universe has seen fit, in his infinite love and mercy, to call from this earthly habitation, our friend and brother, Brother William M. Davis, to the communion and fellowship of the Grand Lodge on High,

And Whereas; Our logderoom has been bereft of his kind presence and esteemed council, his home of a loving husband and fatherland the community of a worthy and upright citizen.

Therefore Be It Resolved; That Yale Lodge No. 312, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, extend to his family our heartfelt sympathy in this, their hour of bereavement, and direct them to that Great Light which guides all who place their trust therein to a blessed immortality.

Be it Further Resolved: That the charter be draped for thirty days and a copy of this resolution be spread on the minutes of the lodge, a copy be given the bereaved family and a copy to each of the newspapers of Yale for publication.⁵¹

The Klan placed itself as a fraternal organization outwardly, but one with a few quirks. The coincidence of the language would make a reader think the same man wrote them, but in fact this was a formulaic response of Masons, Eastern Star, Odd Fellows, and other fraternities, which the Klan adopted.

⁵¹"Resolutions," YD, 7 June 1923, 1; "Resolutions," YD, 21 June 1923, 7.

To gain acceptance in a community an organization had to gain legitimacy within the values of that community. Legitimacy, if achieved, helped the organization to grow and gain a place alongside other institutions of the community. Legitimacy, if achieved, could partially make up for actions by the Klan, locally or nationally, that looked too aggressive to some citizens. Legitimacy might make people turn a blind eye or wink at a few transgressions. The "Good Klan" could thus help protect the "Bad Klan."

Violence

The Klan's reputation for violence most distinguished it from any other public organization in the County. This reputation was won with numerous national stories about violence associated with the Klan. It was also implicit in its costuming, military style, and its frequently harsh rhetoric. The Klan likened itself to militant evangelical Protestant Christianity armed, literally "Onward Christian Soldiers."

Furthering this reputation for violence was Governor Walton's ill-considered assault on violence in general, and the Klan in particular, in 1923. This assault, which ultimately led to the Governor's impeachment, was due to a failed legislative program and the growing restiveness of the various elements of the coalition which felt it had put the Governor in office.⁵²

However, there were several problems with the automatic assumption that the Klan was associated with various violent acts. First, having a masked order with a reputation for violence gave some license to non-Klansmen to carry out crimes and have them attributed to the Klan.⁵³ It also meant that Klan members who committed violent acts could claim the Klan was not involved. MacLean, with access to some minutes of meetings of the Klan, claimed such attacks were planned by the Athens, Georgia, Klan but that the Klan purposely distanced itself from the actual event. She also took to task what she perceived to be an element in the current revisionist

⁵²Sheldon Neuringer, "Governor Walton's War on the Ku Klux Klan: An Episode in Oklahoma History, 1923-24," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 45 (Summer, 1967): 153-79.

⁵³The editor of the *Advance Democrat* commented: "The Ku Klux Klan must have a considerable array of uniforms of different kinds judging from press reports of outrages alleged to have been committed by them." See "Editorial Chaff," *SAD*, 1 February 1923, 2.

argument that downplayed the Klan's violence.⁵⁴ Whatever the exact culpability of the Klan, these situations created confusion on the part of the public and likely led to attacks attributed to the Klan which were not Klan doing. It may also have attributed some attacks to individuals which actually were planned by the Klan.⁵⁵

The Oklahoma Klan cut back on its violence by 1923 after it had attained a huge membership. Grand Dragon Jewett of Oklahoma backed the stripped down anti-Klan bill that replaced the very severe Anglin Bill after the impeachment of Governor Walton. Jewett had arranged to have removed some severe punishments for Klan intimidation and the provisions requiring the revelation of rolls. He saved the last segment of the bill, de-hooding, because he wanted the Klan to be able to prove its innocence in attacks. In this, Jewett's desires corresponded to those of the legislative solons.⁵⁶

In Payne County there was no single act of violence which could be positively attributed to the Klan, showing that Klan violence is hard to prove.⁵⁷ There was the cross-burning in Ripley reported by Alvan Mitchell in Little Fats and Tom, but it is hard to verify.⁵⁸

There was at least one documented act of violence which was almost assuredly the Payne County Klan's doing, and one ambiguous case. The case of the whipping of Walter

⁵⁴McLean, Mask of Chivalry, 165-70.

⁵⁵For example, in the court proceedings for the Walter Mathews whipping, the defense seemed to downplay connections to the Klan and hold up, instead, the character of the accused and the alibis they produced. It is still telling that of Walton's three "friends" whom he identified in the crowd, two were not only in the Klan but important in the organization.

⁵⁶Neuringer, "Governor Walton's War," 175-76.

⁵⁷On this point, D. Earl Newsom and I diverge. He claims that a bombing occurred in a black hotel in Yale that was a Klan action, an explosion about which I have found no direct evidence. Secondly, he claims that the murder of the manager of the Southern Refinery of Yale in Quay in late October, 1921, was probably a Klan murder. That will be discussed. Mr. Newsom's basic conclusions about the Klan in Payne County conforms to mine. He will have a chapter in an upcoming book on the county concerning the Klan (to be published in summer, 2000). Conversation with D. Earl Newsom, March, 2000.

⁵⁸Alvan Mitchell, with Veneta Berry Arrington, Little Tom and Fats (Stillwater, Oklahoma: Forum Press, 1983): 151-57. The cross-burning was on the lawn of the city home of a large land-owner who had a black workforce. The Klan decided to target Mr. Morehead, the land-owner, and pressure him to get rid of his black workers because they were not known in town. Morehead, who trained skunks which still had their power, released the skunks into the crowd burning the cross and not only dispersed the crowds but caused a run at the dry-goods stores the next day. They identified this incident occurring about two years after the bank was robbed in Ripley (1922). In my search of the Ripley paper through 1923 and 1924, I could find neither the exchange of ads which supposedly preceded the cross burning, nor any report of the cross burning.

Mathews showed both the problems of attribution and also may illustrate the actual concerns of the Klan hierarchy. It also introduces the man who would become the best known antagonist of the Klan in Payne County. And the case and the man showed how intimately intertwined violence was with the rise of an active anti-Klan group in Payne County. They must be discussed together.

In 1922 Walter Mathews was a young lawyer in Cushing. He had, in previous cases, defended Arch Flood, who swore the complaint against Sgt. Webber, and he continued to represent him in that case. After his whipping Mathews was caught in court carrying a concealed weapon by a sheriff whom Mathews felt was a Klansman: Mathews claimed he needed the gun because he feared for his life. He later defended the group that tore down the Klan hall's cross in Cushing, and he was the lawyer of record for the petition drive that called a grand jury into session in early 1924 to investigate general lawlessness in the county. He was anti-Klan.

Walter Mathews seemed a man of convictions which often put him odds with some important people in Cushing and the County. Arch Flood, for example, had been in court numerous times including once for bootlegging. When he swore out the warrant against Sgt. Webber, businessmen and the American Legion rushed to bail out the Sergeant. And, adding to this image, Mathews was perceived as a "Walton Man" in Republican clothes: The editor of the Cushing Citizen always became volcanic about Mathews. In a review of the Republican primary candidates for state representative in 1922, editor Green fulminated.

And the other candidate, Walter Mathews, do the people of Payne County want to be represented by such a man. Is it possible that the people of Cushing would foist this man upon the Republican party of the county? We think not and need say nothing more.

His nomination would mean a Democratic representative and that Democrat probably one dictated by the refugees from North Dakota, otherwise the Non Partisan League.⁵⁹

⁵⁹"For The Legislature," CC, 20 July 1922, 1. The Oklahoma Farmer Labor Reconstruction League, which had as a model the Non Partisans of the North, was linked with many former Socialists. It gave Jack Walton its blessing in 1922 after he wrapped himself in the League's "Shawnee Platform", although the Democratic Party never endorsed that document or that connection.

The first account of the attack on the night of September 12, 1922, was in the Stillwater Gazette the day after it occurred. That account put the attacking group at thirty and listed the three Cushing men. "The men were John Foster, cashier of the First National bank; Bert W. Salmon, minister of the Christian church, and R.W. Holmes, attorney and candidate for nomination for county judge at the August Primary."⁶⁰

The fullest account was given in Stillwater's second paper, the Stillwater Advance Democrat, a paper which would become the major pro-Walton voice among county papers. Under headlines of: "Eighteen Held After Flogging of Cushing Man", "Walter Matthews, Cushing Attorney, Beaten, Tarred and Feathered; Alleges K.K.K. Did It," it gave this account.

Walter Matthews, of Cushing, was seized by a party of masked men on the night of Thursday, September 12, placed in a motor car, taken to the edge of the city and severely beaten with a wet rope, after which, he alleges, he was tarred and feathered. He alleges that the act was committed by members of the Ku Klux Klan and eighteen arrests have resulted since that time, all of whom have been admitted to bond. Preliminary hearings before justices of the peace at Cushing and Stillwater have been postponed to Friday, October 5, on agreement of attorneys in case.

Of the eighteen men arrested three were taken into custody Thursday, September 21. They were John Foster, R.W. Holmes and Bert W. Salmon, all of Cushing. The charge was rioting.

Fifteen more arrests were made in connection with the alleged beating, on Friday, September 22. Many of those arrested are said to be prominent in business and social life.

The names of the fifteen as given by Doran are as follows: F.C. Thompson, Roy Miller, Dave Facker, Mr. Perry, Mr. Jones, Cliff Moore, B. T. Walker, M.A. Abbott, John Groom, Frank Davis, Jim Readman, R.W. Morton, E.E. McCormick, E.H. Winger and H. R. Shaw.⁶¹

At that point the Stillwater Advance Democrat largely dropped the story and the Stillwater Gazette began to follow it. On about October 5 a preliminary hearing was held. Sixteen men from the oil town of Shamrock, in Creek County south of Cushing, were named. Only two, H.R. Shaw and Frank Davis, were indicted.⁶²

⁶⁰"Cushing Men Arrange Bond In Riot Charge," SG, 22 September 1922, 1.

⁶¹"Eighteen Held After Flogging Of Cushing Man," SAD, 28 September 1922, 1. Note that although the newspapers spell Mr. Matthews' name with both one and two "t"'s, the single "t" spelling will be used. This was used in the Cushing City Directory. See Polk's Stillwater, Cushing and Yale City Directory, 1926-27 (Kansas City, Missouri: R.L. Polk & Co., 1926): Cushing, 166.

⁶²"Johns Hears Charges Against Shamrock Men," SG, 6 October 1922, 1.

A hearing, probably on October 13, led to the dismissal of charges against the three Cushing men, each of whom produced an alibi. John Foster stated he had been ill and had been informed of the whipping the day after. "He told of his friendship for Mathews, the complainant, saying that Mathews was 'just crazy about a certain thing.'"⁶³ The lawyer from the Attorney General's office recommended, and the Judge agreed, to dismiss the charges against the three, over Mathews' objections. Mathews' testimony as it appeared in the newspaper is as follows:

...Mathews, the complainant, admitted on cross-examination, that the three defendants, more particularly Foster, had been friends of his, 'men for whom he had had the highest regard,' he said. Recounting how he had 'lost confidence in humanity,' when he 'identified' the three in the alleged whipping crowd, Mathews broke down and sobbed, delaying his testimony temporarily.

When the charges were dismissed, the crowd in the courtroom cheered.⁶⁴

After further hearings, two of the Shamrock men were held, Frank Davis and H.R. Shaw.⁶⁵ After many months and more delays the two were acquitted.

The Cushing Citizen reacted predictably. The editorial, written after the three Cushing men were exonerated, men he called "Three honored and honorable citizens," was venomous. It was also confusing, for the editor was never a clear writer.

Yet our late correspondent [Note: an unclear reference but probably meaning Mathews] took it upon himself to denounce these men as guilty without one particle of evidence to prove his statement while the evidence of their whereabouts at the time of the affair was known to many and could easily have been ascertained by the aforesaid correspondent. But that did not suit his purpose and his attempt to smirch these three respectable, respected and law abiding citizens, has been a boomerang, in that it has shown him, whoever he is, to be a member of that species of vermin known as 'rats' the most degraded class of human being. It also proves him to be willing to commit a much worse crime than that with which he charged the objects of his venomous ire."⁶⁶

He then specifically attacked Mathews. In an earlier editorial, the first on the case, he had described Mathews as "not a man of such prominence as to cause much commotion but he evidently is a good advertiser." He then questioned Mathews' motives, implying that getting

⁶³"October Term County Court Grinding Fast," SG, 13 October 1922, 8.

⁶⁴"Release Cushing Men On Attorney's Motion," SG, 13 October 1922, 1.

⁶⁵"Two Men To Be Tried On Whipping Charge," SG, 13 October 1922, 8.

⁶⁶"Cushing Men Exonerated And Discharged," CC, 12 October 1922, 5.

justice and his honor were not the motives. Noting the case "has disturbed the harmony of the community," the editor claimed the case was simply not important enough to cause this level of "factional feeling."

We shall not discuss this now but would say that we cannot see enough in the whole affair to cause good citizens to array themselves against one another and to arouse such bitter animosities as to lead good people to oppose policies or measures just because some one with whom they differ on entirely different questions is supporting it. It would seem that it were paying too much honor to one who is scarcely entitled to it. There must be differences but why should they impede progress?⁶⁷

Once the charges were dismissed, the editor was exultant. Claiming the case was "not of sufficient importance or the central figure in it, to warrant it being made a reason for factional feeling and for dividing our people into two bitterly opposing factions," he in fact admitted that the case had split the town. He then continued, at times in his obscurest manner:

Men will differ as long as the world lasts, but differences need not mean destruction. Prejudice will lead men to wrong purposes, but prejudice need not, should not, must not lead men to the commission of crime or [to] become the obstacle to development. This must not be permitted and when it does, prejudice becomes insanity and should be restrained.

Let us remember there are always two sides to any question. Let us also remember that any man, any institution, any organization has a past and that the recollection and recalling of the history of that past, may not be pleasant or profitable. Let us remember that man should be judged by his acts, and not by what he talks of doing nor what others may say he does or has done. Let reason, concession and patriotism control us.⁶⁸

We shall encounter Mr. Mathews again. Our lawyer was the most concrete actor in the Klan's saga in the county and this flogging was the most obvious action of the "bad" Klan in the county.

Note that no mention was made of Klan robes, regalia, or claims by the accused of being Klansmen. Mr. Mathews identified his assailants by name: There were too many to make it a chance slip of the hood. In Altus, Oklahoma, there was a trial concerning Klansmen who set up a roadblock one night and ultimately caused a wreck, beat up a man, and then brought him and his two female colleagues back near town. They guessed the leader by his voice, thought they knew

⁶⁷"The Mathews Incident," CC, 28 September 1922, 2.

⁶⁸"Cushing Men Exonerated And Discharged," CC, 12 October 1922, 5.

the car driver and marked the car so they could later confirm who got into it. The men were wearing regalia with hoods and the victims could identify only two out of many.⁶⁹ When the Drumright editor was whipped in 1922, his attackers wore masks but the editor later claimed they were not Klan.⁷⁰ In Tulsa in July, 1923, twelve masked men mutilated a woman's face with acid, accusing her of seducing and then blackmailing men. They claimed they were not Klansmen, and they were not identified.⁷¹

The Tulsa case pointed to the problem of masked aggressors who specifically denied a connection to the Klan.⁷² Were they telling the truth when they said they were not acting at the behest of the Klan? There are several answers which are possible. First, it could be they were of the violent sort, which the Klan probably attracted, and were simply being violent folk and not Klansmen when they committed their act. Second, MacLean, with almost unique access to Klan meeting minutes, says the Klan often used cloaked language and indirection when they intended some violence. It was done to blur any legal connection to the Klan.⁷³ In the case in Tulsa, and in the Mathews case, the evidence was lacking to positively determine the directness of the connection to the Klan.⁷⁴

There were two killings in Quay that also seemed to be Klan-related, and the men who were eventually indicted were Pawnee countians. J. Leonard Heflin was the manager of the Southern Refinery in Yale. At night on about the last day of October, 1922, Mr. Heflin was in Quay in a car with two others. They came across a businessman of Quay, Mr. E.C. Ewing. Ewing shot into the car and Mr. Heflin was killed. Ewing and three other men were picked up by the sheriff near Yale and put in jail. Of the four, only Ewing could not post bail and was eventually transported to Pawnee's jail. The events were quite confused, as can be told by the Yale Democrat's reports.

⁶⁹Leo Kelley, "Black Brush of Hatred: The KKK on Trial in Altus," Chronicles of Oklahoma 72 (Spring, 1994): 52-65.

⁷⁰"Masked Men Whip Drumright Editor," YD, 1 February 1922, 1.

⁷¹"No Clue To Identity Of Men In Torture Case," CC, 19 July 1923, 1; "Party Masked Men Admits Their Guilt," CC, 19 July 1923, 8.

⁷²Neuringer, "Walton's War," 161-65.

⁷³MacLean, Mask of Chivalry, 165-70.

⁷⁴This author's opinion is that the Payne County attack was a Klan-ordered attack on Mathews, but the final evidence for that is currently lacking.

It has also been reported that Ewing had had trouble that day with some women on a lease nearby and that they had threatened him with the Ku Klux Klan, also it is reported that he claims to have received a warning from the Klan.

The general opinion seems to be that Ewing thought when the car stopped and the men hailed him that they were after him and he opened fire without investigation.

The events leading up to the shooting are still clouded. None of the parties interested are making any statements, other than it is reported that Ewing says that the men in the car began shooting at him, a statement which, of course, the others deny. It has been reported that guns and masks were found in the vicinity of the shooting, but this has not been verified to us.

Mr. Heflin, the Manager of the large Southern Refinery in Yale, was given a huge funeral. All the businesses in Yale closed and "at least two thousand persons were present at the services", a line of automobiles two miles long proceeding then to the cemetery. He was a Knight of Pythias, a Presbyterian, and 136 Masons participated in the funeral. There was, significantly, no mention of the Klan in reports on his funeral.⁷⁵

The newspaper record was then silent until March, 1923, when this brief item appeared in a syndicated state-wide column:

Twenty-two Pawnee county citizens were arrested on charges of rioting in connection with the alleged masked band activities, one instance being in connection with the death of E. Ewing, of Quay.⁷⁶

The charges leveled against the Pawnee men seemed to imply that Heflin may have been a Klan member, that Ewing's concern about the threats reportedly made to him by the women were justified, and that Ewing was eventually killed by the Pawnee County Klan. But the lack of any Klan presence at his funeral was a strong indicator that Heflin was not a Klansman. The Klan seemed eager to claim their brothers in death, and a prominent man such as Mr. Heflin would have surely brought out the Klan.

Although the murder seemed to be a Pawnee matter and was thus beyond the geographic limits of this work, the violence, as ambiguous as the incident was, undoubtedly

⁷⁵"E.C. Ewing Held For Shooting at Quay," "Funeral Services for J. Leonard Heflin," YD, 2 November 1922, 1. See also, "Entire Community Pays Highest Possible Tribute to Memory of J. Leonard Heflin," "J. Leonard Heflin," Yale Record, 2 November 1922, 1 [hereafter "YR"].

⁷⁶"Oklahoma State News," SG, 2 March 1923, 1.

reflected badly on all the Klans in the region. Murder transcended county lines in the mind of the public.⁷⁷

The major violence in the county attributed to the Klan, the whipping of Walter Mathews and, possibly, the Heflin and Ewing killings, occurred in 1922, about a year after the Klan first appeared in the county. It was a year of Klan parades and other activities. It was also an election year, though the Klan seemed to have stayed neutral in the race. The violence which occurred late in 1922 was probably aimed at specific individuals for reasons which will likely remain unclear.

In the wild year of 1923, a year in which Klan violence becomes a major state-wide issue, there was no reported violence in Payne County. One reason for the cessation of violence in 1923 could be that the Klan really was not directly connected with the 1922 incidents. A more likely solution was that the Klan in Payne County found few real enemies to attack.

The Klan probably also found that the violence gave them bad publicity. If the Klan was led by the business interests of the oil district towns of Payne County, then they likely concluded that the violence was counter-productive. It harmed the Klan's legitimacy in the county. It was also the point most made by the rather amorphous anti-Klan association in the county.⁷⁸ Violence also countered the image of the progressive businessman and the progressive town, an image universally promoted by the boosterish papers of the county and the major business organizations of the county.

In 1923 the only recorded violence associated with the Klan was the attack by an anti-Klan man upon the Klan hall in Cushing, an attack which led to relatively negative publicity for the opponents of the Klan. The violence occurred during the height of the impeachment drive in 1923, directly before the election that decided Walton's fate. The county seemed to have small

⁷⁷A sampling of violence attributed to the Klan in the region, besides violence towards the Drumright editor and the Pawnee violence already noted, included two attacks which took place within months of the Mathews and Heflin attacks. J.Y. Pattenfield of Pryor was beaten by "unmasked white men" because he supposedly squealed on the Klan, and Ben Axley, a Sands Springs lawyer, was kidnapped and threatened by a circle of masked men who finally realized they'd kidnapped the wrong man. See "Unmasked Men Beat Pryor Man," CC, 24 August, 1922, 3; "Ben Axley, A Sand Springs Lawyer.....," CC, 24 August, 1922, n.p.

⁷⁸For example, the petition calling for a grand jury in early 1924 called upon the grand jury to investigate "all crimes in Payne county, Oklahoma." See "Call Grand Jury," CC, 7 February 1924, 2; "Grand Jury Is Now in Session," YD, 7 February 1924, 1.

tolerance for violence coming from either the side of the Klan issue. The absence of confirmed violence blamed on the Klan after 1922 could be due to pressures from within the organization aimed at improving the respectability of the Klan. In Payne County there was added to this public pressure against violence, a pressure in itself strong enough to have blunted the vigilantism of the Klan.

The Klan and Politics

It is difficult to tell how much the Klan became a political power. There had been little radicalism in Payne County since statehood. It was generally a Republican County, yet the central election of the early 1920s, the 1922 general election, showed the county voting Republican for governor and Democratic for almost the entire remainder of state and county positions. Neuringer noted that in the 1922 election the Klan was relatively neutral statewide but that they may have tried to manipulate the 1924 election for Senator in which Walton ran as the Democratic candidate. Brown, in his work on Oklahoma Catholics, stated that the Klan did try to push an anti-Catholic agenda in the 1922 primaries. It endorsed former state Superintendent of Education R.H. Wilson, a Klansman, in the Democratic gubernatorial primary as a counter to Walton. The Catholics mounted their own, relatively secret campaign and eliminated that candidate. The Klan then backed off and did not even make an issue of the fact that Walton's wife was Roman Catholic. Within a year Walton's slide into political controversy made the Klan's efforts against the Governor unnecessary and the Klan stayed somewhat quiet during the whole martial law and impeachment period.⁷⁹

We know the Klan did publish a list of preferred candidates in the 1924 primary elections in Payne County because the editor of the Yale Democrat, Mr. Gelder, was running for nomination on the Republican ticket for a county office. He failed, and lamented the fact that an anti-Klan group had stated in their publications right before the election that Mr. Gelder was the

⁷⁹Neuringer, "Governor Walton's War," 157-58; Thomas Elton Brown, "Bible-Belt Catholicism: A History of the Roman Catholic Church in Oklahoma, 1905-1945" (Stillwater: Ph.D. diss., Oklahoma State University, 1974): 103-14.

Klan candidate for office. Mr. Gelder claimed the anti-Klan group got their information wrong and that it was another prospective nominee, unnamed, who got the Klan endorsement.⁸⁰

Several issues are raised by this. First, it confirmed the existence of an organized anti-Klan group in the County, and it raised the issue of how accurate their information was. Secondly, it showed that the Klan would back Republicans even though historically some might have assumed the party of Lincoln to be immune from any contact with even a revived Klan. Thirdly, it raised what may be the key question: if there was a Klan list of approved candidates, does that prove there was Klan power in politics? Just as in the question of violence, where does the vote for the organization candidate merge with men who might have voted for the candidate even without membership in the Klan? And if that Klan candidate did get elected to a county office, how could that officeholder express his Klan connection? What votes might have been changed? What attitudes might have been different? And those questions and doubts apply also to state elected offices.

There is no objective way, barring the discovery of old Klan meeting notes or actual candidate lists, of knowing how many candidates the Klan backed and how strenuously they backed them. The county and the Klan shared many ideas. The county populace seemed to balk on the use of violence, but it is questionable that that issue had much bearing on votes for county office. If the county was ideologically very close to the Klan, had a rather protected Catholic minority and a relatively minuscule black population, how would capturing a office benefit the Klan?

⁸⁰"A Political Misfit," YD, 7 August 1924, 3. Editor Gelder had earlier complained about interest group politics. "Klan,' 'Anti-Klan,' "Constitutionalists,' 'Fundamentalists,' 'modernists,' 'The Farm Bloc,' etc. -- all down to the minute vocabulary necessities. Why? Each man seeking his own! The public weal be damned! That's the spirit of the NOW." He ended his editorial with: "Good men and true, will give and take 'For the Public Good.' 'Love seeketh not its own.'" This is one of the few mentions of County political factions in any paper in the County: politics was most apparent from the candidate adds at election time. This was also one of the only mentions of national religious controversies, i.e., "Fundamentalists,' 'modernists.'" See "The Common Good," YD, 3 January 1924, 4. Confirming that the Klan had lists in the primary was, "Editorial Chaff," SAD, 9 November 1922, 2.

The Anti-Klan

The Klan presented enough of a threat to some people that an anti-Klan emerged within the county. There was at least one act of violence aimed at the Klan, and at least an amorphous anti-Klan organization. Walter Mathews was the common thread throughout the visible anti-Klan in the county.

In public the Klan never really set itself up to be rebutted: Klan appearances were not intended as dialogues with the non-Klan but as presentations and spectacles of the Klan. Although Sgt. Webber's rantings gained some rebuttals, even his crowds were described as generally in agreement with him.⁸¹ No one sponsored an open rebuttal of the Klan. Yet, the record indicated there were people who opposed the Klan in the County, and some of these acted on their beliefs.

The fall of 1923 was a hot time in Payne County. The governor was in the long process of being removed and tensions were high in the county. The Stillwater Klan had called in a national speaker to present a long apologetic to a packed movie theater crowd, and public Klan activities in the county had ground to a halt. On Thursday night, October 2, George shot up the Klan Hall in Cushing. The relevant issue of the Cushing Citizen is again missing, so we must go by the account in the Yale Democrat.

George Harlison was suspended from the Cushing police force by the city council Monday evening at an extraordinary session of that body.

This action was taken after Harlison, armed, had driven Klansmen from the Klan hall there Thursday night. In taking down the fiery cross he is alleged to have shot a hole through the American flag.

The latter act has been taken up with the war department at Washington, D.C., by Cushing legionaires, members of the Donaldson Walker Post No. 118, said.

Although suspended by the council Harlison appeared on the street Tuesday armed with two guns. Two special deputies, sworn in to serve during the election [to determine if the Legislature could call itself into session for impeachments], arrested Harlison and disarmed him. He was taken to the Payne county jail at Stillwater and is charged with carrying concealed weapons. Following Harlison's arrest friend[s] wired the governor that innocent men were being put in jail asked that troops be sent to Cushing immediately. No reply was received, however.⁸²

⁸¹See Chapter VI, "Fears", pp. 233-38.

⁸²"Ex-Officer Arrested," YD, 4 October 1923, 1. Note that the paper spells his name three ways: "Harlison" is probably correct.

The first thing the accused and their lawyer did was send a telegram to the Governor. The Sheriff, A.J. Tull, got a copy of it and took it to the Stillwater Advance Democrat. The telegram was reprinted: "Sheriff has armed Klansmen here. Are throwing good citizens in jail without charge. Everybody arming themselves and considerable fighting and much other trouble brewing. Won't you please send soldiers at once." It was signed by H.T. Watson, T.E. Finnan, Ralph Powers, J.A. Alexander, T.J. Welch, and Walter Mathews. In an editorial in the same issue, the editor disparaged the signatories as "all of doubtful character and most with court records," and suggested that if these were the type of men Walton was getting his information on about the Klan, the Governor should investigate them instead of Klan.⁸³ This came from a Democrat paper, the most pro-Walton in the county.

Authorities eventually arrested three others with Harlison, and their cases entered the court system in November, 1923. Accused along with Harlison were W.H. Booher, J.L. Over, and John Burris. They appeared before the judge after Mathews got the writs to remove them from the court of Justice of the Peace G.C. Youngblood in Ripley. The Justice seemed to have jumped in and taken the case. The accused seemed to believe the Justice and the sheriff were at least sympathetic to the Klan if not actual Klan members. Burris pled guilty and was released, while the other three were jailed in the County jail.⁸⁴

By January the governor had been replaced and a watered-down Klan bill was winding its way through the legislature. In early February a grand jury was called after a petition from 199 county residents called for it to "investigate as to all crimes in Payne county, Oklahoma." Although Judge Smith said he did not know what was the object of the search, attorney J.W. Reece claimed to know. The attorney of record for the petitioners was Walter Mathews. The signatures came mostly from Cushing and Yale, but also some from Ripley, Quay, and twenty-seven from Stillwater.⁸⁵ As far as is known, nothing ever came of this effort though it was almost surely an

⁸³"Cushing Men Ask For State Troops," SAD, 4 October 1923, 1; "Should Investigate Informants," SAD, 4 October 1923, 2.

⁸⁴"Moore Issues Writ Of Habeas Corpus For Four," YD, 8 November 1923, 1.

⁸⁵"Call Grand Jury," CC, 7 February 1924, 2; "Grand Jury Is Now In Session," YD, 7 February 1924, 1.

attempt to investigate the Klan. The petition at least showed broad concern from some citizens in the Klan's major sites in the county. As far as we can tell there was no crime wave before or after the grand jury was convened. This incident may raise questions as to the judgment of these petitioners. Just as present students of this may not see the enemies the Klan thought it saw, it would seem we also miss the threat the anti-Klan people perceived.

A similar organization emerged in other counties and there was a state-wide organization.⁸⁶ These organizations have not been documented and written about. The one in Payne County was a shadowy group much like the organization they opposed. But the major player throughout and the most obvious opponent of the Klan in Payne County was the lawyer who claimed he was whipped and tarred early in the Klan's history in Payne County, Mr. Walter Mathews.

Klan History

The first public report of the Klan in Payne County was an ad placed by the Klan which appeared in Yale in mid-December, 1921.⁸⁷ Newsom reported the Klan being organized in Drumright by the late spring of 1921, and it is likely from that source that Klan memberships expanded through the oil regions of Payne County, reaching also that county's non-oil county seat.⁸⁸

In 1922 the county Klan was not noted in news reports until late March, but the Klan groups in nearby, oil-soaked Creek County were active. There were Klan floggings in Shamrock and Drumright, and it is likely that the Klan was also responsible for a further well-publicized flogging in Drumright, that of R.L. Moore, editor of the Drumright Post. Possibly as a counter to

⁸⁶"Organize Against Klan," SAD, 13 December 1923, 3. This had a dateline of Oklahoma City. About three-hundred met to form an "Anti-Klan" association. They claimed to represent over 25,000 state citizens and elected Judge Porter Newman of Durant as first president. The week before, the same paper had criticized the Judge for accepting the post and demanding that he resign from the office. See "No Justice here," SAD, 6 December 1923, 2.

⁸⁷For citation of these events, please consult Appendix I, "Chronology of the Klan in Payne County, Oklahoma, 1921-1924," and Appendix II: "Known Klan Members in Payne County, 1921-1924."

⁸⁸D. Earl Newsom, Drumright! The Glory Days of a Boom Town (Perkins, Oklahoma: Evans Publications, 1985): 108.

this publicity, the first recorded Klan appearance in the Payne County was at a Methodist revival and a Baptist Sunday School class in Cushing. That evenings' visits were the only church visit to a Baptist church, the only one to a Sunday School, and the only visit to a revival, in the county from 1921 to 1924: The remaining visits were to Methodist and Disciples of Christ churches during Sunday services.

There followed the period of parading. Within little more than a month the three parades of the Klan in the County during the period of the hooded Klan occurred. They started with a spectacular parade in Cushing about May 24, 1922. Reports of the crowd's numbers and the Klan's numbers both vary, but they could have had a contingent of 600 Klansmen marching before 6,000 spectators. This occurred on or around the date of a huge march in Oilton, Creek County, and about two weeks before a march in Perry, Noble County.

The Fourth of July sparked activities in two cities. In Yale, a theater had been running a news movie in June that showed Klan marches in Oklahoma City and Tulsa. Soon thereafter there were Klan parades in Drumright and in Tulsa, with "hundreds" of Yalites journeying to the spectacles.

Then it happened in Yale. On June 30, there was a parade of 235 Klansmen from Stillwater, Yale and Cushing, who drew a crowd of about 8,000 spectators. That evening they entered Rev. Mallory's Methodist "Tabernacle", presented him with money and with a letter laying out their principles. Mallory, who had described himself in January as an "outsider" when it came to the Klan, was heavily complimented by the robed Christians.

On the day of the great Fourth of July celebration in Stillwater there were said to be 15,000 people in town. That evening an impressive parade of 200 to 300 Klansmen marched silently west on Ninth to Main Street, and then north. Banners claimed 1800 countians were Klansmen. The crowd was silent.

These parades happened during primary campaigns for the 1922 election. It is likely that the Klan informed its membership about Klan-preferred candidates even in the nominating

process, although in fact the organization actually liked neither of the final gubernatorial candidate.⁸⁹ There are no reports extant of Klan candidate lists from this election.

The Fall of 1922 may have been the peak period of Klan assertiveness in the County. They had boasted in the Stillwater parade of a rather spectacular membership level, and it is interesting that they would never again mention the size of their membership. There was the patrolling of roads in and out of Yale in late August which the editor of the Yale Record attributed to the Klan acting against "joyriding". There were "naturalizations" (i.e., initiations) at Cushing in August and Yale in early October, the latter the spectacular event at Twin Mounds. This was also when the Klan first appeared in Ingalls, paying a visit in December to the Methodist Church.

The Fall of 1922 was also the period when the major violence attributed the Klan in the County occurred. The shooting of E.C. Ewing seemed to have been somehow intertwined with the Klan. The public evidence is clearer about the Klan involvement in the whipping of Walter Matthews on September 12 outside of Cushing. Two of the three Payne Countians accused of that whipping by Matthews were men now known to be Klansmen, Mr. John Foster and Rev. Bert Salmon. The fact that the men were all freed points either to shrewd alibis, some sympathy for the Klan within the County, or a combination of both.

The Klan in Payne County was hidden from view for several months after the Matthews whipping. One church visit was the exception. This quiet extended to the counties around Payne, ending in March with the arrest of the twenty-two Pawnee countians on charges related to attacks and the murder of E.C. Ewing. Ewing was the man accused of killing the Manager of the Southern Refinery in Yale, Mr. Heflin.

This quiescence could simply be ascribed to the fact that the Klan seemed to prefer warmer weather for its public events. That was probably not the reason, though, for there were also no benevolences or church visits recorded, both indoor matters. It could also be that the state Klan had suggested a less public image after violence in different parts of the state. This is unlikely, because this is the period during which Walton claims, with some evidence, that there

⁸⁹Neuringer, "Governor Walton's War," 158.

was much violent vigilantism throughout the state. At least as viable was a theory that the Klans in Payne County and the immediate region were conscious of opposition from at least some of the public to the violence of 1922 and sought to quiet peoples' suspicions; The linkage of local Klans and Klansmen to violence throughout the latter part of 1922, with a reminder for the public in March, 1923, likely provoked negative reactions in more people than the Klan's arch-foe, Walter Matthews. And the arrest of Walter Matthews for carrying a concealed weapon into court in March, 1923, indicated that for some people the Klan was not simply blamed for violence but feared. This would be confirmed by the existence eventually of an anti-Klan in the County, and by the real fears Mr. Ewing, killer of Mr. Heflin in Quay, seemed to have about Klan retribution.⁹⁰

The year 1923 was the climactic year for the hooded Klan in the state and in Payne County. To a large extent the attention within the state had been taken from the Klan by the desperate actions of Governor Walton to save his political career. One of the most ironic things about Walton's actions was that by late summer, 1923, the Klan was not as great an issue as was the Governor.

In Payne County Governor Walton was soon viewed as a threat to the major public institution of the county, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College. In late spring and early summer of 1923, he announced the dismissal of the President of O.A.M.C., Dr. Eskridge, and soon thereafter appointed Mr. George Wilson, manager of the Farmer Labor Reconstruction League, whose Shawnee Platform Walton nominally endorsed, as the new president. This appointment was made over the strenuous objections of George Whitehurst, the chairman of the State Board of Agriculture which ran the College, but Whitehurst chaired a board which had been packed with Walton cronies. Stillwater erupted with mass meetings at the appointment of Wilson

⁹⁰Neuringer claimed that Jewett, the state Klan chief, moved to slow the violence from within the organization at about this time in part because he felt the Klan had gained the numbers it needed to continue and to influence the state government. "By 1923 the Oklahoma Klan had attained sufficient numerical strength and influence so that it no longer needed to resort to physical violence in gaining its objectives. During it earlier years the hooded order with a small membership did employ strong-arm methods in dealing with those whom it regarded as its foes; but by 1921 it began to attract members from the better element of the community--that is, ministers, businessmen, professionals, and politicians. As a result of this growth in the quantity and quality of its membership the Klan's political power began to increase, and it succeeded in gaining control of many town and county governments." Neuringer, "Walton's War," 176.

and eventually sent a delegation which numbered "more than a thousand persons" to the governor, a delegation whose leaders were curtly dismissed and even threatened by the Governor once they got to see him. "You people up at Stillwater seem to think you own that college, but you don't. If you hamper it in any way, I shall have to take a hand myself."⁹¹

Stillwater was angered for several reasons. Dr. Eskridge had been a popular President. George Wilson was considered a radical and a man without the proper credentials to lead a college. And Wilson threatened to push the College in a strongly vocational direction with open admissions and an implicit threat to research and higher learning. Several professors resigned in protest when he was appointed. Wilson was also accused of making remarks indicating his absolute hatred of the American Legion. When the County Commander from Payne County went to investigate these remarks, he was at first dismissed but later reinstated. Despite attempts by Wilson to patch up differences, the American Legion remained a foe of him and of Walton.⁹²

On another level, Stillwater was all too familiar with the politicized nature of employment at state colleges. Presidents were put in place and taken out with great regularity, a practice rightly seen as counter-educational by educators and residents of college towns. At O.A.M.C. this political shell game would not be halted until Dr. Henry Bennett took powerful hold of the College's Presidency in 1928 and earned enough prestige and power in the state to even resist the corrosive politicization of education carried out by Governor "Alfalfa Bill" Murray (1930-34).⁹³

⁹¹"Cold Reception," SG, 25 May 1923, 1.

⁹²"Gassaway Is Removed As County Commander," SG, 11 May 1923, 1; "Gassaway Reinstated As County Commander," SG, 1 June 1923, 1. Dudley Monk, the State Commander for the American Legion, later claimed that he was responsible for the eventual dismissal of Wilson. "It was a fight for Americanism and for the integrity of our schools," he said. "There is not room in Oklahoma for both radicals and the American Legion and the Legion intends to stay. The safety of our government depends upon the intelligence and the patriotism of our youth. No man must be allowed in our schools whose patriotism is subject to dispute. Our teachers must be Americans above reproach." "Legion Responsible Says State Head," SAD, 2 August 1923, 8.

⁹³The best primary source for the events surrounding the Wilson affair are the articles in the Stillwater Gazette, particularly: May 4, 1923: 1, 2; May 11, 1923: 5; May 18, 1923: 5; "Wilson Gets It," "Cold Reception," "Folks Jam Auditorium In Great Mass Meeting," "Country Press Against Gov. Walton's Policies," May 25, 1923: 1, 1, 5; "Wilson Temporarily Restrained From Job," June 1, 1923: 1; "[Witchita] Eagle Prints Wilson's Side Of Controversy," "Wilson Brings Guard Of Militia Officers," "Eagle Asks Governor His View Of Upheaval," "Ten Resignations Are Announced At College," June 8, 1923: 4, 5, 5, 5. At this point the *Advance Democrat* is the best source: "Name New Board Members; To Remove Wilson Friday," July 26, 1923: 1; "Tyler Named To Succeed Wilson," August 1, 1923: 1; "Bradford Knapp To Head College," September 13,

Wilson made it to campus, accompanied by an armed guard of state troopers, but he stayed in the position for only a few weeks. Walton seemed to have realized he had made a great blunder, withdrew both his support for Wilson and his open opposition to Dr. Whitehurst's reign at the Board of Agriculture, and, after appointment of an interim President, Dr. Bradford Knapp was appointed permanently to the position.⁹⁴

While all this was going on, Walton was beginning his attacks on "whipping parties" throughout the state, attacks he soon blamed on the Klan. In the Spring of 1923, he began placing areas of the state under martial law. By the summer of 1923, he placed Tulsa under martial law and began a series of investigations of vigilantism in that city, blaming it on the Klan. His office claimed in July that there had been "about 2,500 persons" attacked by whipping mobs in the state during the past year.⁹⁵

When the legislature objected to his use of martial law and his suspension of *habeas corpus* in Tulsa, it tried to call itself into session. Walton put the state under martial law and drove the legislators from the capitol building with the state militia. This led to a legislature-sponsored state-wide vote on an initiative giving the legislature the right to call itself into session. Payne Countians overwhelmingly endorsed the proposal, 5,288 to 1,301.⁹⁶ When the legislature met, the Governor was impeached, temporarily removed from office despite his attempt at various maneuvers in the courts, and then he was convicted and permanently removed.⁹⁷

1923: 1. See also the relevant sections of Philip Rulon, Oklahoma State University Since 1890 (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University Press, 1975): 162-80. For Walton's removal of Dr. Stratton D. Brooks as President of the University of Oklahoma, see: Roy Gittinger, The University of Oklahoma, 1892-1942: A History of Fifty Years (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1942): 102-22. For an example of the fact that political meddling had a long tradition in state higher education, see the example of Governor Bill Murray's removals from Southwestern State Teacher's College in the early 1930s: Melvin Frank Fiegel, "A History of Southwestern State College, 1903-1953" (Stillwater: Ed.D. dissertation, Oklahoma State University, 1969): 158-67.

⁹⁴Rulon, OSU, 181.

⁹⁵"Many Whippings in Year," SAD, 5 July 1923, 6.

⁹⁶"Heavy Vote Cast In Payne County," SAD, 4 October 1923, 1.

⁹⁷The best account of this is Neuringer, "Walton's War."

Walton's attack on Oklahoma A. & M. College directed the county's anger outward towards the Governor, though many in the county still supported Walton.⁹⁸ As the governor's fate got more precarious during 1923, the anti-Klan actions picked up in Payne County. The Klan building in Cushing was attacked right before the initiative election and, once the men were arrested, they wired the governor for help against lawlessness in the county. Even after the Governor's removal the anti-Klan group attacked general lawlessness in the county, the euphemism for the Klan, in their January, 1924 petition. Although this group probably did support Walton, it cannot be claimed that this was simply a group of die-hard Waltonites who continued the fight simply to cleanse Walton's name. It seemed that this group truly feared what they perceived to be a growing penetration of the county by the Klan and that organization's willingness to use force to further its ends.

Conclusion

In 1923 and 1924, the Payne County Klan stopped parading and was without any accusations of violence in the media. In 1923 the Klan visited churches at least twice, three fewer visits than were recorded for 1922. In Stillwater they did something unique in the county: they brought in speakers twice (April and August) to explain and justify the Klan's positions and policies. And the Klan continued to receive new recruits with at least two naturalizations within the county during that year.

The appearance of Sgt. Webber during June, 1923, was very fortuitous for the county's Klan. Although counted in this study as a Klan member, he never claimed membership and always spoke as a private citizen who was legitimized by his veteran's status. What he spoke fit directly into the Klan's rhetoric, and his last recorded appearance in the county was at a Klan naturalization in Cushing on the night of June 28. He was able to give vent to the Klan's arguments without involving the Klan, allowing that organization to stay above the fray.

⁹⁸The only newspaper to continue to support Walton, or at least ask that judgment be held until all the facts were in, was the Stillwater Advance Democrat. By the Fall of 1923 even that paper had had enough of Walton.

Despite the relative paucity of Klan public activities, it can be assumed that the Klan attempted to influence the anti-Walton initiative against the Governor. But since that course was already being pushed on the county by the events at O.A.M.C., the negative publicity the Governor uniformly got in the county press by the Fall of 1923, the opposition of the American Legion posts and probably other conservative groups within the county, and the county's vote against the Governor in the 1922 gubernatorial elections, the Klan's urgings were superfluous to the outcome. In Payne County, dislike of the Governor was overdetermined.

After the Governor's removal and while anti-Klan bills were being debated in the state legislature, the Yale Klan produced its large benevolence for the December, 1923, Good Fellows campaign. This was a fitting end to a year in which the "good Klan" was on display in Payne County.

In 1924 the Klan likely continued its church visits. They also had to unmask in the late summer. The Klan was preparing for a new phase of its existence, the phase without anonymity. Two years after the Walter Mathews whipping, the Yale Klan won second place with its float in the Founders Celebration parade in Yale. From a group militantly, silently, powerfully marching in anonymous masses, a spectacle and a warning, it now took part in the civic parades competing for ribbons.

With the unmasking of the Klan in 1924, the formerly hooded order entered a new phase in its life. Just as losing the hood freed the Klan to be more public and more accessible, it lost for the Klan the mystique of the secretive and the aura of implicit violence, both of which were so central to the Klan in its hooded phase.

Chapter VIII

Conclusions

The first question that must be asked in studying the Klan is why was it accepted by the community. This logically precedes the question, why did people join? The pursuit of private motivations for joining the Klan has been an endless road for scholarship and one with great frustration. The revisionist revolution of the past two decades has been fueled by the detailed analysis of the few extant membership rolls of the hooded Klan. Even close analysis of these, usually done from the viewpoint of economic class, cannot absolutely pin down the motivations for any individual joining. Joining an organization such as the hooded Klan involved many levels of decision making beyond simply the economic level assigned to the individual by scholars. It must also include religion, service in World War I, the fears of the locality, fraternal affiliation, and more. It could be argued that, barring the existence of letters, diaries, or other forms which specifically lay out why a person joined, there is no way to know why an individual joined the hooded Klan. We can give reasons for him to join, but the individual's motivation will always be a mystery.

Community acceptance was also murky, but it was in many ways more important. The Klan had to fill a space in the community. That involved both having a message or activities which were acceptable to the community, and finding areas in the community in which the Klan could actually function. The first part of this involved the Klan having values, spoken and acted, which fit the values of the community. The second part of this involved the Klan finding areas where it could stand out, where its voice and actions would not be too redundant with existing organizations, and thereby finding ways to attract members.

In Payne County, Oklahoma, during the period of the hooded Klan, the Klan was first accepted as spectacle. Even the most optimistic estimates of Klan membership never place it above the 1800 claimed in 1922. But announced Klan events regularly drew crowds estimated at several thousand to over ten thousand. The vast majority of these people would never join the Klan or do anything else for or with the Klan than attend a parade or a naturalization. Those events were the purest of spectacle. Parades caused massive traffic jams hours beforehand and drew people for miles and hours around. In our own age, inundated as it seems with spectacle vicariously observed on television or actually attended, it may be difficult to see why a group of several hundred men marching up and down a street could have such an effect. But this was an age with isolation, no electronic media, and long days of work. This was also a time when fraternal organizations continued to thrive in the county, at least in part for the private spectacle of the rites, and where the revival, a religious spectacle, was the high point of the religious year for many evangelical Protestants. A parade offered more than simply several hundred men marching on a summer night; It offered an occasion, a community get together, a time to visit and talk.

Naturalizations also brought out the crowds. They drew thousands of visitors, were more prolonged and more ideological than the parades, and even more spectacular. Masses of hooded men, airplanes with lighted crosses, speakers, and a flaming cross prominent against a night sky, all worked to make a naturalization a wonderful show. And it must be remembered that with the Klan's anonymity, people attending a naturalization and other Klan public events were often not there to see their husband or brother join, for they likely didn't know the candidates or the Klansmen. Naturalizations were a spectacular form of outdoor morality play, Barnum and Bailey and ersatz Christian rites in one program.

But there also had to be an ideological fit between the community and the hooded Klan. In this, the solidity of community values was symbiotically fitted to the malleability of the Klan ideology. Klan ideology was capable of creating a package of ideas to fit most white community's concerns and that malleability was probably the key to the rapid spread and popularity of the Klan nationally.

In the case of Payne County, fitting Klan to community occurred on several levels. The Klan had to immediately confront the fact that Roman Catholics and African Americans were paternalistically accepted by the white protestant majority of the County. Anti-Catholicism undoubtedly existed in the County but was muted -- witness the rare occasions when any public mention was given to it. In the day to day life of the County community, Roman Catholics were part of the white majority and were counted an established part of the community. African Americans were accepted but on a clearly different level. Jim Crow laws had done their job and white countians of all political stripes felt the "race question" or the "negro question" was already answered. A black man or woman could never be accepted as fully equal, but there was a role for them in the broader County community. If blacks accepted the restrictions of Jim Crow, if they kept demands for better schools or better public services within bounds, if they worked hard, obeyed the normal laws and social strictures, got education to fit their place in the life of the community, and in fact fully acted within the bounds of the station created for them by the white majority, then they were declared to be "good coloreds" and were protected by an umbrella of paternalism extended over them by the ruling white majority. Protected by paternalism, both white Roman Catholics and black Protestants were settled issues and not potential issues for the Klan in Payne County.¹

There were some areas of the County's community which the Klan did not fit. The Klan had no economic message to fit farmers, one of the major reasons that the Klan formed no known rural Klaverns in Payne County. Their economic message, as stated in their 1922 visit to Pastor Mallory's church, was one that fit well with the business interests of the oil fields of Payne County. Emphasizing free enterprise and calling for the end of labor unrest -- code for diminishing

¹MacLean, in her book on the Klan in Athens, Georgia, argued that even though the Catholic presence in Athens was minute and Catholics offered no threat to the white protestant dominance of that community, Catholicism was still an issue the Klan could play, for a threat did not have to be immediate to be considered a threat. Countering this contention, Payne County did have a sizable minority of Roman Catholics, Roman Churches and Roman schools, but they were not perceived to be threat to the community despite their immediacy. They had a history in the community as old as nearly any other community institution, and they lived rather easily within the value systems of a majority protestant and white community.

organized labor's influence -- the County Klan's economic message, such as it was, appealed to urban business interests in regions with a history of labor unrest.

The Klan failed to fit the community in several other ways. In a County with a sense of community which emphasized the individual white person, named by name, the hooded Klan did not fit. In a County which feared crime and violence, and in which negative comments were attached by editors to stories of lynchings in other places, the Klan's implicit violence, and its mention in both the Mathews whipping case and the Heflin and Ewing homicides, also set the Klan in opposition to community values. And in a County which evoked the values of cooperation with great frequency across the board, the Klan staunchly stood with an ideology of division.

The Klan's secrecy and anonymity also set it apart in the County. Because of its anonymity, the Klan could not openly be part of the rural community. Because of its anonymity, the hooded Klan also failed as a cooperative urban civic group due to an inability to participate in public forums and civic activities. Because of its anonymity, the Klan could not have purely social public events or public events which involved Klansmen's own families. Because the hooded Klan did set itself apart from the community in these matters, it helped elevate public Klan occasions as spectacle, but it also likely impeded recruitment for the Klan. And it excluded the Klan from most public forums.

And the Klan ideology, when it did fit with the values of the County, had a difficult time making itself distinctively heard among the voices of established organizations and institutions in the county's community. When it spoke of 100% Americanism, it had to stand in line behind, among others, the American Legion, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and even the likes of Rev. Mallory of the Yale Methodist Tabernacle, various itinerant speakers, and John Simpson of the Farmers' Union. If the Klan promoted Protestant Christianity, so did almost every other organization in the community beginning with the most established private organizations in the County, the Protestant churches. These groups were also there on the issue of traditional family values -- remember that the Klan liked pure womanhood among other things. If the Klan was anti-foreign, so were many other voices in the County including newspaper editors and the

American Legion. If the Klan was for white supremacy so were the Republicans and the Democrats, the newspaper editors and the state's laws, and virtually every organization outside the relatively tolerant Farmers' Union.

The motivation for joining undoubtedly varied and was probably complex in any individual. There are some broad things which can be said. There are no known Klan rolls from Payne County so the fluctuations in membership cannot be quantitatively followed. Studies with Klan rolls showed members' socio-economic status to be roughly proportional to the socio-economic class structure of the white population, and it would seem a safe assumption that this finding would not be contradicted in Payne County. It can be said about the Klan of Payne County that membership, if judged by activities, known Klaverns, and known members, was urban and concentrated particularly in the cities of the Cushing Field. If judged solely by activities such as parades, church visits, naturalizations, and physical actions such as patrolling roads or whipping Walter Mathews, nearly all occurred in or around the cities and towns of the Cushing oil field.

The whiff of violence that accompanied the Klan may have attracted some County men. There was probably a small minority who were simply violent individuals who joined primarily in hopes of violence. It is likely many more joined the Klan seeking an organization that would actively protect against radicalism by punishing radicals, be they the Reconstruction Leaguers or the I.W.W.² The image of North Dakota under Non-Partisan Leaguers was incarnate in the Farmer Laborer Reconstruction League. And Bolshevism seemed all to present to some, especially with the reports that men with Socialist pasts were closely advising Governor Walton. The memories of labor unrest and I.W.W. recruiters from the earlier days of the Cushing Oil Field likely still were fresh to some businessmen. The Red Scare of 1919 and the strikes since the War were well publicized. And for those who feared crime and creeping immorality in the youth, the

²There is no evidence to support Goldberg's interesting finding in Denver's Klavern that there were few veterans among the rank-and-file, implying they found the Klan a substitute for the action and moral crusading the men in uniform had had in World War I. See, Robert A. Goldberg, "Beneath the Hood and Robe: A Socioeconomic Analysis of Ku Klux Klan Membership in Denver, Colorado, 1921-1925," Western Historical Quarterly 11 (April, 1980): 191.

Klan seemed a proper enforcer.³ The men who joined in the hope of enforcing Americanism, anti-radicalism, prohibition, or moral correctness, did not know how little physical action the hooded Klan would effect in the County. Night patrols of County roads were reported only once, and there are neither reports of the Klan enforcing prohibition or other crimes, nor any claims by the Klan that they did any enforcement. The whipping of Walter Mathews was the single incident of known violence by some County Klansmen. Since the men denied their, and the Klan's, involvement, the reason for the whipping will remain unknown. By 1923 the Klan policy in the state was to squelch violence by its membership. Even without the state organization's disapproval of violence, it was likely that the county's disapproval of violence combined with a lack of immediate enemies to attack would have kept the Payne County Klan away from acts of violence.

Many men likely joined the Klan just to belong to an organization. Joining was in the air and organizations of all types seemed to be attracting new members. Becoming a Klansman demanded an acceptance of the organization's ideology, but much of that ideology was found in other county organizations. For some, the Klan offered an accessible group to join with accepted values. If you were a male, you couldn't belong to the W.C.T.U. If you hadn't been in the War, you could not join the American Legion. If you weren't a businessman, you could not join Rotary or Lions, or the Retail Merchants' Association, and you'd probably never join the Chamber of Commerce. And if you would rather socialize than repeat rites, and if you desired an ideology which was at once both more understandable and more about current concerns, the Klan was more attractive than the older fraternal organizations. It offered high purposes which the community generally accepted, ease of entry, and a certain rough equality as long as you were a

³"In spite of the warning sent out some time ago by the Ku Klux Klan against the habit of the young men on the street making remarks regarding young ladies walking on the streets, there has been some of this display of low breeding and it is to be hoped that if there be such an organization as the Ku Klux Klan that an example be made of some of these foul mouthed young men who clutter up the sidewalks with their worthless carcasses and profane the air with their remarks." See "Too Much Of It," Yale Democrat, 1 February 1922, 4. As far as is known, the Klan, after their extended warning in their newspaper ad of December, 1921, concerning these young men, did nothing directly against these profaners.

white Protestant male. And it was an organization which gained general acceptance in the county even while a minority condemned it.

It also offered male camaraderie. One of the primary things which fueled the growth of nineteenth-century fraternal organizations was one of the main reasons for joining the Klan; It was a male preserve and a male group with concern for maintaining a moral, Protestant Christian America. It was a group with a secrecy that could appeal to many males, a secrecy which also set it apart from normal organizations in the County. It was a group which could stage spectacular events. It was an organization which marched. It was an organization in which, once you joined, you knew who you marched with even if the public did not. The secrecy, the militancy, could only heighten the basic male camaraderie of the fraternity.

The hooded Klan in Payne County lacked an immediate enemy to confront. An immediate menace felt by the citizenry of the County could have allowed the Klan vigilante heroism, and that would have led to a Klan with growth and influence. But the enemy most countians recognized was the economic structures which were depriving them of livelihood, and the Klan had no weapons to fight that battle. Paternalism by the community of white countians protected other groups which were useful enemies elsewhere. The hooded Klan was never able to find areas of ideology where the Klan's voice would be distinctly heard. Although the Klan's stated values were in line with the County's values, the Klan was a redundant voice and never found a value or crusade that could make its voice distinctive. And the hooded Klan also ran counter to commonly held concepts of community, concepts which were the property of both rural and urban residents.

The Klan in Payne County after de-hooding laws represents a study beyond the scope of the present study. But that change in law dramatically changed the public activities of the Klan and probably changed the membership and the public perception of the organization.

The de-hooding law took effect in the middle of 1924. In August of that year the Klan float won second place in the Yale Anniversary Celebration parade. An even greater sign of a different

Klan was the first known Klan picnic in the County. Held at Ingalls on September 30, 1924, it preceded the formal unmasking ceremonies for the region, held at Oilton, by about two weeks. The Ripley paper reported ten to twelve-thousand in attendance, stunt flying, the Drumright Band, and speeches by the Rev. Bert Salmon and a Rev. Holland, plus a national speaker. The anonymous Klan was dead, and the Klan seemed to be trying to act like the other organizations in Payne County.

Klan halls and Klan "lodges" remained in Cushing and in Stillwater according to the 1926 Polk's Directory, but no Klan lodge or Klan hall was ever listed for Yale.⁴ The next available city directory was from 1938. It, and the 1939 directory, listed no Klan lodge in Stillwater, either in the topical listings or the alphabetical directory.⁵ It would be interesting to know how long Klan camaraderie attracted, how long the ideology could appeal, how long the Klan could compete in the open marketplace of County organizations.⁶

The Klan was probably failing in the County before the unhooding. There were no immediate enemies for a militant organization to confront. The Klan's ideology held no uniqueness. The Klan's very secrecy condemned members to similar meetings and few public events. As parks were created, progressive cities beautified, as road improved and people weathered the problems of the recession, the Klan remained largely silent and hidden. The Klan changed neither County politics, nor County morals. The Klan did not stop moonshiners and it did not stop petting parties. The Klan marched a little, initiated some, visited churches, and provided benevolences in season, sometimes.

⁴The Klavern in Yale probably met in the Yale Garage, the place where the fiery cross was displayed, that cross which glowed over Yale on a night soon after Harding's death.

⁵The directories are held by the Stillwater Public Library.

⁶Polk's Stillwater, Cushing and Yale Directory, 1926-27 (Kansas City, Missouri: R. L. Polk & Co., 1926); Stillwater, 24, Cushing, 23, Yale, 3; 1938 Stillwater City Directory (Stillwater, Oklahoma: Crossman Multilith and Printing Co., 1938); 1939 Stillwater City Directory (Stillwater, Oklahoma: Crossman Multilith and Printing Co., 1939). Newsom claims that the Klan in Drumright "declined rapidly after masks were gone and anonymity was no longer possible." By 1930 the Klan was no longer active in that city. In Oilton, also in Creek County, "the KKK continued as a fraternal organization with a women's auxiliary almost until World War II. Its stated purposes were to help needy children, to provide Bibles for school rooms, and to help the poor obtain food. A fiery cross burned weekly atop the Klan building for more than 10 years after the unmasking, but about the wildest activities inside were Bob Wills dances." See D. Earl Newsom, Drumright! The Glory Days of a Boom Town (Perkins, Oklahoma: Evans Publications, 1985): 118.

It is likely most Payne County's experience with the hooded Klan of the 1920s was similar to that of many other counties in Oklahoma and in the nation. The Klan existed at the sufferance of the county. It attracted a large initial membership. The Klan controlled its public activities with an eye to spectacle and good marks with the county, and countians flocked to see the shows. But the Klan was neither very violent nor very active. Many were attracted into membership by the Klan's ideology, possibly more by the promised activities and male camaraderie. And many probably left because the Klan was no more effective an instrument for the ideology than other organizations, and the camaraderie could be found elsewhere.

To a degree, interest in the Klan studies of the Klan have been crisis driven, focusing most on places where great confrontations and violent actions were taken. In the Payne Counties of the America there were neither of these, but there were Klans. If there was a crisis in the county, it was likely not the type the Klan could confront. And if the Klan wanted a place in the county it had to fit the existing community of the county; In effect, the Klan was domesticated by the county.

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Appendix I

Chronology of Hooded Ku Klux Klan in Payne County

This Appendix contains two parts: a chronological table and a topical listing.

The chronological table has been assembled largely from newspapers within Payne County between 1921 and 1925. Multiple references are listed in the source list. Events listed from outside the county were selected for their proximity to the county or because they were in a major metropolitan area, and because countians attended. This is as comprehensive as possible.

The topical group major types of Klan and anti-Klan activities in the county and its surrounding area.

Abbreviations used in the sources section:

CC	<u>Cushing Citizen</u> (weekly)
PJ	<u>Perkins Journal</u>
RR	<u>Ripley Record</u>
SAD	<u>Stillwater Advance Democrat</u>
SG	<u>Stillwater Gazette</u>
YD	<u>Yale Democrat</u>
YR	<u>Yale Record</u>
Mitchell, LT&F	Mitchell, Alvin, with Veneta Berry Arrington. <u>Little Tom and Fats</u> . Stillwater, Oklahoma: Forum Press, 1983.
Neuringer	Neuringer, Sheldon. "Governor Walton's War on the Ku Klux Klan: An Episode in Oklahoma History, 1923-1924." <u>Chronicles of Oklahoma</u> 45 (Summer, 1967): 153-79.
Newsom, Drum.	Newsom, D. Earl. <u>Drumright! The Glory Days of a Boom Town</u> . Perkins, Oklahoma: Evans Publications, 1985.
Newsom, Exciting	Newsom, D. Earl. <u>The Story of Exciting Payne County</u> . Stillwater, Oklahoma: New Forums Press, 1997.
Newsom, 3-23-2000	Newsom, D. Earl. Conversation, 23 March 2000.

Chronology of the Hooded Klan in Payne County, Oklahoma

date	location	event	sources
1921			
Spr. '21 unkn.	Drumright Drumright	Klan organizer appeared, sold some memberships, moved on. Klan parade: ltr. to mayor requested permit / positive reply; 600 to 1,000 Klansmen marched up and down Broadway; claimed in request to be for Christianity, "pure womanhood," immigration restriction, "pure Americanism," separation of church and state, freedom of speech, the flag and Bible in all schools.	Newsom, Drum., 108 Newsom, Drum., 107-08
unkn. unkn.	Drumright Drumright	Drumright Klan No. 10 gave \$100 to Salvation Army via a messenger. 12 Klan to funeral of Fred Hodson: w. floral wreath, 12 red roses; Hodson also American Legion.	Newsom, Drum., 108 Newsom, Drum., 108-09
7-13-21	Drumright	Disappearance of Rev. B.H. Montelius, assoc. min., First Baptist Church: blamed on Klan; body never found; American Legion chaplain; ruled a robbery; Newsom recognized Klan hardly organized by then.	Newsom, Drum., 110-12.
c 9-10-21 12-16-21	Drumright Yale	Masked rider delivered warning notice, chased but not caught. Ad in paper: "Undesirables Given Warning By The Ku Klux Klan"; "...Gamblers, Tin-horns, Boot-leggers, H-jackers, Gunmen, Loafers. Law Breakers of Every Description, I.W.W.s, Bolshevicks and Agitators, Black and White Alike, Old or Young"; "We are sworn to Preserve the Sanctity of Homes--The Virtues of Wives, Mothers and Daughters--and Accordingly Warn Against the Dirty Foul-Mouthed Remarks Made About the Women and Girls of Our City and Community"; "We Are 100 Per Cent American--Ready to Make Any Sacrifice For Our Country and Community. We Stand Squarely Back of Law and Order and Are Pledged to See That There is a Strict and Impartial Administration of the Same"; attacks "...the gang which has been hanging around this town for years without legitimate means of support, who never labor; the young men who have time to pass remarks about women and girls who pass him--the booze peddler and booze hoisters--harlots--commiters of adultery--every undesirable of any color or sex who may now be in our city to cease from such activities NOW".	SG, 9-16-21, 1 Newsom, Exciting, 139 YD, 12-16-21, np SG, 12-23-21, 1.
12-17-21 12-23-21	Drumright Yale	Klan given charter by state Klan: est'd. 500 in Drumright, 2,000 in Creek Cty. Rev. Mallory disusses "What is One Hundred percent Americanism?": Klan mysterious, unclear on intentions, meanings; Will discuss Klan next week. Done in Sun. evening service.	Newsom, Drum., 108. YD, 12-23-21, 1.

<u>date</u>	<u>location</u>	<u>event</u>	<u>sources</u>
1922			
1-2-22	Yale	Rev. Mallory (Methodist) spoke again on 100% Americanism and Klan: if Klan lived up to claims it'll be fine; claimed he's outside Klan; at Sunday evening service.	YD, 1-2-22,c.1
c1-25-22	Drumright	<i>Flogging of oil co. supt. for not remarrying divorced wife: attributed to Klan.</i>	Newsom,Drum, 112.
c1-26-22	Shamrock	<i>Klan flogged Frank Green (Thurs. pm): Women present; c.20+ cars; from <u>Drumright Derrick</u>.</i>	CC,2-2-22,1
1-30-22	Drumright	<i>R.L. Moore, ed/pub.,<u>Drumright Post</u>, kidnapped off street, flogged, tared, and threatened: some said Klan did it, but he was crusader against local administration, enemy of <u>Drumright Derrick</u>, likely not Klan; Newsom quoted some who said it led to end of Klan in area.</i>	Newsom,Drum, 112-13 YD,2-1-22,1
2-11-22	Okla. City	<i>Klan parade: c.2,000 Klansmen, large crowds.</i>	YD,2-15-22,7
2-15-22	Drumright	<i>Klan parade c. 8 p.m.: "wierd looking mass of Ku Klux carrying a fiery cross, came over the hill, paraded for a short while and departed over the hill as mysteriously as they had come."</i>	CC,2-16-22,5
c 3-29-22	Cushing	Revival and Sunday School visited (Thurs) by c.60 Klansmen: Revival led by Rev. Mathias at Methodist Church visited; Klan entered at the start of a prayer, stood in order during it, then presented envelope with "a sum of money" and made a statement of principles; then across street to meeting of a Baptist Sunday School class of fifteen year olds plus teachers, spoke, then left after gifting teachers.	CC,3-30-22,1
c 4-27-22	State	<i>Gov. Robertson forbade Okla. National Guard members to be klansmen.</i>	SG,4-28-22,2. CC,4-27-22,6.
c 5-24-22	Oilton	<i>Klan parade in evening for crowds assembled for a trades day: Oilton and Drumright Klans.</i>	SG,5-26-22,1
c 5-24-22	Cushing	Klan parade: thousands of spectators, one of largest crowds in year; c.600 Klansmen from OkC., Guthrie, Tulsa, Drumright, Yale, other places; silence of march noted. <u>Yale Democrat</u> said c.300 Klansmen, 6,000+ spectators, "A large number of Yale people...."	CC,6-1-22,1 YD,5-26-22,2
6-8-22	Drumright	<i>Kidnapping and murder of 9 yr. old Kenneth Garven Williams: unsolved; at time, <u>Oklahoma Leader</u> (c.Jan,'23) argued Wms. found evid. tt. Klan had tarred R.L. Moore, Klan had to get rid of him; now some think it a sex crime.</i>	Newsom,Drum, 113-16.
6-10-22	Perry	<i>Ku Klux Klan parade: people from Payne County's Cottonwood district attended (named).</i>	SG,6-16-22,np
c 6-16-22	Yale	Yale Theater ran, "The Ku Klux Klan, A Photo Play": showed parades from OkC, Tulsa; along with "Educational Comedy" starring Constance Talmadge.	YD,6-14-22,8

date	location	event	sources
6-16-22	Drumright	Klan parade: "impressive" procession, "the biggest crowd ever in Drumright"; "Hundred of people from Yale drove to Drumright...."	YD,6-19-22,1
6-23-22	Tulsa	Klan program & parade in Tulsa: "Hundreds of Yale people went to Tulsa tonight...."	YD,6-23-22,8
6-30-22	Yale	Klan parade; pre-publicized, 235 Klansmen in show from Stillwater, Cushing, Yale; large crowd from around, over 1200 cars, c. 8,000 people ("a quiet crowd and well behaved").	YD, 6-28-22,1 YD,7-6-22,1
6-30-22	Yale	Klan visited Rev. Mallory's church: Number of Klansmen came in with letter bearing extended discussion of how Klan and Mallory agree; extended description.	YD, 7-6-22, 1
7-4-22	Stillwater	Klan parade evening of 4th: c. 300 marching (<u>Yale Democrat</u> said 200), 15,000 in town. Many came over from Yale (noted line of car lights going east afterwards).	SG,7-7-22,1; 7. SG,7-14-22,7. YD, 7-6-22, 1
8-9-22	Cushing	Naturalization: "open air" at ball park; "thousands" attended; Ripley people liked speaker ("among the best ever heard on such an occasion in this county.")	RR,8-9-23,8 RR,8-16-23,8
c 8-10-22	Norman	V.P. Dr. Edwin De Barr (OU), reprimanded for political activities.	SG,8-18-22,1
c8-29-22	Yale	Klan in regalia patrolled streets, roads, in and around Yale: editor speculated they were there to stop "joy riders who had no business joy riding or booze peddlers."	YR,8-31-22,1
c 9-7-22	Stillwater	Klan at funeral of Ross Lyndon Wiley, Christian Church: seven Klansmen robed, with Fred Peery driving car.	SG, 9-8-22,1
9-12-22	Cushing	Walter Mathews whipped, tarred and feathered: grabbed in evening, taken out of town, flogged (wet rope), tarred & feathered;18 arrest warrants issued; 3 in custody: John Foster, R.W. Holmes, Rev. Bert Salmon, all of Cushing. <u>Stillwater Gazette</u> stated Mathews claimed there were 30 in whipping party.	SG,9-22-22,1 SAD,9-28-22,1
9-28-22	Cushing	Hearing of those accused of Mathews whipping post-poned: hearing to be October 6.	CC,9-28-22,1
9-28-22	Cushing	Editor of <u>Cushing Citizen</u> attacked Walter Mathews: Mathews "not a man of...prominence"; complained that "differences" might "impede progress".	CC,9-28-22,2
10-1-22	Ripley	20 Klansmen (Ripley Record says approximately) visited Methodist Church: Rev. J.C. Henderson ministering; gave speech, then left \$25 & note.	Newsom,Excit'g,170-71 RR, 10-5-22,1
10-4-22	Twin Mounds w. of Yale	Klan naturalization at Twin Mounds: initiated 300; 3,000 cars, airplane with fiery cross; Ripleyites attended; <u>Ripley Record</u> claimed 75 candidates, 5,000 crowd; speaker from Tulsa; 2 airplanes distributed handbills before hand, one with cross that night; sponsored by Yale Klan.	Newsom,Exciting,139 YR, 10-5-22,1 RR,10-12-22,8. YD,10-5-22,3
c10-5-22	Cushing, Stillwater	Mathews trial for three Cushing men accused moved from Cushing to Stillwater: to be heard before Justice Johns, Oct. 16; <u>Cushing Citizen</u> stated trial for fourteen Shamrock (Creek County) men also accused postponed again to c.10-7-22 before Justice Doran; <u>Stillwater Gazette</u> stated only two Shamrock men indicted by Justice Johns and held for trial of fourteen arrested.	CC,10-6-22,8 SG,10-6-22,1

date	location	event	sources
c10-11-22	Cushing, Stillwater	Three Cushing men accused of whipping Walter Mathews acquitted: <u>Stillwater Gazette</u> stated Assistant Attorney General N.W. Gore requested charges be dropped, which Justice Johns did; all accused had alibis; Mathews claimed his faith in humanity shaken; Cushing editor lauded the three accused, castigated Mathews (a "rat," the most degraded class of human being.); must not allow differences over affair threaten "the progress and welfare of the community."	CC,10-12-22,5 SG,10-13-22,1
10-11-22	Pawnee	<i>Klan parade: c.500 Klansmen, c. 10,000 witnessed; great crowd; Ripleyites attended: "One thing seems certain a Klan parade seems to bring out the biggest crowds of most any event nowadays." "A large number of Yale citizens went to Pawnee...."</i>	RR, 10-12-22,8 YD,10-12-22,8
10-25-22	Quay/Yale	Shooting death of H.F. Heflin: Manager, Southern Refinery in Yale; Shot in Quay by E.C.Ewing who thought Heflin was Klansman; Newsom thought it may have been Klan killing, but no klansmen attended the funeral.	YD,11-2-22,1 Newsom, 3-13-2000
c.10-25-22	Stillwater	Three charges against Walter Mathews dismissed: two embezzlement charges by former clients dropped on technicality; dismissal requested by City Attorney on charge of carrying concealed weapon, brought by R.W. Holmes of Cushing (one of accused whippers).	SG,10-27-22,1
c.12-17-22	Ingalls	Klan visited Methodist Church Sunday evening: Rev. Nail in service; c.30 Klansmen; gave Rev. Nail envelope endorsing his good work and containing \$100 bill.	RR,12-21-22,8
1923			
c3-1-23	Pawnee	<i>22 arrested in Pawnee for "alleged masked band activities": Accused of death of E.Ewing, Quay businessman (accused in Heflin death); charged with rioting.</i>	SG,3-2-23,1
c3-29-23	Stillwater	Walter Matthews arrested for gun in courtroom: claimed he needed it for protection.	SG,3-30-23,5
4-12-23	Stillwater	Klan Speaker from Atlanta tonight: "He will present truths concerning the Ku Klux Klan which at present are unknown to many," the circular read." On stage with speaker were Rev. Vertes Williams and Rev. S.G. Rogers (both Stillw.); Speaker argued Klan didn't commit violence and had reasons for secrecy; 1.5 hours, full house at theater.	SAD,4-12-23,10 SG,4-20-23,--
c5-23-23	Stillwater	Wilson appointed President of Oklahoma A. & M. College: Pres. Eskridge fired; Wilson Manager of Reconstruction League; Mass meeting in College Auditorium opposing appointment; Town group (1,000+) rebuffed in personal meeting with Governor.	SG,5-25-23,1
6-4-23	Cushing	Funeral of John Foster (58 yrs.): 300 Klansmen in procession to grave, dropped flowers in grave; major businessman and bank cashier / Director, Rotarian, Mason, Shriner; got nearly whole front page; funeral at Disciples of Christ Church.	CC,4-12-23,1 SG,4-13-23,1 RR,4-5-23,1

date	location	event	sources
6-4-23	Cushing/etc.	Sgt. Webber arrested in Cushing.	SG,6-11(?) -23,--
6-4 to 23	Various cities	Sgt. Webber speaking: in Stillwater, Yale, Mehan, Ripley, Cushing.	
6-c5-23	Yale	Funeral of W.M. Davis (65 yrs.): six Klansmen help conduct rites at church and grave.	YD,6-7-23,1 YD,6-7-23,1
6-21-23	Evansville, Ind., Cushing, Drumright	<i>Death in Evansville, Ind., of Cushing priest, Father Wm. Treinenkens, by gunshot, reported; had been threatened by Klan about conducting services in new Catholic church in Drumright; Catholic members sure it was Klan deed.</i>	<i>Newsom, Drum, 116-17</i> <i>CC, 6-21-23, 1</i>
6-28-23	Cushing	Naturalization: East of Cushing; "large crowd", "estimated at from 10,000 to 15,000."; Sgt. Webber spoke; Ripleyites and Free Silver people attended.	RR,7-5-23,1; 8
c7-7-23	Perkins	Klan appeared at Church service of Rev. McCown (Methodist?); declared Klan backed him, especially on correlation of "100 Per Cent Infidelity vs. 100 Per Cent Americanism."	SG, 7-12-23,np
7-10-23	Belle Isle	<i>Naturalization: "several" Ripleyites attended.</i>	<i>RR, 7-12-23, 8</i>
7-25-23	Pawnee	<i>Naturalization: outdoors, "immense attendance and an interesting time...."; "several" Ripleyites attended.</i>	<i>RR, 7-26-23, 1</i>
c.7-26-23	Stillwater	Wilson ousted by Board of Agriculture: New members replaced old 3 to 2 majority; sided with Whitehurst; Tyler named intrim President.	SAD,7-26-23,1
c.8-6-23**	Ripley	Klan No. 97 [Ripley] gave well publicized donation to distressed family: got card of thanks from family in paper. [2 articles]	RR,8-9-23,8
8-9-23	Cushing	Klan naturalization: open air; speaker "...among the best ever heard on such an occasion in this county." "A large number...." went from Ripley.	RR,8-16-23,8
8-14-23	Tulsa	<i>Governor declared martial law in Tulsa due to seeming police collusion in the beating of Nate Hantaman.</i>	<i>Neuringer, 161</i>
8-18-23	State, Ripley Yale	Fiery Cross night: In Ripley, "The K.K.K. Fiery Cross was raised here last Sat. night...."; Yale, "Last Saturday Night the fiery cross flashed out from the top of the Yale Garage." <u>Yale Democrat</u> claimed it was rumored to honor of the late President Harding.	RR, 8-23-23,1 YD,8-23-23,9 YR8-23-23,5
8-31-23	Stillwater	Klan meeting east of town: Ad in paper for meeting on Friday claimed there'd be an "able speaker" to tell what Klan intended to do "...in its campaign of law enforcement."	SAD,8-30-23,8
8-31-23	State	<i>Governor suspended <u>habeas corpus</u> throughout state.</i>	<i>Neuringer, 163</i>
9-2-23	Yale	Kamelia Kourt visited Methodist Church during Sunday evening service: twelve robed women, enter before sermon, give letter to minister which he read, knelt before alter as minister prayed, silently left: "Their coming in no sense desecrated the sacred service; for their motive was pure and sympathethetic." Only appearance of female Klan in County.	YD,9-6-23,1

date	location	event	sources
9-6-23	State	Governor announced force he is fighting was the Klan: Governor suspended all Klan public demonstrations.	Neuringer, 163-64
c9-10-23	Stillwater	Bradford Knapp appointed President of Oklahoma A.&M. College	SAD, 9-13-23, 1
c9-11-23	State	Grand Dragon Jewett ordered cessation of Klan parades and public displays wearing hoods.	Neuringer, 164-65
9-15-23	State	Governor placed state under martial law to stave off calling of grand jury.	Neuringer, 166
9-26-23	Oklahoma City	Governor denied Legislature session: turned back with troops at Capitol.	Neuringer, 168
c10-1-23	Cushing	Klan building invaded by George Harlinson: Chased Klansmen from building, took down cross, shot several times including hole in flag; City suspended, fired him from Police force.	SAD, 10-4-23, 1
c10-2-23	Cushing	Supporters of Harlinson send telegram to Governor about Sheriff arming Klansmen: asks Governor to send troops; signed by H.W. Watson, T.E. Finnan, Ralph Powers, J.A. Alexander, T.J. Welch, Walter Mathews; telegram somehow gotten by Sheriff, given to <u>Stillwater Advance Democrat</u> .	SAD, 10-4-23, 1
10-2-23	State	Initiative vote allowed Legislature to meet without call by Governor.	SAD, 10-4-23, 1
c.11-13-23	Stillwater	Judge Brown Moore issues writ of <i>habeas corpus</i> at request of Walter Mathews for George Harleson, W.H. Booher, John Burris, J.L. Over (all Cushing); arraigned under Justice G.C. Youngblood in Ripley, held by Sheriff A. J. Tull; three in jail, one (Burris) pled guilty, free for time.	CC, 11-15-23, 2
12-c4-23	Yale	Funeral of W.L. Learned (57 yrs.): Klansmen in regalia were pall bearers at Presbyterian Church; manager, Spurrier Lumber.	YD, 12-6-23, 1
11-25-23	Quay	Klan visited Christian Church: Yale Klan, gave donation.	YD, 11-29-23, 3
12-19-23	Yale	Klan gave baskets to 49 families / individuals: double baskets to each (98 baskets total); the most given by any group to Good Fellows Christmas Campaign.	YD, 12-17-23, 1
1924			
c.2-2-24	Stillw./County	Grand Jury called to "investigate as to all crimes in Payne county, Oklahoma": signed by 199 countians, most from Cushing, some from Stillwater, Ripley, Quay.	YD, 2-7-24, 1 CC, 2-7-24, 2
c.2-5-24	State	Gov. Trapp signed anti-masking bill: ok'd it.	YD, 2-7-24, 5 Neuringer, 176
c.2-22-24	Okla. City	Klan parade: c. 50,000 Klansmen, c. 100,000 audience; "Quite a number from here [Ripley] attended...."	RR, 2-28-24, 1
c.4-8-24	Stillwater	Mathews fined \$50, given 30 days, on appeal: for gun offense.	YD, 4-10-24, 1

date	location	event	sources
5-28-24	Drumright	59 new Klan members admitted at K. hdqtrs, old high school bldg, North Penn; had large lighted cross.	Newsom, Drum, 117
6-12-24	Drumright	5,000 Klansmen came to ceremony/celebration; 942 Klansmen too K-Duo degree, 25 high K. officials in pullman car; picnic, parade led by 30 piece Klan band; included a "junior Klan"; town business, etc., draped in welcome.	Newsom, Drum., 117
c.8-3-24	Yale	Klan float wins second place in town Anniversay Celebration parade.	YD, 8-7-24, 1
9-30-24	Ingalls	Ku Klux Klan picnic: Open to all; c.10-12,000 people; stunt flying, speeches by Rev. Holland and Rev. Bert Salmon, and national speaker W.S. Buckner; Drumright band played.	RR, 9-25-24, 1 RR, 10-2-24, 1
c.10-1-24	Stillwater	Walter Mathews in jail on concealed weapons charge from incident, c.3-29-23.	YD, 10-2-24, c.3
10-15-24	Oilton	Unmasking (one of four statewide sites): 10,000 Klansmen, others; plane with "KKK" in lights; march through town; unmasking. "In spite of the massive celebrations, Klan membership declined rapidly after masks were gone and anonymity was no longer possible. The Klan of Drumright was still purchasing advertisements in the high school yearbook at late as 1925 in support of public education, but by 1930, its activities had virtually ceased." [118]	Newsom, Drum, 117-18
c.10-16-24	Stillwater	Mathews out of jail early: defended person in court; many unclear how he got out.	YD, 10-17-14, 5
unkn.	Ripley	Klan cross burning before land-owner Morehead's city home: Morehead's trained skunks dispersed the crowd; Please note that this cannot be verified.	Mitchell, LT&F, 156-57.
1925			
5-16-25	Cushing	Rev. Bert Solomon killed in car wreck.	CC, 5-21-25, 1
5-21-25	Cushing	Rev. Bert Solomon funeral: large Klan presence in procession.	CC, 5-21-25, 1, 4, 6

Chronology of Public Acts of the Hooded Klan Topically Arranged

The following listing conforms to details of the previous comprehensive chronology of Klan activities in Payne County and beyond. Benevolent gifts by the Klan are not listed because there were likely other benevolent gifts not noted in the newspapers.

For citations, please consult "Chronology" above.

Event Date	Location	Description
Parades in Payne County		
May 24, 1922	Cushing, Oklahoma	c.600 Klansmen, 1,000s of spectators
June 30, 1922	Yale, Oklahoma	235 Klansmen, c.8,000 spectators, c.1,200 cars
July 4, 1922	Stillwater, Oklahoma	c.300 Klansmen, 15,000 in town
Parades attended by Payne Countians but not in County		
c. Summer, 1921	Drumright, Oklahoma	600 to 1,000 Klansmen
February 11, 1922	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma County	c.2,000 Klansmen
February 15, 1922	Drumright, Creek County	"weird looking mass of Ku Klux"
April c.27, 1922	Oilton, Creek County	Oilton and Drumright Klansmen, at trades day
June 10, 1922	Perry, Noble County	
June 16, 1922	Drumright, Creek County	"impressive" procession, "biggest crowd ever in Drumright"
June 23, 1922	Tulsa, Tulsa County	"Hundreds" of Yalites attended
October 11, 1922	Pawnee, Pawnee County	c.500 Klansmen, c.10,000 crowd
February c.22, 1922	Oklahoma City, Okla. County	c.50,000 Klansmen, c.100,000 crowd
Naturalizations in Payne County		
August 9, 1922	Cushing	at ball park, "thousands" attend, great speaker
August 9, 1922	West of Yale	75 or 300 initiates (RR, YD), 3,000 cars, 5,000 crowd, airplane with lighted cross
June 28, 1922	Cushing	east of city, c.10 - 15,000 crowd, Sgt. Webber spoke
Aug. 9, 1923	Cushing	open air

Event Date	Location	Description
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Naturalizations attended by Payne Countians but not in County

July 10, 1923	Belle Isle, Oklahoma County	"several" Ripleyites attended
July 25, 1923	Pawnee, Pawnee County	outdoors, "immense attendance", "several" Ripleyites attended
May 28, 1924	Drumright, Creek County	59 initiated in Klan headquarters (the old high school building)

Churches Visited by Klan in Payne County

c. March 29, 1922	Cushing	c.60 Klansmen visited revival at Methodist Church, then Sunday School at Baptist Church
June 30, 1922	Yale	Klansmen enter after parading, Rev. Mallory's Methodist Church
October 1, 1922	Ripley	c.20 Klansmen, visited Methodist Church, Rev. J.C. Henderson, speech and \$25
Dec. c.17 1922	Ingalls	c.30 Klansmen, Methodist Church, Rev. Nail, speech and \$100 bill
July c.7, 1922	Perkins	Methodist Church, Rev. McCown, Klansmen lauded his "'100 Per Cent Infidelity vs. 100 Per Cent Americanism'"
November 25, 1923	Quay	Yale Klansmen visit Christian Church

Funerals of Klansmen in Payne County and Beyond

unknown April c. 10, 1922	Drumright	Fred Hodson, 12 Klansmen attend John Foster, at Christian Church, Rev. Solomon presiding: declared founder and head of Klan in Cushing, very large funeral
Sept. c.7, 1922	Stillwater	Ross Lyndon Wiley, at Christian Church: seven robed Klansmen plus Fred Peery (driving)
May 21, 1924	Cushing	Rev. Bert Solomon, minister, Disciples of Christ: large Klan presence

Violence in Payne County Done by or Attributed to Klan

September 12 1922	Cushing	attack on Walter Mathews outside town: kidnapped, flogged, tarred and feathered
October 25 1922	Quay	killing of H.F. Heflin by E.C. Ewing: Heflin manager, Southern Refinery in Yale; Ewing Quay businessman

Klan Violence in Surrounding Counties

c. January 25, 1922	Shamrock, Creek County	flogging of Frank Green.
c. January 25, 1922	Drumright, Creek County	flogging of oil company superintendent for not remarrying divorced wife.
January 30, 1922	Drumright, Creek County	flogging, tarring and feathering, newspaper editor R.L. Moore of <u>Drumright Post</u>
c. March 1, 1923	Pawnee, Pawnee County	22 arrested for "masked band activities" including alleged murder of E. Ewing.

Event Date	Location	Description
Other Public Klan Activities in Payne County and Beyond		
Spring, 1921	Drumright	Klan recruiter selling memberships
December 16 1921	Yale	newspaper ad, announcing Klan, warning various types to watch their step
December 17, 1921	Drumright, Creek County	Klan given charter by state Klan, 500 Klansmen in Drumright, 2,000 in Creek County
April 12, 1923	Stillwater	national Klan speaker defended Klan: at packed Isis Theater, Rev. Vertes Williams (Disciples of Christ), Rev. S.G. Rogers (Methodist, south), on state
August 18, 1923	Yale, Ripley	Fiery Cross lit, supposedly for late President Harding, but possibly in defiance of Governor east of town, information meeting about Klan's "law enforcement" campaign
August 31 1923	Stillwater	Governor suspended all Klan public demonstrations
September 6 1923	State	Grand Dragon Jewett ordered cessation of Klan public demonstrations
September 11 1923	State	
Public Activities after De-Hooding, Payne County and Beyond		
June 12, 1924	Drumright, Creek County	ceremony, celebration, parade, picnic, 5,000 Klansmen, 942 taking new degree, 30 piece Klan band
August c.3, 1924	Yale	Klan float won second place in town Anniversary celebration parade
September 30	Ingalls	Klan picnic, open to all, c.10 - 12,000 crown, speeches by Rev. Holland, Rev. Salmon, airplane
October 15, 1924	Oilton, Creek County	unmasking (one of our in state), 10,000 Klansmen, others, parade through town, unmasking, airplane
Anti-Klan Activities in Payne County and State		
October c.1, 1923	Cushing	George Harlison invaded Klan building, took down cross, shot hole in flag
October c.2, 1923	Cushing	Supporters of Harlison send telegram to Governor asking for troops, Sheriff somehow got copy
December c. 13, 1923	State	Anti-Klan group organized for state in Oklahoma City meeting: c. 300 members including c.50 women; claimed to represent at least 25,000 in state; Judge Porter Newman (Durant), elected President.
February c.2, 1924	Stillwater	Grand Jury called to "investigate as to all crimes in Payne County, Oklahoma", 199 countians signed (Cushing, plus Stillwater, Ripley, Quay)
February c.5 1924	State of Oklahoma	Gov. Trapp signed anti-masking law

Appendix II

Known Klansmen in Payne County

The following list is of Klansmen from Payne County in the era of the hooded Klan who could be identified. This list should be seen as suggestive only.

Sources are abbreviated as follows:

CC	<u>Cushing Citizen</u>
RR	<u>Ripley Record</u>
SAD	<u>Stillwater Advance Democrat</u>
SG	<u>Stillwater Gazette</u>
YD	<u>Yale Democrat</u>
YR	<u>Yale Record</u>
Abbott, <u>City Directory, 1922</u>	<u>Abbott's Stillwater City Directory, 1922</u> (1922).
<u>Polk's Directory, 1926-27</u>	<u>Polk's Stillwater, Cushing and Yale City</u> <u>Directory, 1926-27</u> (Kansas City, Missouri: R.L. Polk & Co., 1926). Stillwater Rotary Club, historic files (various), provided by Dr. Roscoe Rouse.
Rotary Files	
Sellers, <u>Wobblies</u>	Nigel Anthony Sellars, <u>Oil, Wheat, and</u> <u>Wobblies: The Industrial Workers of the</u> <u>World in Oklahoma, 1905-1930</u> (Norman, Oklahoma: Ph.D. disser., University of Oklahoma, 1994).

Known Payne County Klansmen, 1921-24

<u>name</u>	<u>town</u>	<u>occupation</u>	<u>notes</u>	<u>sources</u>
Burris, Calvin M.	Yale	Owner, Yale Garage	Displayed fiery cross (August 18, 1923) on garage for President Harding's death and (likely) in defiance of Gov. Walton; ads listed owners of Garage as "C.M. Burris & Sons" (John W. and Lloyd T).	YD, 8-23-23,1 YR, 8-23-23,5 <u>Polk's Directory, 1926-27, 8</u>
Davis, W. M. (65 yrs.)	Yale/Kaw City	No information.	Mason, Odd Fellows. Long-time resident, recently moved to Perry; probably Pentecostal.	YD, 6-7-23,1 YD, 6-7-23,1
Foster, John (58 yrs.)	Cushing	Bank Cashier, businessman	Mason, Rotary. School Board; Officer, Benevolent Soc.; leading citizen; largest newspaper coverage of any funeral in period; Disciples of Christ.	CC, 4-12-23, 1 SG, 4-13-23, 1 RR, 4-5-23, 1
Kerns, E.C.	Cushing	candy store owner	described as "cyclops"; screened job seekers for Empire Refinery;	Sellars, Wobblies, 444-45 [cites: "Indust'l.Solidarity," {I.W.W. publication} 5 April 1924, n.p.]
Learned, W.L. (57 yrs.)	Yale	manager, Spurier Lumber Company	obituary; lived in Yale seven years; Presbyterian.	YD, 12-6-23, 1
Murphy, Wyche L.	Stillwater	insurance, real estate	Rotary; probably Presbyterian.	Robert Murphy, conversation, 4-10-99 Abbott's, <u>City Directory, 1922</u> ad, back page Rotary Files
Peery, Fred	Stillwater	proprietor, Peery Livery	Drove car for Klan at Ross Lyndon funeral.	SG, 9-8-22,1 Abbott, <u>City Directory, 1922, 65.</u>

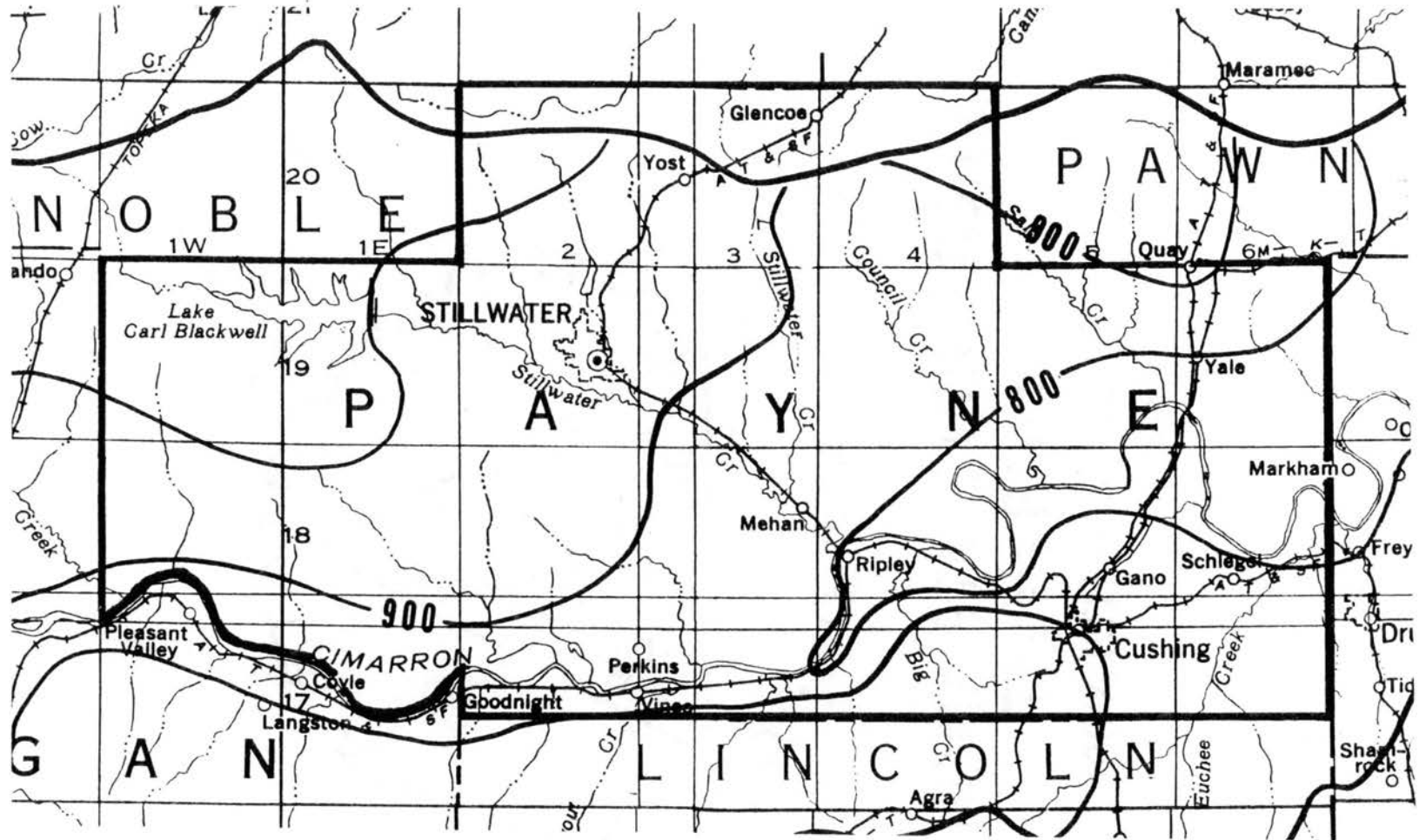
name	town	occupation	notes	sources
Rogers, S.G.	Stillwater	Minister, Methodist Church (southern)	On stage when Klan spokesman from Atlanta spoke; WW I veteran, chaplain of Cushing American Legion.	SG, 4-20-23, n.p. Abbott's, <u>City Directory</u> , 1922 (Stillwater), n.p. <u>Polk's Directory</u> , 1926-27, 22 SG, 4-27-23,5
Salmon, Bert (53)	Cushing	Minister, Disciples of Christ Church; WW I veteran, chaplain, American Legion	Died in auto accident; Mason & Shriner, Chaplain for Royal Arch lodge; born Liverpool, England; to Canada (age 4); pastorages Kt, Mich, Iowa, Ill, Neb., Ok; WW I YMCA Chaplain in France	CC, 5-21-25, 1, 4
Webber, Sgt. William	unknown	no known occupation; street speaker.	American Legion; spoke in most cities of county during June, 1923, his last appearance at a Klan naturalization in Cushing.	various newspapers, June, 1923. RR, 7-5-23, 1,8
Wiley, Ross Lyndon	Stillwater	no known occupation; residence 223 West.	Buried, Peery drives car with Klansmen.	SG, 9-8-22, 1 Abbott, <u>City Directory</u> , 90.
Williams, Vertes	Stillwater	Minister, Disciples of Christ Church	Founded Disciples of Christ Church in Stillwater; appeared on stage with national Klan speaker; Dr. Ted Agnew claimed Dr. Beeson, early Okla. A. & M. administrator, said Williams head of Klan in Stillwater.	SG, 4-20-23, n.p.

Appendix III

Maps

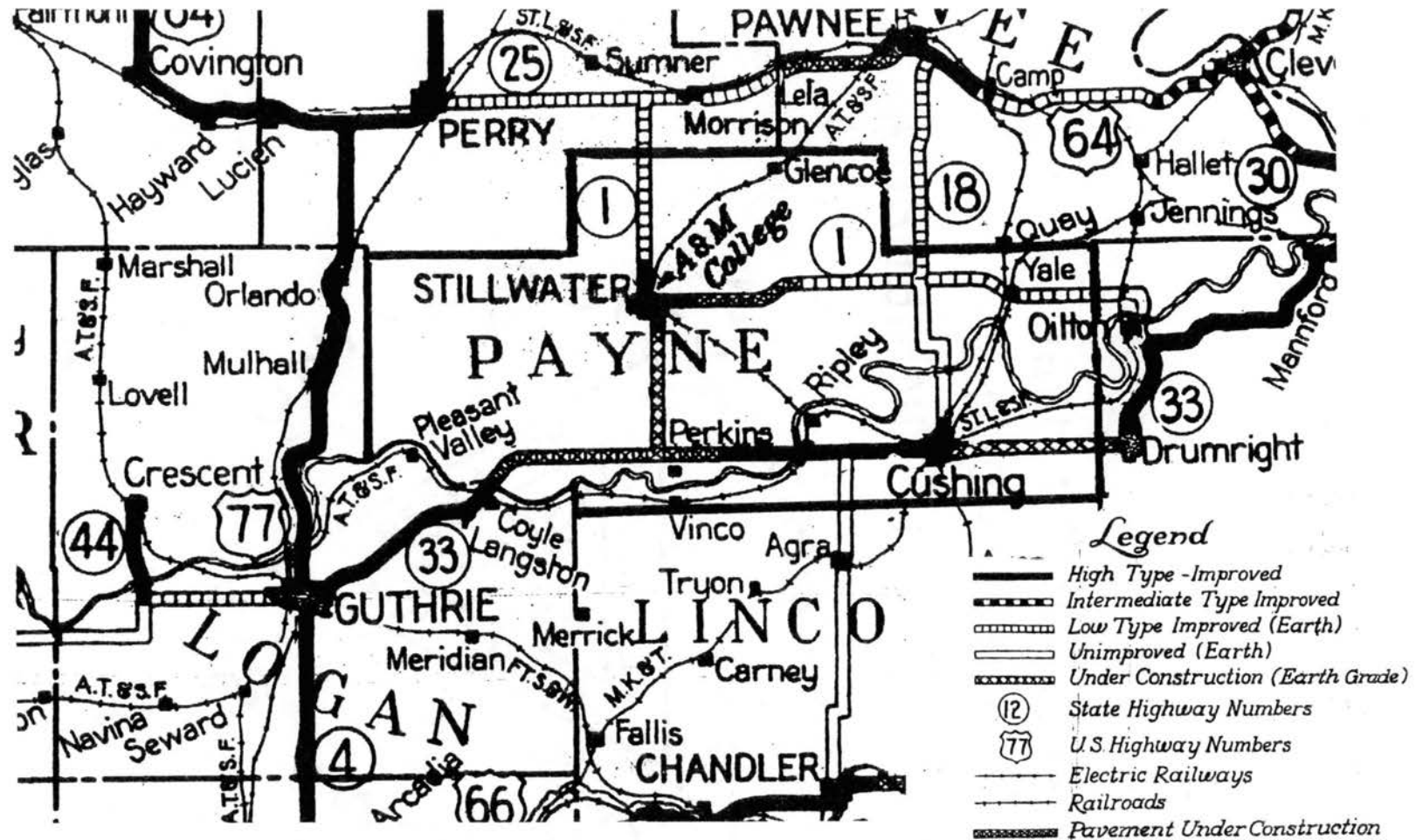
The following maps are included.

- Map 1: Oklahoma Counties, 1907**
- Map 2: Ground Water in the Cimarron River Basin (detail)**
- Map 3: Map of Major Routes in Payne County and Surrounding Counties**
- Map 4: Map of Rural School Districts in Payne County, 1907**



Map 2: Ground Water in the Cimarron River Basin (detail)

This is part of a map of the entire Cimarron River basin included with, US Geological Survey, Water Resources Division, Ground Water in the Cimarron River Basin: New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas, and Oklahoma (Denver, Colorado: US Corps of Engineers, Tulsa District, 1966). Borders of Payne County have been enhanced by author.



Map 3: Map of Major Routes in Payne County and Surrounding Counties

This is a detail taken from, "New Agricultural and Highway Map of Oklahoma," (Oklahoma City: State Board of Agriculture, [1929]). In the period of this study, 1921-1924, route numbers were not mentioned. Route 33, crossing the southern part of the county going east to west, was known as the "Ozark Highway." Route 1, coming through eastern Payne County via Yale to Stillwater, then heading straight north to Route 25 (today's Route 64) was known as the "Albert Pike Highway."

VITA

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