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THE WOMEN OF THE KU KLUX KLAN IN OKLAHOMA

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A THESIS

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THE WOMEN OF THE KU KLUX KLAN IN OKLAHOMA

CHAPTER I

THE KU KLUX KLAN: A STATE OF MIND

According to a Democratic former Attorney General from Maine,

> The Klan is more than an organization, it is a state of mind. The organization may not be so strong to-day, but the state of mind is stronger. The Klan's propaganda has caused a tremendous development of [negative] sentiment all through the country. It is now the rallying point for all the religious and race prejudice in the nation. Thousands who would not think of joining the organization support it and follow it politically.[1]

Spokesmen for organizations dedicated to opposing the Ku Klux Klan have asserted "that for each active, robed Klan member another ten Americans support the organization by attending rallies, contributing money and subscribing to publications." They refer to the increase of "sympathetic onlookers" as "alarming," and they claim, "were hatred and violence practiced only by members . . . , the problem would pale in scope as well as significance. Not all racists join a hooded order, but every person who holds his or her race to be superior denigrates another."[2] The significance in the quotations stems from their striking similarity, in spite of the fact that the former Attorney General from Maine wrote in 1925, and the spokesmen for the Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai B'rith, for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and for the United States Commission on Civil Rights issued their statements in 1983. The Ku Klux Klan and all of its ramifications seem to offer an almost continuous source of fascination for both its adherents and its staunchest opponents.

Since 1980, for example, media coverage of the various national Klan organizations has been steady. Some reporters have tried to find the so-called romance of the Klan epitomized by the flaming cross; according to one Klan leader, "we do not burn the cross, we *light* the Cross, that the forces of light may drive out the forces of darkness." Reporters have explored the causes for discontent among the white, predominantly lower-middle class members, including fears of losing jobs to minorities supported by affirmative action programs and of street crime.[3] They also review what they believe to be the new elements of the Klan, usually beginning with the emphasis on assault rifles as more sophisticated instruments of intimidation, and the tendency of many members of the Klan to prefer army fatigues over robes and hoods. Some media-wise Klan leaders have also rejected the robes, in favor of three-piece suits more acceptable to the general public. The Klan recruits young people, ages ten through seventeen, into the Klan Youth Corps in an effort to perpetuate the philosophy of white supremacy; the young people can go to summer camp and learn to handle firearms. The Klan Youth Corps recruits girls as well as boys, and the adult women members of the order have attracted a large share of the media attention.[4] One member of the hierarchy of the Klan has explained that "without the women, we wouldn't have a Klan."[5]

The women have described their attraction and devotion to the order. In general, they believe that the Klan provides constancy and hope in their lives. The order also provides them with support for other beliefs, concurring that blacks are less than human because they lack conscience and soul; that Judaism is not a religion; that immigrants are undesirable; that morality has declined dramatically in only a decade. For some, the Klan is religion because churches have capitulated to the supporters of integration. The Klan offers solace in the disappointments the women encounter, such as good, inexpensive restaurants that hire black waitresses to serve the food, or the end of a dream to become an operating room technician because the aspirant simply could never touch a black patient. The so-called Klansladies angrily reject the feminist movement, because the place for women "is where God intended for them to be. . . . If He hadn't intended for us to be a mother, He would not have made it necessary for us to be a mother." The Klansladies also reject violence and hate. One of the women summed up the predominant attitude saying, "I'm not into cruelty. If a black kid were hit by a car, chances are I'll stop and help. If a dog gets hit chances are I'll stop."[6]

All of these changes detailed in the media of the 1980s are more superficial than real. The methods of intimidation are certainly more modern and potentially more lethal. The attire has changed for some. The rhetoric, the fears and insecurities, the hatreds are essentially the same as they were over a century ago, and the themes emphasized by the order reflect a philosophy of nativism evident in this country even before the first Ku Klux Klan. Of course, the racial intolerance and the prejudice adapt to any particular era; nativists begin with white supremacy and denigrate the various minorities perceived to be most threatening during any given era. The essentials, however, remain constant among all nativist movements. Within the Klan, the women are not a new facet; even the auxiliaries for the young people are not new. The Women of the Ku Klux Klan in Oklahoma during the 1920s exemplified a reactionary reform movement, relying on the same bigoted nativist themes used by the Klans of the 1980s, but also desirous of forcing their communities to conform to stricter standards of decency and morality, to a status quo the members believed to be disappearing.

Various factors have provided the impetus for large numbers of native white Americans to band together in order to protect their lifesytles. During the 1920s, the men and women of the Ku Klux Klan perceived a period of national crisis, and they dreaded what they believed to be a spreading moral bankruptcy. They eagerly listened to speakers who could suggest simple solutions to national problems and were quite willing to blame minorities for their troubles. After all, these were religious people with a simple, fundamental faith. They earnestly believed that God had given them America to be their Christian homeland. Accordingly, their problems must be caused by the outsiders who had invaded their lands and threatened their spiritual and economic well-being.

just like all protestants

Perhaps, however, the real threats to their cherished way of life lay in the very lifestyle itself. The largely small-town Women of the Klan had a vision of what the ideal family should be, with father supporting the family financially, mother creating a loving and nurturing atmosphere for father and children, and children growing up to lead lives identical to father and mother. Suddenly, however, times had turned economically turbulent and families felt as though they had less to spend. Women had achieved suffrage, and they took their new civic duties seriously, but the members of the Klan insisted that women must resist any temptation to enter further into the heavenly-ordained world of men. They had no desire to compete with their men, or to lose certain pleasant prerogatives of being protected and cared for. Other women, however, especially in the growing cities, continued to demand greater equality. The children, of course, could not be insulated from modernization. The parents desired a good education for the children, urging them to learn everything their local schools could offer. The children, however, continued on to college where local standards were less applicable, and they underwent changes, desiring lives very different from those of their parents. Inherent, then, in the interaction between the humble desires professed by the Klanswomen and the realities of an evolving society was much of the discontent felt by the women who belonged to the order.

A comprehensive study of the Women of the Ku Klux Klan must begin with a brief history of the orginal Invisible Empire, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. Although the women had an organization that was officially separate from that of the men, the Knights sanctioned its formation in 1923. The women assumed their role in a history of America carefully created by the Knights. They believed, for example, that the original Klan of the Reconstruction Era had been the sole salvation of southern whites and of pure womanhood specifically. They recruited members by using the same patriotic and religious rhetoric that had been so successful for the Knights. They endowed the Klan with positive attributes, rejecting the increasing press reports of Klan improprieties as exaggerated if not untrue. The Women of the Klan truly believed

Klan saved women

recruiting

> There is no organization in the United States that is more intensely American than is the Ku Klux Klan. It is composed solely of Americans; its history, its customs and its traditions are to be found in the annals of no country save

beliefs

> America; its present purpose and its future mission are alike indissolubly connected with American purposes and principles. . . .[7]

The Ku Klux Klan seemed to offer regeneration for American society and some excitement for American women.

Much of the excitement for the women stemmed from the use of elaborately detailed ritual in all aspects of the Klan. The order created detailed membership requirements and held naturalization ceremonies for the newly initiated. Once officially involved in the Invisible Empire, members could study the secret documents of the order, including the *Kloran*, the handbook for all Klan ritual, and the *Musiklan*, the official songbook. Every meeting offered members something different from their everyday lives. The officers had strange titles, everyone wore uniforms of pure white, the members memorized and practiced secret oaths and signs, and even the days, weeks, and months of the year had special names on a Ku Klux Kalendar. The Klanswomen specialized in the mystical, developing a burial service to honor deceased members. They also formed military committees, as well as a variety of other committees, in order to better regulate the membership, and they adhered to strict principles of propriety. If any member violated the creed of the Klan, she was subject to penalties, ranging from a reprimand to complete banishment from the Empire. The Klanswomen met frequently, paid their dues, and studied the comprehensive lessons recommended in the official *Educational Year-Book*. They provided auxiliary clubs for their children, and they proudly involved themselves in activities designed to improve their communities. Many women in Oklahoma remained loyal to their klans through 1928, in spite of conflicts within the order and increasing negative publicity. Significant fears and sincere hopes

penalties for disobedience

what they did

motivated the women of Oklahoma to join and remain members of the Ku Klux Klan.

The appeal of the Klan was multifaceted and logically falls into two comprehensive categories, the secular and the religious. The division is artificial in the sense that the secular and the religious aspects of life were never completely separate for the members of the Klan; nevertheless, a distinction is desirable for the sake of a more complete analysis. First among the secular considerations was the appeal of the organization as an aspect in the history of feminine voluntary associations. The Klan, however, did not blend with the majority of other clubs for women, although the memberships undoubtedly overlapped. The Klan was largely a reaction to World War I and the postwar social and economic turbulence. The women were fearful of change, and they accepted traditional nativist explanations for the causes of the dangers they so acutely perceived.

The members wanted to feel in control of their own lives. They found some satisfaction in denigrating relatively helpless minorities; they secured a sense of superiority through unity in the Klan and the expression of white supremacy. The women in Oklahoma had little contact with the minorities they feared because native-born whites were more numerous than all other groups combined. Nevertheless, Americans demanded of immigrants complete assimilation, and members of the Klan were highly intolerant of any minority group suspected of a desire to retain any ethnicity. Ironically, most nativists secretly harbored a conviction that immigrants were unable to become real Americans. If the intolerance of foreigners formed the essence of the secular appeal of the Klan, white

Catholics
Jews

supremacy had another, if less overtly significant element. Racial prejudice against blacks, and presumably Indians in Oklahoma, were obvious implications of white supremacy. Prejudice was not, however, as important a factor motivating women to join the Klan because segregation was an accepted way of life in the 1920s. A brief examination of the distribution of the klans with relation to foreign and black populations suggests a greater concern with certain groups of foreigners. The population of Oklahoma, however, was almost a miniature model of the South and the Midwest, the sections of the country most affected by the Klan, and perceived dangers usually affected the divergent population in varying degrees.

During the 1920s, concerns related to religion and morality seemingly affected all the members of the Women of the Ku Klux Klan. The women again turned to traditional nativist rhetoric in an effort to expose their enemies, and they revived some pre-war progressive ideals in order to mold their communities into models of decency. The central enemy in almost all Klan attacks was the Catholic; he epitomized all potential evil. He was frequently a foreigner, and his loyalty allegedly belonged to Rome rather than to the United States. According to the Klan the Catholic could not even comprehend, let alone believe in, such American values as freedom of religion, speech, press, education. The Klan suspected the Catholic Church of sanctioning endless varieties of immoral, illegal, and indecent behaviors, and much Klan rhetoric eagerly speculated on the salacious details. The Klan attacked the Jews as well as the Catholics, but an ambivalence marked the official attitude as to the severity of the Jewish problem. Just as native-born whites far outnumbered foreigners in the state, Protestant numbers easily exceeded those of the

Catholics,
Jews

religious minorities. Specifically, the Women of the Klan organized in communities with especially large numbers of Southern Baptists, Methodists, and to a lesser extent, members of the Churches of Christ.

In retrospect, little basis in reality seems to justify white Protestant fears about the invading groups of Catholics and foreigners, but the evidence suggests that even the slightest increase in the percentages of either group impelled the women to unite to protect their homeland. This occurred, in part, because the presence of the traditional enemy suggested to the members of the Klan an insidious internal enemy, usually referred to as the liberal. The liberal was the native American who should have known better than to promote alien ideals and modernism, but who betrayed his country by encouraging the forces of cosompolitanism. All of these forces combined and resulted in the serious decline in morality especially among the young, and the Klan espoused as one of its primary purposes the fervent desire to improve the home and community by enforcing Prohibition and eradicating crime, graft, and indecency. Thus, in its brief history during the 1920s, the Klan combined historical nativist bigotry with a religious and moral crusade to legislate and enforce small town decency in the face of increasing urban degeneracy. With that in mind the Klanswomen in Oklahoma could have sung their "Klexology" to the tune of "America":

> God of Eternity,
> Guide, guard our great country,
> Our homes and store,
> Keep our great state to Thee,
> Its people right and free
> In us Thy glory be
> Forevermore.[8]

The frequent use of direct quotations in the pages that follow may convey a sense of the intensity felt by the adherents of the Ku Klux Klan, and occasionally by the opponents of the order. The songs, speeches, and publications written by the members clearly express sincere convictions about patriotism, religion, and the dangers confronting the nation. Much of the rhetoric was quite specific; the Women of the Klan tried to address all of the issues that affected their communities. At other times, however, representatives of the order generalized in lofty terms, usually referring to such undefined opinions as facts. Members of the Klan ascribed precise meaning to official pronouncements, and they believed that outsiders could never have what the Klan called an instinctive, racial understanding of all of the ramifications of the important issues. The belief that Klan rhetoric was indisputable fact cloaked the members in their mantles of sincerity; when the manipulation of concepts in succeeding statements seemed inconsistent to the alien, it was because he could not instinctively internalize the appropriate meanings for the words used at the time.

Primary source material relating to the Women of the Klan is difficult to obtain. All official publications carried warnings that the contents were for naturalized persons only, and Klan authorities ordered the destruction, preferably by ceremonious burning, of all outdated materials. Few legible records survived this predilection for maintaining the utmost secrecy about the details of the Klan. Proclamations by the Knights, however, may be used to supplement the information published by the women. The women believed that their Invisible Empire embraced the Knights as well as their own membership. The philosophies of the men mirrored those of the women, even if their behavior sometimes did not.

The history of the Women of the Ku Klux Klan offers some instructive insights into the recurring episodes of reactionary reform movements in this country, into those organizations that exist for the purpose of superimposing their beliefs and behaviors on communities that are straying from the values of a treasured past. Because violence did not characterize the activities of the women, as it did those of the Knights, the women cannot be dismissed as mere vicious and ignorant malcontents. Indeed, the danger inherent in the Klan of the twenties stemmed not just from the atrocities committed by zealous members, but, more importantly, from the system of destructive beliefs internalized by large numbers of otherwise decent and responsible citizens.

The Women of the Klan represented the growing desire of middle-class women to improve society, in much the same way the progressives had sought to better their communities a few years earlier; even the attitudes toward foreign minorities were not unlike the patronizing foreign policy of many progressives. Unfortunately, the optimism of the pre-war progressives did not exist in the postwar Klan. The Women of the Klan were dissatisfied and fearful. They perceived changes in their country, especially in urban areas, which they could not control from their small towns. Most of their enemies existed not in reality, not in the presence of the foreign neighbors they knew, but in the potential threat from greater numbers of urban foreigners reportedly invading other parts of the country. The women were willing to reject intellect and rational thought in favor of emotionalism and vague references to something called the native white instinct. They sought companionship, and they sought identity as a significant force in the state and the country, unified with other native Americans of kindred spirit in the Women of the Ku Klux Klan. As one observer wrote in 1925, "the Klan may presently fade away as quickly as it came. But the general state of mind which could manifest itself in this strange way--that is a far more permanent aspect of our national life."[9]

CHAPTER II

THE CHIVALROUS PATH

The Guthrie Register once recorded that at least one thousand Klansmen arrived in Guthrie, Oklahoma, on a special Santa Fe train from Drumright, Cushing, and Ripley, and in cars from Enid and possibly Marshall. An immense crowd lined the streets to witness the parade, but they were disappointed, the reporter noted, because the Klan carried no fiery cross. The parade, he wrote, "lacked the genius of soul. It failed in lofty emotion." He thought that the spectators "wished for more thrills. Greater mystery. Either a more Satanic or a more Sacredotal [sic] symbol of that Invisible Power that emanates from the spiritual regions of Righteousness."[1] The Klansman has been a legendary figure, both popularized and stigmatized, for decades. Forgotten entirely, however, are the women who also marched in the parades. One woman played a significant role in the establishment of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, and thousands of others eagerly joined their own klans in efforts to influence their communities. Although they aspired to establish an independent order, the women professed an acceptance of the history promulgated by the Knights.

The Ku Klux Klan traced its beginnings to the "old pioneer stock" of America, those settlers who were "a blend of various peoples of the so-called Nordic race, the race which . . . has given the world almost the whole of modern civilization." According to this Klan account,

> . . . only hardy, adventurous and strong men and women dared the pioneer dangers; from among these all but the best died swiftly, so that the new Nordic blend which became the American race was bred up to a point probably the highest in history. This remarkable race character, along with the new-won continent and the new-created nation, made the inheritance of the old-stock Americans the richest ever given to a generation of men.[2]

That inheritance, passed on to the children of the pioneers, was a Protestant American spirit,

> a thing of rugged steel, tempered and forged in the terrific stress of the task of wresting a continent from savages and from the wilderness. It is welded of convictions, independence, self-reliance, freedom, justice, achievement, courage, acceptance of responsibility, and the guidance of his own conscience by each man personally.[3]

The Klan obviously cherished its presumptive inheritance.

The order emphasized its role as the defender of Americanism, and it linked its own history to that of the nation. Official Klan publications explained that the spirit which guided the Klan awakened during the time before the American Revolutionary War, a period they called the Reign of Incarnation. The First Reign of Reincarnation dated from the beginning of the Revolutionary War and the establishment of the government of the United States to the organization of the original Invisible Empire in 1866 during the Reconstruction Era.[4]

A group of young ex-Confederate officers in the small town of Pulaski, Tennessee, originated the Ku Klux Klan as a social club. They derived the name of their organization from kyklos, a Greek word meaning circle, and in honor of their Scottish ancestry, they called themselves a clan, spelling it with a "k." They also adopted from the Scottish Highlanders the use of the fiery cross as a symbol to unite members of the klan.[5] According to the order, Lieutenant General Nathan Bedford Forrest reorganized the original social club in 1867 in an effort to protect endangered white Southerners. The Klan asserted that after the Civil War, an "undesirable element" overran the South. Those unscrupulous individuals intended "to prey upon helpless whites and use the negro and sympathy aroused for a newly liberated race of slaves for selfish purposes." The men and women of the New South, however, "saved the day, rebuilt the fallen fortunes of a conquered people, reconstructed a devastated land and worked and struggled."[6] This period, the Second Reign of Reincarnation, ended in 1872, when the order voluntarily disbanded. Coincidentally, the federal government had outlawed the Klan of the Reconstruction Era in 1871. The Invisible Empire, cloaked in secrecy, had desired to curb Radical Republican political dominance and to exert effective controls over newly emancipated freedmen. In their zeal to achieve their goals, they had all too frequently been brutally violent.[7]

The Third Reign of Reincarnation began in 1915, when Colonel William Joseph Simmons resurrected and incorporated the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. Simmons, a private in Company B of the First Regiment of Alabama Volunteers during the Spanish-American War, acquired the rank of colonel in the Twenty-ninth Regiment of the Woodmen of the World. Described as a "thin-lipped, long-nosed, spectacled gentleman," tall and gangling with "stubby red hair,"[8] Simmons was, for a time, a clergyman. Although he evidently possessed "much of the spell-binding ability generally associated with the revivalist preacher," he gave up his ministry to become a salesman for several fraternal orders, including the Masons, the Royal Arch Masons, and the Knights Templars. Simmons declared that he believed "in fraternal orders and fraternal relationships . . . so that all people might know something of the great doctrine of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man."[9]

In 1915, in Atlanta, Simmons brought together some of the veterans of the Reconstruction Klan. He took advantage of a Georgia statute that permitted ex-members of any disbanded organization to re-establish it and use the original name. One contemporary journalist sardonically suggested that the Klan was only a money-making venture and a direct result of Prohibition; Simmons, the writer suggested, first promoted the new order as a locker club where men could legally keep their liquor.[10] To Simmons, however, the order was much more serious than that. He capitalized on the appeal of the original Klan as the epitome of heroism, the protector of Southern womanhood, and the savior of white supremacy. He believed that race conflict was the central issue in a "struggle to save, to regenerate, and to Christianize the world." He hoped to segregate Negroes, perhaps to transport them to Africa. He envisioned a "vast army of warriors, superbly mounted and robed and hooded in white . . . [with] steeds . . . garmented in similar fashion." His supreme desire was to construct a great national university in Atlanta, what he was later to call the 'One Hundred Per Cent University,' where each state would erect a building and where future leaders for the country would train.[11] Simmons sensed the appeal of ritual, mystery, and strange nomenclature, and he heightened the appeal of the Klan during the First World War by turning the members of the Klan to spy-hunting and by offering a secret membership. The Klan developed slowly during the war, but after the Armistice, it exploded across the nation.[12]

The popularity that the Klan achieved following the war resulted largely from the efforts of two individuals. The first, Edward Young Clarke, "was a modern disciple of Barnum and believed that fools were born in America, not every minute but at an ever-increasing rate." In all of Clarke's efforts, "it was never his purpose to offer the public anything in a simple, direct and honest way." He preferred, instead, to contrive complicated proposals, making "them as mystical and mysterious as possible to appeal to the curious in human nature." His partner in an effort to promote the Klan, even though the Klan allowed no women as members, was Mrs. Elizabeth Tyler. One Klansman described her as an "extraordinary woman . . . untaught, but endowed with unusual mentality." Tyler developed her promotional skills on behalf of hygiene and a 'better babies' movement. She met Clarke when he was in charge of a festival to promote the city of Atlanta, and she was responsible for a 'Better Babies parade.'[13] Both were organizers: she with the Young Women's Christian Association, he with the Young Men's Christian Association. They established a promotion company called the Southern Publicity Association. They wanted to make money.[14]

In 1920 Clarke joined the Ku Klux Klan. The associates investigated the organization and decided to give it "the impetus it could get best from publicity." Simmons agreed that Clarke could develop a propagation department for the Klan. Tyler invested about $14,000 of her savings, personally financing the early and difficult stages of promoting the order, and for three years, "the Southern Publicity Association was the tail that wagged the Klan dog."[15] As the membership grew, the Southern Publicity Association and its owners prospered.

In addition to their successful publicity efforts Tyler and Clarke also recruited new talent to the Klan cause. One potential leader financed by Tyler was Dr. Hiram Evans, a Dallas dentist and a Mason who agreed to promote the Klan if its principles "were found not inconsistent with Masonry."[16] Evans, elected to the national office of Imperial Secretary, believed that Simmons had lost the ability to direct the tremendous growth that the Klan was experiencing. Even as the order gained power in local and national politics, it became increasingly unpopular in the press; newspapers around the country published reports of Klan abuses. On 6 September 1921, the New York World began a three-week exposé emphasizing the violence by order members. The articles castigated Klan purposes, ideals, and practices; they depicted Klan leaders as avaricious and inept. The widespread newspaper coverage induced the United States House of Representatives to launch an investigation of the Klan and its officials. Evans, in an effort to help the organization overcome its tarnished reputation, conspired with Tyler and Clarke to get Simmons to step down from the leadership position of Imperial Wizard in June 1922. The three urged Simmons to rest for a period of six months, but when he attempted to resume his official role in October of that year, they supposedly blackmailed him, forcing Simmons to retire permanently with the ceremonial title of Emperor.[17]

Evans was similar to Simmons in several ways. He, too, was orginally a product of Alabama, although he had migrated early to Texas. He also reportedly possessed some of the qualities of the "evangelist and spellbinder," but in addition, Evans possessed a far greater practicality than Simmons ever did. Evans accepted the Imperial Wizardship in an effort to reform the Klan. He realized that many members of the Klan suspected Tyler and Clarke of various improprieties and illegalities. Many men resented a prevalent suggestion that Mrs. Tyler actually was controlling the order. In Chicago alone, 18,000 members resigned because they believed that "the purpose of the Ku Klux Klan . . . is the antithesis of the practices alleged or proved against Clarke and Mrs. Tyler." Late in 1922, Evans removed Clarke from his position in the propagation department; Tyler renounced her concern with the order and married a man from Atlanta involved in the motion picture industry; and the Ku Klux Klan severed its relationship with the Southern Publicity Association.[18]

In spite of negative publicity, the Klan moved into Oklahoma early in the summer of 1921. By the end of that year, as many Klansmen had joined in Oklahoma as had joined throughout the entire Invisible Empire in the preceeding six months.[19] Perhaps many Oklahomans believed with Hiram Evans that attacks against the order were deliberately unfair and misleading, or giving the articles the benefit of the doubt, were superficial. Perhaps the new members of the order agreed that the journalists involved were "'intellectuals [who] have lost contact with the deeper emotions and instincts which, far more than brains, control the majority of men." Many new members might have identified with the characterization Evans gave himself as "the most average man in America."[20] For a variety of reasons, membership in Oklahoma soared to an estimated 90,000; some authorities have indicated that one man in every twenty belonged.[21]

Journalists suggested that the Ku Klux Klan "flourished best in cummunities [sic] where education standards were low and social life raw or primitive." Reportedly only six states spent less per capita on education than did Oklahoma; none had a poorer average attendance.[22] The explanations for Klan popularity noted a dichotomy between large areas "poor to the verge of misery" and oil regions "in a state of bumptious and almost barbaric prosperity." One writer described a pioneer tradition where

> Men carry guns and are ready to use them; woman is still a lesser man, protected, deferred to, and exploited as such; and religion and morals are not a Sabbath formality, but a serious week-day preoccupation. . . . The rural South . . . tends to see life in moral terms, and . . . 'ethical concepts' are more important . . . than law.

The Klan, accordingly, presented an ethical concept based on "vague ideas about woman, home, God, Americanism, and Anglo-Saxon supremacy." Religious "fundamentalist" fears were important to the Klan both in the South and the North. "Evolution, Bolshevism, atheism, and immorality were lumped together. . . . They put Klan regalia on every dead national hero, not even excepting Washington, Lincoln, and the rationalistic Franklin."[23]

Many politicians, very much alive and aspiring to office, also put on the Klan regalia. Although a spokesman for the order claimed that the Klan was neither a political organization, nor officially involved in politics, he did note that some "Klansmen are in politics, and some Klansmen are mighty good politicians."[24] The New York Herald included Oklahoma, as well as Oregon, Texas, southern Arkansas, Indiana, and Ohio, as states "where the Klan is strongest and most militant." The Herald indicated that Kansas, Missouri, northern Arkansas, Alabama, Georgia, and Florida were additional states "where the Klan is well organized but keeping under cover."[25] Oklahoma acquired national notoriety when the Klan reportedly played a significant role in the impeachment of its enemy, Governor John (Jack) Walton. Walton had imposed martial law in Oklahoma in an effort to curb the activities of the Klan. When an angry legislature, strongly influenced by Klansmen, called a special session to impeach the Governor, he tried to use the militia to prevent the session. Many Oklahomans opposed to the Klan viewed Walton, with his clumsy efforts to establish personal prestige and power, as a greater threat than the hooded order, and they formed a temporary alliance with the numerous Klansmen in the legislature resulting in the impeachment of the Governor.[26]

As the order attained considerable influence, both politically and socially, it was not surprising that former Imperial Wizard Simmons would seek to regain some of his former power and prestige. As one editorial humorously suggested,

> When Simmons found himself being edged out of the order, he was suddenly illuminated within by a new inspiration. He would organize the Kluxettes! He would have a ladies' Klan, and sell hoods and furniture for their klaverns. These are times of equal rights, and if there is any fun to be had out of tar and feathers, why shouldn't women have their share?[27]

Actually, Simmons established the Kamelia in April 1923, as an order for women who embraced the tenets of klannishness. In Oklahoma, several W. A. P. (White American Protestant) Study Clubs became Kamelia Kourts, and many studies of the Klan mistakenly report the Kamelia as the official sister society of the Knights.[28]

Upon assuming the Imperial Wizardship, Evans had also begun considering an organization for women. According to Klan accounts, women historically had been faithful to the principles of Klankraft. Although it was not practical for women to become members of the original Klan, the chivlarous path led the men to provide an organization to cooperate with the Knights. The practical Evans recognized that this cooperation was necessary both for political progress and for supplementing Klan revenue with new initiation fees, robe sales, taxes, and contributions. The convention of the Knights, the Klonvocation, meeting in Atlanta in November 1922, had begun six months of investigation into the best method of uniting the numerous existing patriotic organizations for women; the ladies of Enid, Oklahoma, for example, had united already in a Cu Clux Clavern.[29] Evans challenged Simmons in a well-publicized court battle in Georgia for the right to establish the women's auxiliary to the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, and he warned that societies with membership requirements similar to the Knights were multiplying. One in particular, Evans suggested, persisted in its claim, "without legal or moral right," that it was an authorized auxiliary and received thousands of well-intentioned women as members. Evans issued an order that loyal Klansmen should advise their women to wait.[30]

Finally, in the summer of 1923, the Klan rewarded the faithful Klansmen and their women for their patience. The Kloncilium, the governing body of the Klan, held a conference in Washington, D. C., with the administrative heads of women's patriotic organizations from throughout the country, and those gathered approved the Constitution and Laws of the Women of the Ku Klux Klan on 2 June.[31] The Kloncilium issued a statement that it was "essential that the women's organization be of women, by women and for women," without direction by men.[32] After the Pulaski County Circuit Court of Arkansas granted a charter to the Women of the Klan, the organization established a headquarters in Little Rock on the second floor of the building used by the Ancient Order of United Workmen.[33] Mrs. Lula A. Markwell became the Imperial Commander, and Miss Robbie Gill became the Imperial Kligrapp, or secretary. They urged fidelity to Klan principles:

> Klansmen! Klanswomen! Stand firm, do not be deceived and yield not to the flattering unction of ambitious but false leaders, for God's in His Heaven and the principles of Klankraft are as eternal as His granite hills, and must and will prevail over all opposition, against foes without and enemies within.[34]

Some of the Kamelia refused to join the new society, and many Klansmen even left the Knights, disillusioned by the courtroom revelation that the

Klan was so mercenary. Nevertheless, the Women of the Klan claimed that during their first month of existence, due to a coalition of several societies, at least 115,000 women enrolled in their organization.[35]

The women who joined the Ku Klux Klan believed in the attributes of the order as depicted by Klan accounts, and they rejected accusations of violence. They embraced their role as the descendants of hardy and wholesome pioneers. They endorsed patriotism, Christianity, and white supremacy as the faiths that could regenerate the country, even the world. Elizabeth Tyler typified these women who desired to become actively involved in their communities. They evidenced a strong sense of responsibility, participating in clubs and study groups that could help them understand their duty to society. They were eager to use their recently acquired franchise wisely; they did not, however, have any desire to challenge their traditional roles as wives and mothers. The new members of the order believed that the Ku Klux Klan offered them the opportunity to unite with thousands of others to improve themselves and their communities, and to enjoy themselves as well.

CHAPTER III

THE DETAILS OF KLANNISHNESS

The Women of the Klan relied on elaborately detailed ritual in all aspects of their organization. Membership requirements were stringent, and new members participated in a mysterious naturalization ceremony when they joined a klan. Duly elected officers, bearing strange titles, conducted the ceremonies described in the Kloran, or 'Secret Work' of the Klan, and led the singing of songs published in the Musiklan. Well-organized meetings for both women and girls were educational and entertaining, and they depicted an ideal way of living. The order promulgated a militaristic and patriotic sincerity, yet it provided its members with the opportunity for mystery and secrecy in their lives. The members, in return, provided the order and its officers with various revenues to be used to recruit even more members.

As part of the recruitment effort, the society sent a prospective member a small card inviting her to join. This "Patriotic Call" informed the recipient that certain unnamed friends knew that she was a native-born American citizen, sincerely interested in her community, city, state, and nation. They knew she owed no allegiance to any foreign government or ruler, any political party, sect, or creed, and these friends stated that she was engaged in a legitimate occupation. The prospect had to

how to join

believe in:

The Tenets of the Christian Religion.
Protection of our Pure Womanhood.
Just Laws and Liberty.
Closer Relationship with Pure Americanism.
The Upholding of the Constitution of the United States.
The Separation of Church and State.
Freedom of Speech and Press.
Closer Relationship between the Government and the Governed.
Preventing the Causes of Mob Violence and Lynchings.
The Limits of Foreign Immigration.
The much-needed Local Reforms.
Law and Order.
Higher Moral Standards.
Better Understanding and Relations of Home and Duty.

must believe

The invitation emphasized that "REAL WOMEN whose oaths are inviolate are needed." It advised the prospective member that because of the recommendations of friends, she possessed the opportunity to join a "powerful and secret, non-political organization." She needed to present the invitation at the door of the indicated meeting location in order to be admitted. The card warned her to discuss the invitation with no one.[1]

joining @ meeting

After attending a meeting of the Klan, the woman could submit a Petition for Citizenship endorsed by two Klanswomen in good standing. The Klan required her to specify, among other things, her religion and the religions of her husband, mother, and father; it asked whether she had paid her poll tax for that year. The Klan verified that the applicant was white, native-born, Christian, of sound mind, and at least eighteen years of age. The Realm Commander, a regional official, possessed the authority to give special dispensation to any applicant who qualified in all other requirements but the one of six months' residency. An officer of the local klonklave, or meeting, read each application twice. The Klan required any rejected applicant to wait for one year before submitting another petition, and if no member filed a formal written objection, the woman made a donation of a specified sum and reported to a designated site for naturalization in the Invisible Empire.[2]

To the Klan, the Invisible Empire denoted the geographic jurisdiction of the order, embracing the whole world. In a spiritual sense, it also applied to

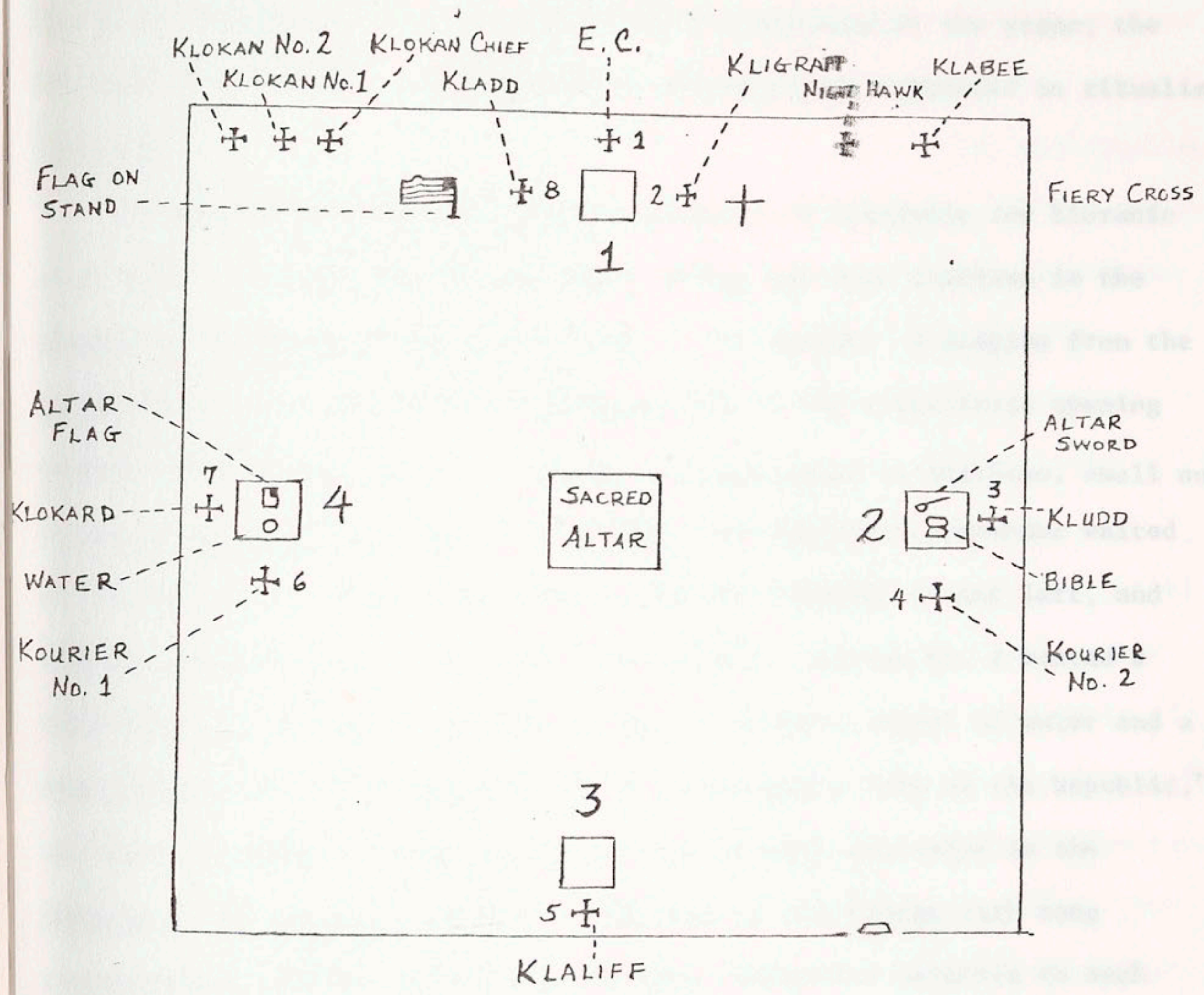
> all the secrets and secret knowledge and information, secret work and workings and things of this Order, and to all that has been, that now is and that is to be, the past, the present and the future, yesterday, today and forever; the dead of yesterday, the living of today, the contemplated of tomorrow; the life that is now and that which is to come.[3]

During the naturalization ceremony, the woman pledged to this Invisible Empire her allegiance in four different oaths. To emphasize the confidentially of these oaths, asterisks appeared in place of the title, Women of the Ku Klux Klan, and of the word Klan itself. With her left hand over her heart and her right raised to heaven, she pledged obedience to all "requirements of the **** which do now exist or which may be hereafter enacted," her secrecy concerning all Klan matters, her fidelity "to foster the interests of the ****," and finally, her sincere "*ishness."[4]

The Kloran, the handbook for all ritualistic work, described both the naturalization klonklave and the regular business klonklave in detail, even including diagrams. The Kloran itself, in its physical form, belonged to the Women of the Ku Klux Klan; the order loaned each copy to a specific Klan with the warning, "This Kloran MUST not be permitted to get into the possession of any person not entitled to receive same." The handbook included the Ku Klux Kreed, "held inviolate by our Citizens . . . and sacredly secret," and the list of Kloranic officers elected by the Klan. The officers included the Excellent Commander or President; the Kludd

their handbook

Illustration I: "View of Quadrate before Officers Enter"


KLOKAN No. 2
KLOKAN CHIEF
E. C.
KLIGRAPP
KLABEE
KLOKAN No. 1
KLADD
NIGHT HAWK
1
FLAG ON STAND
8
2
FIERY CROSS
1
ALTAR FLAG
ALTAR SWORD
7
KLOKARD
4
SACRED ALTAR
2
3
KLUDD
WATER
6
BIBLE
4
KOURIER No. 1
KOURIER No. 2
3
5
KLALIFF

loran or Ritual of the Women of the Ku Klux Klan, Rev. Ed. (Little Rock: Parke Harper Publishing Co., 1927), p. 5.

or Chaplain; the Klaliff or Vice-President; the Klokard or Lecturer; the Nighthawk usually in charge of candidates for office; the Kladd or conductor of candidates for naturalization; the Musiklad at the piano; the Kouriers No. 1 and No. 2, appointed by the Excellent Commander as ritualistic officers.[5]

The Klan designated the shape of a square as desirable for kloranic work, with a Sacred Altar in the exact center and four stations in the centers of the lines forming the sides of the square. A diagram from the Kloran pictured this square at the beginning of the ritualistic opening ceremony (See Illustration 1). Large numerals refer to stations, small numerals to the order in which officers appeared. The Excellent Commander waited at Station No. 1, with a Fiery Cross, not yet lighted, to her left, and with an American flag on a stand to her right. Station No. 2 hosted a small Bible and a sword, and Station No. 3, a small vessel of water and a small altar flag. The Musiklad played "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," the first of several religious and patriotic songs published in the Musiklan. The Musiklan noted to which page of the Kloran each song corresponded, and the text of the kloranic ceremonies referred to each musical selection by number.[6]

The officers entered one at a time and before taking their places "quickly and with military snap to their movements,"[7] they exhibited a variety of secret signs. These signs promulgated by the Imperial Commander were important since the society wished to "inculcate a high spiritual philosophy through exalted ritualism."[8] Before any member could even enter the outer door of the klavern, or meeting place, she knocked twice and whispered the first half of a national password to the Klexter, the officer elected as Outer Guard. At the inner door, the member again rapped twice, whispered the second half of the password, and showed her dues card to the Klarogo, or Inner Guard. As the meeting opened, each officer entered and gave the SOS (Sign of Salutation) to the Excellent Commander. To make the sign, the officer placed her left thumb in her palm, and touching the left eye-brow with the first finger; during the meeting, if any member desired to speak she used the same sign. When greeted by the Excellent Commander, the entering officer made the Sign of the Fiery Cross by standing with feet together, arms extended to right and left at right angles to the body, palms open to the front, fingers and thumb close together.

During the course of a regular business klonklave, members practiced several other signs. For the SOK (Sign of Klanswomen), a member raised her left arm at a forty-five degree angle, with the thumb in the palm of the hand, fingers outspread, left foot forward. To make the SOL (Sign of Loyalty), a Klanswoman, with the fingertips of her left hand, touched her forehead over the left eye, then touched her breast over her heart, then stretched out her hand, with elbow at waistline, palm upward; the spoken interpretation of the SOL was "My head, my heart and my hand/For God and Home and Native Land." The Sign of Secrecy involved closing the third and fourth fingers and the thumb of the left hand in the palm, and the member drew the extended first and second fingers from right to left across the lips. For the secret Grip of the Klan, women clasped left hands, and to test a woman for membership, the Klanswoman extended her left hand. If the person so approached clasped the hand, the member was to turn her hand over to her left, asking AYAK (Are You a Klanswoman?).

If the other individual was a member, she turned the hand of the first member over to the left, saying AKIA (A Klanswoman I Am).[10]

Each Klavern contained more ritualism than just the signs. After the entrance of officers, the opening ceremony continued with the welcome to all members and to all visitors from other klans. Following the singing of "Sweet Hour of Prayer," the officers prepared the Sacred Altar. The Night Hawk moved the Fiery Cross in front of the Excellent Commander, three feet from the altar, and lit the cross. At the same time, the Klokard placed the flag in the center of the altar. The Kludd placed the Bible open at Romans XII below the flag. Kourier No. 2 removed the sword from its scabbard and positioned it to the right of the flag; Kourier No. 1 placed the vessel of water at the upper left of the flag. The Kladd, to the strains of "Stars and Stripes Forever," moved the American flag from its stand to a position in front of the Excellent Commander. The assembled Klanswomen pledged their allegiance, and the Klokard explained the significance of the flag as the symbol of the Constitution of the United States. The red, she noted, represented the blood of American heroes; the white, "the prayers of American Womanhood and the sancitity of American Homes;" the blue, "a reflection of America's unclouded sky, cast from [a] star-decked canopy. . . ." Following the "Star-Spangled Banner," the Excellent Commander asked the Klokard to explain the Fiery Cross. The Klokard responded that it was one of seven Sacred Symbols, and the Excellent Commander continued that each of the seven taught a "spiritual truth, and [represented] a great Klan principle."[11]

The brief form of the ceremony used in most of the regular business klonklaves omitted the elaboration on the symbols; the complete form included an explanation of each followed by a song. The Kludd commented that the Holy Bible signified the existence of God, and that Romans XII was "a constant reminder of the tenets of the Christian religion and a Klanswoman's law of life." The assemblage sang "How Firm a Foundation." The Night Hawk described the Fiery Cross as a symbol of sacrifice and service, "sanctified and made holy . . . by the suffering and blood of the Crucified Christ." She further commented that "the Fiery outline of the burning cross illumined the heavens of old to lead the Christian army against a pagan horde," and the Klan hoped that "its light [might] dispel the darkness of ignorance and superstition." The women sang "In the Cross of Christ I Glory" in honor of their Fiery Cross. The Sword, according to the Kladd, symbolized law enforcement, and the military and executive powers of the Government. The Sword also symbolized the determination of the Klan to "help, aid, and assist all law enforcement officials in the proper performance of their legal duties," and to defend "America for Americans" from "traitors within or enemies without." "Onward Christian Soldiers" punctuated their determination. Kourier No. 1 described water as a symbol of purity of life and unity of purpose; the group united its voices in "Wash Me and I Shall Be Whiter Than Snow." Kourier No. 2 described the Mask worn by Klanswomen as a symbol of secrecy and unselfishness, enabling the women to hide individuality and become a part of the larger group; the women sang "A Charge to Keep I Have." The Robe, according to the Klaliff, symbolized purity and equity, placing all women regardless of wealth or poverty "on a common level of sisterhood and fraternal union." Wearing the snowy robe, each woman could "do good deeds in secret without thought of personal reward." The accompanying song was "Jesus Lover of My Soul," not found in the Musiklan.[12]

The opening ceremony, both regular and brief forms, continued with a prayer followed by "Rock of Ages." The Excellent Commander then complimented her officers on their willingness to assume an important responsibility, that of promoting

> this noble Order, through which the generations now and always may learn the blessings of the real America; of living with singleness of purpose that our daughters may be loyal wives and righteous mothers, that our sons may be devoted husbands and noble fathers; that their lives may be a contribution to the true wealth of home and country.

Everyone joined in one stanza of "Blest Be the Tie that Binds" as the opening ceremony reached its conclusion.[13]

The lengthy and detailed opening ceremony was simply the prelude to the regular order of business or the naturalization ceremony. For either, the Excellent Commander gave three raps of her gavel, and all stood to sing "America" and recite the Ku Klux Kreed. If the meeting proceeded into the naturalization ceremony, officers escorted the women already approved for membership into the inner room. The candidates answered a series of questions, and the Kludd led the group in prayer before the Klokard administered the oaths mentioned earlier. The Excellent Commander then congratulated each candidate on her "womanly decision to forsake the world of selfishness and fraternal alienation and emigrate to the delectable bounds of the Invisible Empire. . . ." She reminded the women that they "must be actively patriotic toward our country and constantly klannish toward Klanswomen. . . ." A pre-selected member then recited as impressively as possible a lengthy poem, memorized for the occasion. The Kludd delivered the dedicatory prayer, and the Excellent Commander declared

Photograph I: Women of the Ku Klux Klan, probably 1928.

Courtesy: Photographic Archives, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Photograph donated by Bettie Weldon.

the women citizens of the Invisible Empire.[14]

Although the regular business klonklave had little established ritual to follow, the Klan provided a variety of ways to heighten the mysticism of the Klan. The women used a special Ku Klux Kalendar in all correspondence. The days of the week, from Sunday through Saturday, were Dark, Deadly, Dismal, Doleful, Desolate, Dreadful, and Desperate. The weeks of any month, from first through fifth, were Woeful, Weeping, Wailing, Wonderful, and Wierd. The months of the year were Bloody, Gloomy, Hideous, Fearful, Furious, Alarming, Terrible, Horrible, Mournful, Sorrowful, Frightful, and Appalling. Each year of the Klan, or Anno Klan, began in June, and the first year of the Klan correlated with 1866.[15]

The Kardinal Kullors of the Klan were white, crimson, gold, and royal purple, and Secondary Kullors were green, blue, and black. The women wore white robes of light weight cotton cloth, made with a half cape of the same material over the left shoulder, with a white girdle around the waist, and with the insignia of the order over the left breast. They also wore a cowl or helmet of the same material, reinforced to give it sufficient stiffness to form a cone when worn; the helmet had masks of the same material in the front and the back, with two small eyeholes in the front and one red tassel at the peak. The ensign of the Klanswomen was a crimson cross on a gold shield on a white rectangular background with a gold border. The words "Women of the Ku Klux Klan" appeared in crimson four inches below the tip of the shield. The back of the ensign was royal purple.[16]

The Klanswomen even developed a mystical and religious burial service to honor deceased members. The women were to line up silently in immaculate regalia and walk slowly, forty inches apart. The Bearer of the Fiery Cross and the Bearer of the Flag lined up first, with the latter on the right. The Excellent Commander and the other officers, in order of rank, followed the muffled drums next in line. The Bearer of the Regalia of the deceased, if the deceased were not interred in her robe, was next, followed by the remaining women. Arriving silently, the women then sang "Abide with Me," and the Excellent Commander explained, "We grieve not for her. . . . She was a worthy member with us of a noble Order. She has passed on from the Invisible Empire to the Empire Invisible. . . ." The Kludd read I Thessalonians 4:13-15, pertaining to the reasons for not sorrowing for those who followed Jesus Christ; she then comforted the bereaved, saying "we will meet again in the Great Klonvocation of the Empire Invisible." After singing "Nearer My God to Thee," with left hands over hearts, the women formed a square around the casket and knelt for thirty seconds. After placing the regalia on the casket and offering a prayer, the women left silently. Following the death of a member, the Klan sent a card of condolence and was available to help the family.[17]

Because the order was defined as historically "Militaristic" as well as "Ritualistic," the women established Military Committees. The committees were essential to facilitate the completion of necessary projects in the briefest time possible. The Excellent Commander held the additional title of General, in command of the Klanton, which was all of the territory within the jurisdiction of the Klan. The General issued orders, formulated rules, and assigned duties. The Major was second in command, insuring that the orders from the General were obeyed. Captains were responsible for the political wards of a Klanton, and lieutenants for the precincts.

Ideally a Sergeant was responsible for each block, but frequently the position was difficult to fill.[18]

Consistent with the desire for a strictly regulated membership, Klanswomen occasionally needed to consider the Official Document of Banishment of a member, a serious penalty for a major offense. The Constitution of the women of the Klan defined such an offense as treason against the United States, a violation of the Oath of Allegiance of the Klan, disrespect of virtuous womanhood, violation of laws of the order, swearing of allegiance to any institution inimical to the government of the United States, habitual use of profane language during a klonklave, pollution of Caucasian blood through miscegenation, commission of any unworthy act, or repetition of a minor offense. A minor infraction included committing any act operating against the best interests of the Klan, failing to obey the Excellent Commander, and failing to respond to any summons. Before consideration of the Official Document of Banishment, the Klan required that the charge be submitted in writing to the Klokann, or elected Board of Investigators. If the Klokann recommended a trial within thirty days, the Excellent Commander, the Klaliff, the Klokard, and the Kludd each chose six names, from which the Kladd withdrew eight. The accused had to appear before a tribunal of the remaining sixteen members. After the hearing, twelve votes sufficed to acquit or convict; if convicted, the member had the right of appeal to Realm officials, or to the Imperial Kloncilium, the highest judicial body. If the appeal failed, then the possible penalties ranged from a reprimand, to suspension, to the banishment considered by an Oklahoma Klan. Only the Imperial Commander could decree the worst, or Extreme Penalty, that of "complete ostracism in any and all things by each and every member of this order."[19] Banishment carried serious implications; a newspaper clipping alleged that newly elected Governor Henry S. Johnston invited trouble by appointing as his secretary an Okmulgee woman banished by the Ku Klux Klan.[20]

Besides ritualistic and militaristic, the Klan claimed that the organization was a "Social," "Fraternal," "Patriotic," and "Benevolent" order.[21] The klonklave constitutionally had to occur at least once a month and have at least six members present. The Women of the Klan in Cherokee, Oklahoma met more frequently in 1924, and at one meeting, had twenty-seven members present, as well as nine visitors from Jet, one from Alva, and one from Blackwell. The minutes from another meeting noted that a visitor from Denver, Colorado, gave "a very interesting talk on how and where their Klan met and how they had to be guarded all of which was very interesting and showed what 100% folks can do." The women invited the Knights to their first meeting of 1925, and "about 18 of them graced the south side of the klavern." The Kligrapp concluded her minutes, noting that "a very enjoyable time was had socialy [sic] after the conclusion of the work." Members of the local Klan presented a patriotic program during their second meeting in February. One Klanswoman delivered remarks concerning the Puritans, and the arrival of the Mayflower in America. One member read a poem about the Liberty Bell, and another gave a talk on Betsy Ross. The chairman of the committee spoke of the meaning of the United States of America, including "some fine information along the line of George Washington and it was enjoyed." Even when their klavern burned, the women continued to meet in the homes of members,[22] closing their ceremonies with an affirmation that "the crowning glory of a Klanswoman is to serve," followed by a vow of secrecy.[23]

The Klanswomen in Cherokee believed, however, that their enjoyment of the social aspects of the Klan was secondary to their civic duties. Minutes from business meetings frequently recorded that members visited the sick in the community hospital and at home. The women also expressed an interest in politics, and they counted on the Klan to advise them as to the best candidates seeking office. In 1924, for example, the Kligrapp recorded, "the question of who's who in politicks [sic] came up and [sample] ballots were given out and [we were] instructed who was who and why. . ." Again in 1926, the minutes noted that the Kligrapp planned to write to the Realm Commander "and find out who we should vote for out side [sic] of governor." The women coordinated their activities through committees, including Americanization, Public School, Public Amusement, Legislation, Child Welfare and Juvenile Delinquency, Citizenship, Civic Affairs, Prohibition, Law Enforcement, Peace, and Politics; just as in other social organizations, some committees were not popular.[24] The society also organized itself through a series of political units. A Kleagle, or organizer within the state, helped form the Klans into a Province of contiguous counties, and a Major Kleagle, or organizer in charge of one or more states, helped form the Provinces into Realms. Each Realm elected Klepeers, or delegates, to the Imperial Klonvocation, the national legislative body, on the basis of one vote for each one hundred or major fraction of Klanswomen in good standing.[25]

The national order provided local klans with an Educational Year-Book outlining studies for an entire year of meetings. The Year-Book indicated that each six weeks, the national Education Committee would send a booklet containing the study outline, the bibliography, and aids for the preparation of talks and papers for the next six-week period. The Excellent Commander assigned topics to various members to present, and she encouraged all to read and do original research in order to discuss the material intelligently. If each Klan would devote thirty minutes per week to the discussion of topics, the Year-Book asserted, the members would gain a thorough "knowledge and understanding of every phase of all the problems confronting the women of America." According to the booklet, "the combined influence of a multitude of women throughout America concentrating upon these patriotic studies is beyond computation."

The patriotic studies began with the public school system. The women discussed its origin, including the reasons public schools were more desirable than private or sectarian schools. They examined the means of support for public education. Considering the administration of schools, the members favored a Secretary of Education in the Cabinet of the President of the United States and a rigorous method of selecting teachers on the bases of religion, qualifications, loyalty, and leadership ability. They favored more practical training for students and noted the importance of compulsory education. The women also questioned how "the moral code and Christian teaching" could best be incorporated into education. They believed the public schools were the safeguard of national life, breaking down class barriers and prejudice, overcoming illiteracy and enabling citizens to do their work better, Americanizing aliens, and teaching respect for the law, thus outlawing the vicious and depraved. Finally, the Klan emphasized the relation of the schools to Christianity and considered the role of the school in the evangelization of the world.

Citizenship followed education in the Year-Book. The women discussed both the rights and the responsibilities of citizenship. According to the Klan, the good American had to "eradicate illiteracy, insure domestic tranquility and promote a reign of good will," and also to "condemn intolerance, bigotry and racial animosities." The members investigated various rewards of good citizenship, including an enlightened public conscience, "honest government agencies and businesses, a reduction of poverty and depravity, and "improvements in industrial conditions." Viewing the child as the future citizen, the women advocated "Clean literature, clean amusements and wholesome home environments" as the keys to the protection of the democratic state. They deplored the standards and tendencies of the day, exploring the relationship of styles of dress to public morality and private living; they fearfully noted "alien tendencies toward anarchy, communism, Sovietism and Bolshevism." Finally, the Klan encouraged the members to condemn and "fight to the limit" all violations of the law, to honor the flag, to keep "unsullied" the "stream of pure Americanism," and to maintain "the tenets of Protestant Christianity."

Following the unit on citizenship, the members studied women in politics, both as voters and as office-holders. As voters, women had the obligation to become well-informed; as office-holders, women possessed the potential to accomplish many things in the appropriate positions, particularly as members of school boards. After considering the history of the suffrage movement, the members explored the ways in which women held the balance of power in politics as positive influences. Klanswomen needed to exercise the franchise, according to the Year-Book, in order to protect the home, "to increase the proportion of moral, intelligent, native-born voters," "to guard against the exploitation of women in the industries," and finally, to guarantee "laws to protect women in their proper rights."

Following the study of women in politics, Klan members considered the new responsibilities of women. They stressed that the old responsibilities of motherhood and homemaking could not be surrendered and discussed ways to exercise suffrage without neglecting other duties. The women studied their historic "mistreatment and degradation," and they rejected objections that suffrage meant "socialism, feminism or weakening of domestic relations." Discussing the proper attitude toward elections, the women recognized their ability to "elevate the tone of polling places" as judges and clerks. They accepted their obligation to be "thoroughly conversant with the character of all candidates," and to explore the attitudes of all candidates toward the public schools. In every way, women needed to "keep America on guard."

The members next studied a unit on civics. The Klan urged the women to follow the inspiring examples of a varied assortment of heroines and great Americans, including Betsy Ross, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Robert E. Lee, Andrew Jackson, Benjamin Franklin, Theodore Roosevelt, and Woodrow Wilson. As a part of civics, the women studied immigration from its early character to the progress of legislation "to control the menace of ignorant millions from Southern Europe." The women also examined their role in both industry and professions. They questioned, however, whether they could be "justified in abandoning home life for a public career." Klanswomen explored their roles as the guardians of public health, and they concluded their unit on civics with the study of various levels of government.

The next week of study emphasized homemaking. The Klan encouraged the members to consider the "divinely ordained mission of Motherhood," and further, to consider the "contrast between children of America and those of heathen or non-Protestant lands." The women discussed the religious influence of mothers, noting that "woman naturally [was] more religious than man," and that this gave women greater opportunities for service, practical charity, and benevolence. Accepting their domestic responsibilities, the Klanswomen declared, no longer meant that women could "be forced to be a drudge," or beg funds from their husbands. The women emphasized that "no divided household can long survive," and that cooperation within the family was essential. They explained that the home was the foundation of good government, and that American women were the "mothers of America's greatest men." Finally, the members considered that special training in domestic science and psychology could make better mothers.

Following the study of homemaking, the Year-Book contained a unit on women as "the other half of humanity." The members explored the ways in which women complimented men, and they studied medical and psychological evidence that proved the alleged inferiority of women to be fictitious. They discussed the duties of each member of the family and considered the equality of the sexes. The women concluded, however, that married women should not displace men in gainful occupations, and that, while some occupations were peculiarly adaptable to women, "home duty must come first if American institutions are to survive."

The Klanswomen completed their year of study with the contemplation of "the women of tomorrow." They noted, first, that "the product can't be better than the maker," and that mothers needed to provide good examples for daughters. They reflected on their advancements and evaluated new conditions. "Shall America remain Protestant" the members queried, "or shall our Christian birthright be taken from us?" The Klan urged them to compare predominantly Protestant nations with predominantly Catholic ones in categories such as education, morals, religion, finances, industry, commerce, and the relative positions of women. They noted that women should be concerned with a variety of special problems of the future. They discussed, for example, the proposition that the "intermingling of races [was] opposed to the laws of God and man," and they examined various dangerous amusements, such as "public dance halls, moving pictures, carnivals, petting parties and the auto, and salacious literature." With all of their studies in mind, the women took a final week to review and reflect on the mission of the Ku Klux Klan in America.[26]

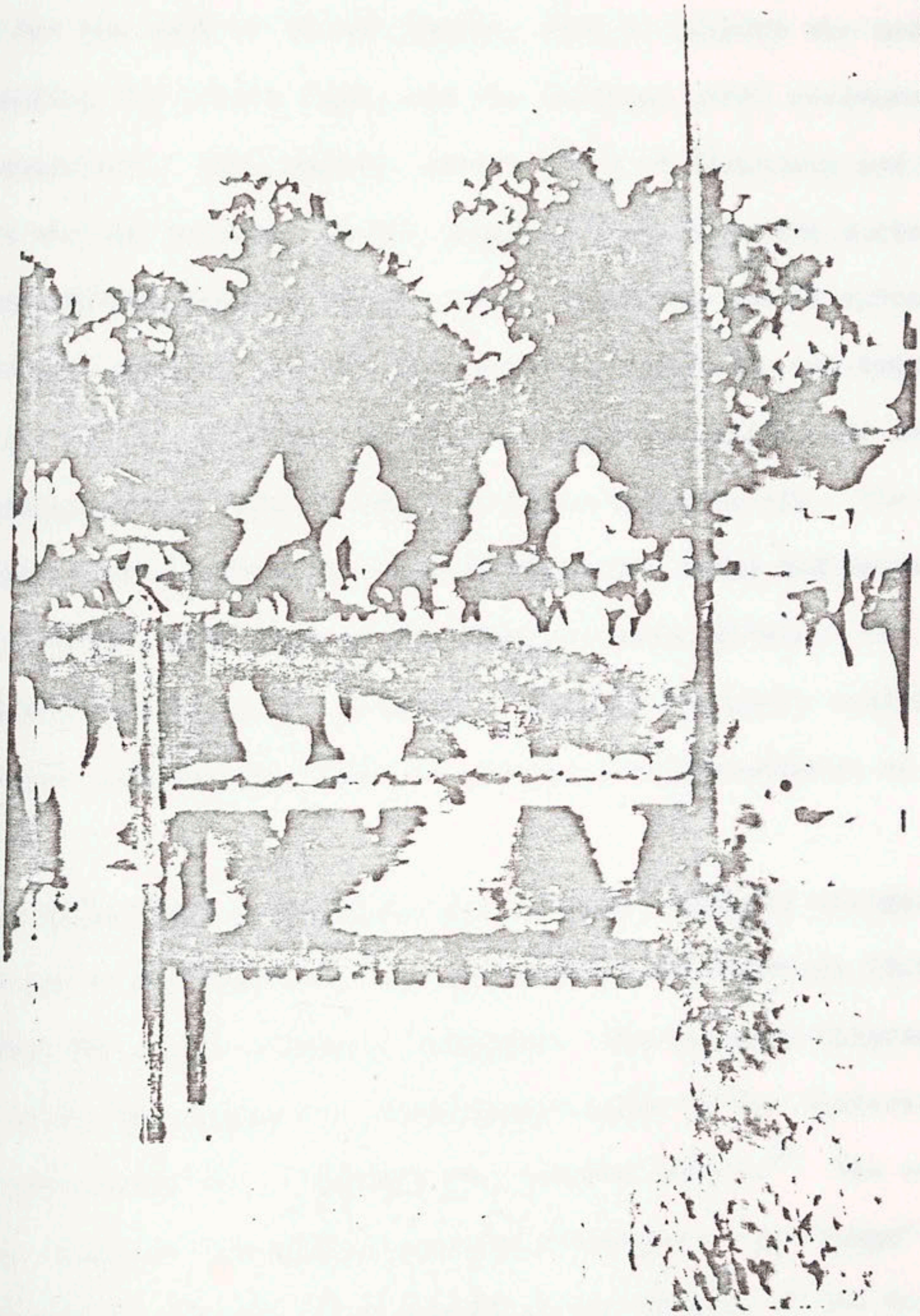
Reflected throughout Klan pronouncements was a concern for the youth of America. Many klaverns provided a place to entertain young children during weekly meetings. Pre-teens could join the Kradle Roll, and teenage boys could enlist in Junior Prep. The Women of the Klan created the Tri-K Klub in an effort to influence girls between the ages of thirteen and eighteen, and the Klub published pamphlets on subjects such as Trust, Races, Influence, Knowledge, Leadership, Unity, and Brains-Brawn-Breadth. The organization urged each girl to "be cheerful" in her home, social activities, school or work, church and Klub; a story about the partially blind Mist brothers, Mr. Opty-Mist, who never saw a ship leave the safety of its port, and Mr. Pessy-Mist, who never saw one return, warned the girls of being "foolishly optimistic" or "disgustingly pessimistic." The Tri-K Klub advised each member to "be energetic," to "be determined," and to "be militantly and aggressively good."[27] The pamphlets attempted to educate the girls on a wide variety of serious subjects ranging from race to religion to immigration, but the explanations were quite simplistic in order to appeal to the teenage audience. An "industrial problem," for example, occurred because Southern European immigrants could work in America for less than half of what an American required. This, according to the Klan, was because of his racial training and his way of life in his native country. Once in America, the immigrant

> can live on garlic and a little cheap meat. . . . His wife . . . will keep the little dingy hut for him, and they will raise from three to five times the number of babies the Anglo-Saxon mothers will raise. They do not know anything about Mather or Brewster or the Pilgrim Fathers. Their religion is invariably Roman Catholic.[28]

In spite of the severity of the menace, the Klan reminded the girls that the Klan had "never been an organization to resort to force of physical violence because we know that brains must be relied upon to outwit--out guess--out vote and out class all opposition." Finally, the Klan enjoined each girl to influence her friends, advising her date, for example, of her interest in her church, and in the foreign immigration problem, and of her support for the new immigration quota laws.[29]

Also desirous of influencing friends and neighbors, Oklahoma Klanswomen actively participated in public ventures. In November 1924 they welcomed an Imperial Lecturer to the state and promoted her speaking tour.[30] The Klanswomen in Muskogee became an integral part of community memorial services and were active in charity work. The Guthrie members publicly initiated a large class "into the joys of Klankraft and the thrilling work of patriotism."[31] The women in Cherokee considered the "matter of donating to the poor . . . and names were taken down and amounts for each listed." Their minutes also revealed a slogan, "Every Klanswoman earn a dollar for a motherless child," in reference to a statewide effort to construct Klanhaven, evidently for orphans.[32] The Cardin Klanswomen made donations to hospitals, furnished food, fuel, and clothing to the unfortunate, and donated linens, clothing, and three dollars per month to the Juvenile Home in Miami, Oklahoma. The Cardin Klan, with characteristic emphasis on the importance of religion, also rewarded one of its members for memorizing the Twelfth Chapter of Romans. In Lawton, the Klansfolk held frequent outdoor gatherings, and as late as 1928, could "always be counted on to partake in the fight against wet candidates and Roman Catholic intolerance." The women in Lawton were proud to be the first Klan officially established in the state, and they sponsored such varied events as a "profitable and enjoyable Spelling Bee" and a penny circus with thirty-five booths. The Lawton Klanswomen also supplied the needy, on one occasion with as many as ninety baskets. The Oklahoma City Klanswomen once made crosses of red roses, placing them on the graves of former members at midnight. The Ku Klux Klan held frequent parades to demonstrate their strength, and because Klanswomen around the state belonged to other societies, including the Legion Auxiliary, Order of the Eastern Star, Delphian Study Club, Rebekahs, and Royal Neighbors, the Drumright Klan quickly turned to the women of the Eastern Star to supplement their ranks during a parade, supplying robes and cowls to all alien participants.[33]

Beyond supporting the public displays of Klan benevolence and strength, Photograph II: Women of the Klan in El Reno, Oklahoma



Courtesy: Photographic Archives, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma; Photograph donated by Bettie Weldon.

the Klan required the women to aid the order monetarily. The initial donation to acquire membership began at $5.00 in 1923, but increased to $10.00 as of 1 June 1925. The Klanswoman also donated $5.00 if she applied for the rank of Second Degree, open to members who had been in good standing for ninety days, and the national order collected a percentage of all donations. Each member, except wives of ministers and wives of Klansmen who had belonged to the original Reconstruction society, had to donate her Klecktoken, or yearly dues. Each Klan was to maintain a separate bank account for its Imperial Tax; the total tax reserve equaled at least 23 1/3¢ per member in good standing per month, 15¢ for Imperial expenditures, and 8 1/3¢ or more for Realm expenditures. The Empire made additional revenues from the sale of mandatory robes and helmets for $5.00, of which $4.50 went to the Imperial headquarters. The Klan was the only authorized dealer for a variety of other necessary supplies, and the Empire also realized the interest accrued from investments of their income.[34]

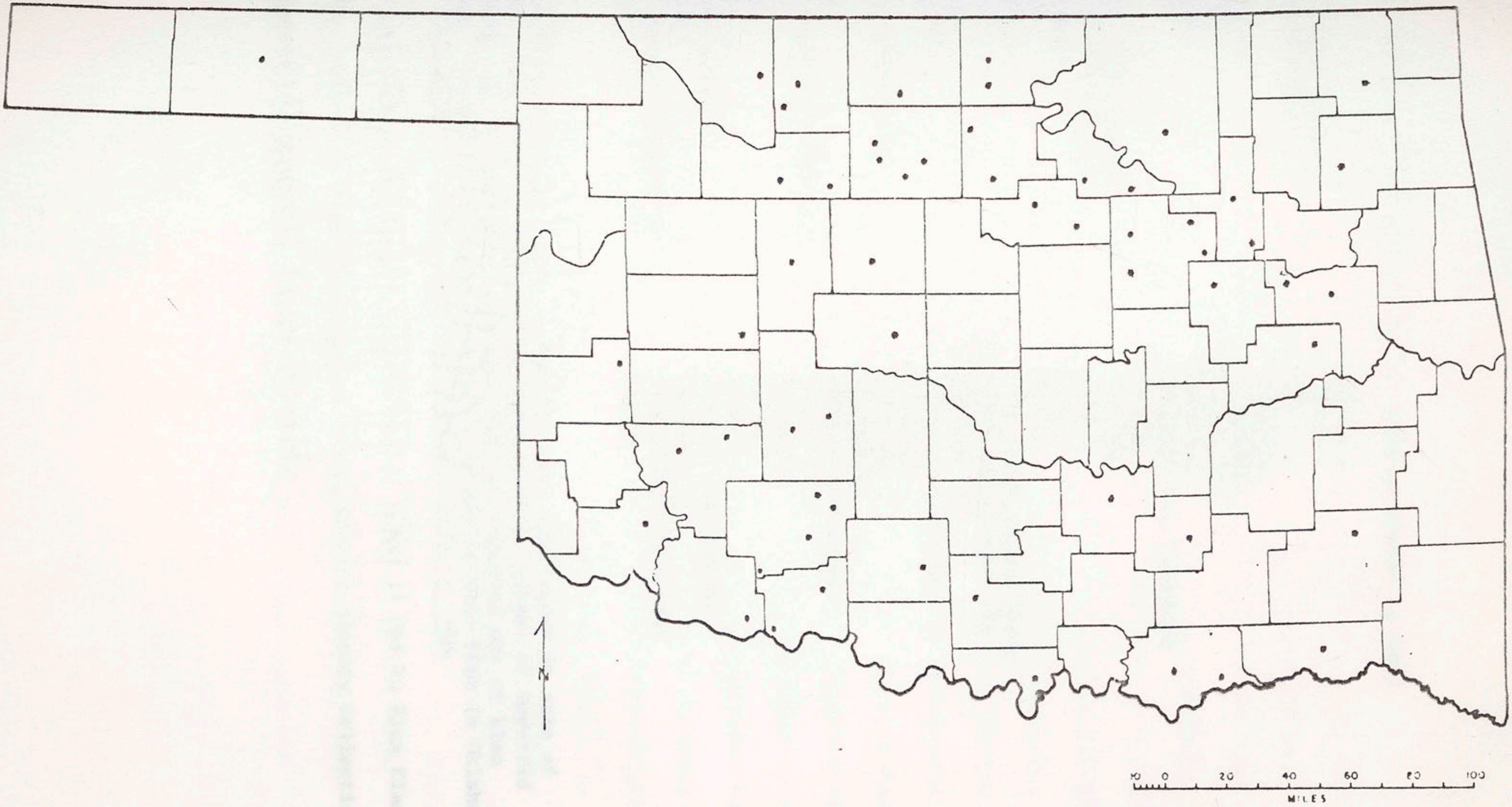
The Constitution vested in the Imperial Commander ultimate responsibility for the use of all revenues, but on or around 12 February 1924, the first Commander, Mrs. Lula Markwell, resigned. The Imperial Kligrapp, Miss Robbie Gill, "an attractive, dark-haired woman in her thirties, perhaps a bit on the portly side," assumed the coveted office.[35] She soon married James A. Comer, a Little Rock attorney referred to as "Judge" in Klan pronouncements, and the Grand Dragon of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in Arkansas. By August 1925 three officers of the Women of the Klan brought suit in Pulaski Chancery Court against the Comers. The three, Miss Agnes B. Cloud, Imperial Klaliff and Major Kleagle for Texas and

New Mexico, Miss Dora B. George, member of the Klokann and Major Kleagle for those states also, and Mrs. Flora Alexander, service women for the order, charged that Cloud should have assumed the office of Imperial Commander. They charged also that Comer, as Commander, had withheld information from the Imperial Klokann. They charged that she had paid her husband $18,000 as Imperial Klonsel and had given him large sums for robes, and that she planned to purchase a robe factory at an exorbitant price from the Grand Dragon. The plaintiffs alleged that Comer had wasted funds, that she had misappropriated funds for automobiles, a new Imperial Palace and administrative offices, and that she intended to banish without cause the three who had brought suit. Chancellor John E. Martineau, previously an anti-Klan gubernatorial candidate, refused to review the charges contending he lacked jurisdiction in the dispute. Yet he ruled that the three plaintiffs could examine the books of the Women of the Ku Klux Klan and file an amended petition in court. The subsequent accusations against the Comers included fraudulent bookkeeping, mismanagement of funds resulting in a $70,000 deficit in only seven months, and the purchase by the order of the robe factory owned by James Comer for $50,000 more than its value. Although the court appointed a special master in chancery to hear the case, the plaintiffs could not raise $250 in court costs, and the master dismissed the suit.[36]

The Imperial Commander answered the charges against her in a formal proclamation, asserting that the court had dismissed the case because the complaints contained no "legal cause for action" against the Comers.[37] The dissension, however, helped validate suspicions that the women were pawns in power struggles among the Knights, and that their funds supported the men. The women themselves indicated their close relationship with the Knights; their constitution declared that they promoted the Imperial Proclamations of the Klan.[38] Despite claims that they were "two separate and distinct orders" in membership and government, the women indicated that the two orders, "having the same principles, teachings and tenets and thier Ideals of Citizenship and Morality being the same, are both included in the Invisible Empire."[39] The female membership had increased because of the assistance provided by the Knights; James Comer had invested $8,000 in the Women of the Ku Klux Klan in 1923. The legal battle for the control of the society dramatically affected the Little Rock members. Both Little Rock Klan No. 1 for men and Rose City Klan No. 1 for women seceded. The women, in their "ordinance of secession," attacked the domination of the Women of the Ku Klux Klan by the Knights.[40]

The actions and reputations of the Knights had less effect on Klanswomen in Oklahoma. In spite of nationally publicized stories of Klan "whippings, burnings, and intimidations,"[41] the district meetings in 1924 united women from eighty-five Klans in all but Wagoner and McIntosh Counties in the east central part of the state. As of 10 April 1925, when twenty-one states had 287 Klans, Oklahoma still had 59 of these (See Map I), second only to Indiana. "Those who live where the Klan is in action are amused at the press scare stories. . . ," one journalist observed. "They know that the members of the Klan are their friends and their neighbors, and that the Klan cannot make them into demons, so are not disturbed."[42] Significantly, of the chapters reported in good-standing as of 1925 (See Table I), only nine were in communities with histories of violence committed by the Knights. By 1928, however, many local Klans

Map I: Chartered Klans in Good Standing, 1925.


N
10
0
20
40
60
80
100
MILES

Women's Ku Klux Klan Papers, Box 6, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma

Table I: Chapters in Oklahoma (Special Chapter Names) in 1925

Ada
Altus (Golden Buckle)
Alva (Heliotrope)
Ames
* Anadarko (1)
* Beggs (6)
Bennington
Billings
Bixby
Blackwell (Kay Kounty)
Carmen (Carmenceta)
Chattanooga
Cherokee
* Checotah (1)
Coalgate
Covington
* Cushing (1)
Devol
Douglass (Mistletoe)
Durant
El Reno
Elk City (Service Chapter)
* Enid (1)
Fairview
Fletcher
Fort Cobb (Kobb)
Grandfield
Guymon (Knoble Krusaders)
Haskell
Healdton
Hobart
Hugo
Jennings
Kingfisher
* Lawton (1)
Marietta
Mountainview (Harmony)
Mounds
Muskogee
Oilton
Pawnee
Perry
Pond Creek (Civic Club)
* Pryor (Coo-Y-Yah) (1)
* Sapulpa (2)
Sante Fe (Liberty)
Shamrock
Sterling
Stillwater
Tonkawa (Fidelis)
* Tulsa (37)
Tuskahoma
Vinita
Walters
Watonga (Enterprise)
Waukomis
Weatherford (Akirema)
Wynona

*Denotes Klans in towns where the Knights were implicated in acts of violence. The number in parentheses indicates the nubmer of reported incidences; six of the nine towns had only one reported act of klan violence. (Carter Blue Clark, "A History of the Ku Klux Klan in Oklahoma," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1975), p. 150.

List of Chapters in Oklahoma (Little Rock : Women of the Ku Klux Klan, 1925), Women's Ku Klux Klan Papers, Box 6, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

found it almost impossible to maintain effective memberships.

From the inception of the Women of the Ku Klux Klan in 1923 to its decline in 1928 the order achieved considerable popularity in Oklahoma and throughout the country, both North and South. The Klan attracted members with its mysterious and detailed ritual, appealing both to a desire for diversion from the commonplace and also to a yearning for order in an increasingly complex world. With its proliferation of offices, committees, even military divisions, and with civic projects as well, the society provided an opportunity for individual involvement. The Educational Year-Book published by the Klan reflected the various fears, concerns, and aspirations of the members; the Tri-K-Klub indicated the fervent desire to inculcate in the youth of America appropriate values and beliefs. Although the Klan for women was legally independent of the Knights, strife over control of the considerable revenues collected by the women contributed to a widespread belief that men dominated the Women of the Ku Klux Klan. In Oklahoma, this close association with the Knights led to a negative association between the numerous communities plagued by violent Klansmen and those communities hosting the newer klaverns for women. Evidently, the women sincerely believed in their own rhetoric, including their claim that the Klan strictly respected law and order. The Klanswomen throughout the state possessed a variety of reasons for their individual interests in klannishness; reviewing the details of their order simply lays the foundation for understanding their fears and aspirations.

CHAPTER IV

THE APPEAL OF THE KLAN IN A SECULAR WORLD

In the petition for their charter, the Women of the Ku Klux Klan in Pulaski County clearly stated a variety of ambitions held by members of the order. The women, the petition asserted,

> associate themselves for [their] mutual benefit . . . and for the purpose, among other things, of the promotion of literature, education and science, and for the promotion of bodily and mental health, for the worship of the Almighty God and the furtherance of His Kingdom, and for such activities as might tend to develop a Christian character and purely for the purpose of benevolent, charitable, fraternal, eleemosynary and protective measures. . . .[1]

In many ways the organization was similar to any other voluntary association, and its popular appeal was another aspect of the history of the development of feminine associations. The Klan, however, was indicative of far more. The decision to remain a member of the Ku Klux Klan symbolized a curious juxtaposition of hopes and fears. The rhetoric and program of the order clearly delineated a vision of an ideal way of life; following World War I, members of the Klan perceived a variety of threats to that way of life. The Klan relied heavily on a national tradition of nativism to explain the changes occurring around the country. Although members usually denied charges of bigotry, they were avowedly white supremacist, and they used certain contemporary scientific rationales to defend their attitudes of racial prejudice and social intolerance. Their attitudes shaped their lives in ways both secular and religious, but the various moralistic concerns stemming from their fundamentalist Protestantism were so significant that they form a separate chapter. The Women of the Ku Klux Klan actively worked for the betterment of their communities, and, at least in Oklahoma, they seemingly avoided involvement in the extralegal or violent activities committed by the Knights. It is, therefore, less easy simply to condemn the members of the order, and easier to reexamine the Klan and its role, not in an effort to defend it or its programs, but rather to ascertain its appeal and its inherent danger to a democratic society.

Women began to form voluntary associations early in the nineteenth century in response both to their personal needs and to new social demands in the growing cities of the nation. Before the passing of the American frontier, pioneer women had sensed true equality with men as they shared necessary duties and unavoidable dangers. With the beginnings of urbanization, however, upper- and middle-class women found few ways to pursue personal fulfillment. Reared with the woman-belle ideal that purity, piety, docility, domesticity, and a willingness to sacrifice defined the worth of any woman, they traditionally remained isolated at home. In an effort to escape loneliness and boredom, the women organized benevolent associations.[2] While "feminine involvement in voluntary societies represented a multifaceted quest for identify . . . it formed a plausible response to urban problems."[3]

The growing cities of the nineteenth century seemed unstable and threatening to upper- and middle-class citizens. Charitable associations were effective in assimilation and acculturation, and they consciously promoted moral reformation and religious indoctrination in an effort to "maintain a stable society based upon traditional patterns of deference and morality."[4] A variety of influences encouraged the women gradually to embrace their potential as reformers. The Enlightenment had emphasized human reason and control of destiny; it had taught that society could progress toward social improvement and even equality. The Great Awakening had encouraged a religious belief that mankind was capable of regeneration. Romanticism had stressed the individual and spontaneous human feelings, and it had urged women to assume a moral role in society. For many women, participation in the abolition movement heightened awareness of their own oppression, and the growth of the suffrage movement symbolized a belief that women possessed human dignity and basic natural rights.[5]

Participation in voluntary associations developed new skills in the members. They wrote their own constitutions and by-laws, elected officers, arranged their meetings, conducted a variety of imaginative fund raising efforts, kept accurate records, and published annual progress reports. The women frequently petitioned city governments concerning their various reforms, and they became knowledgeable in the methods of city administration. By the 1920s, the women had such confidence in their organizational abilities that they used the phrase 'a regular men's affair' to indicate that speakers had talked too long and had failed to make a point.[6]

By the 1920s, the urge to reform had spread from the urban centers to communities in the West and Midwest. The women wanted to accomplish changes quickly, and they indicated that men were not "efficient enough as organizers." The Federation of Women's Clubs, the largest national association, claimed some two million members who could mobilize and achieve nationwide results in a matter of six weeks.[7] Another one to two million women in Rotary clubs, chambers of commerce, and "thousands of women's clubs and women's organizations of every political and humanitarian complexion" involved themselves "in matters which are directly connected with the enrichment of the life of the nation through organizations . . . distinctly feminine."[8] The women believed that their associations were centers of public service, unlike clubs joined by men. The members asserted that every community depended on its groups of organized women "to promote what leads to the betterment of life."[9]

Even after achieving suffrage, the women still depended on their associations to enrich their own lives. Many members of the Federation of Women's Clubs were older and had raised their children; one of these women explained "we'd commit suicide if it weren't for our clubs. They give us something to do, they give us a renewed sense of our importance in life." They viewed themselves as part of a growing movement where women could "find compensatory activities which give them position and value in the community at large and enable them to battle more effectively for civic acknowledgement of their prestige and value in their own sphere." The majority of the voluntary associations, including the Women of the Klan, clearly embraced that traditional feminine sphere. The Educational Year-Book of the Klan and the programs of most clubs emphasized activities to improve the role of the women in her home. They applauded her role in industry only "in the sense of economic reward and independence that will protect and dignify her in her emotional investments in children and husband, that will provide security and honor for those concerns of the community which are an enlargement of her personal interests."[10]

The President of the Federation of Women's Clubs, Alice Ames Winter, described a woman's club as

> one more expression of that mother instinct which naturally centers around a home, for the club is characteristically the mother organization that reaches down into the basal principles, into the educational and family standards, into the citizenship that lies under government and politics, and that flows out in music and art.[11]

Many women believed the most valuable contribution they could make as citizens was to link the homes of the nation with their local governments.[12] The federated clubs, as well as the Klan, agreed with the League of Women Voters that women had to make "a definite and constructive contribution to their country's citizenship"; the League desired "ultimately to depersonalize women into the perfect citizen." Nevertheless, the various voluntary associations united in their opposition to the National Woman's Party which intended "to remove from the statute books all laws which discriminate for or against women on sexlines." The party threatened members of the Klan and other groups that desired to nurture, not negate, their traditional sphere. Promises by the National Woman's Party to sponsor new laws which would provide "necessary protection in industry, marriage and other legal and social relationships, to men and women alike as human beings, regardless of sex, but regardful of the minimum of physical endurance for both," did not alleviate the antipathy of other associations. The only legislation demanded by most groups of women was that which would control "individual liberties, especially those liberties which spell harm to the propertied interest of women in their families and certain standards of virtue."[13]

The Women of the Klan, as an organization, did not affiliate with the Federation of Women's Clubs. Many Klanswomen, however, probably did belong to other affiliated clubs. The committee work undertaken by Klanswomen, and the Educational Year-Book lessons studied weekly, reflected the same concerns expressed at the federation convention. The departments of work in the federation included: American Citizenship, with emphasis on citizenship training, Americanization, and community service; applied education; home economics and conservation; fine arts, with categories of art, music, and literature; public welfare, subdivided into committees on public health, child welfare, and social and industrial conditions; legislation; and publicity. The members of voluntary associations also shared the desire to have their children embrace the beliefs they fervently promoted, and the Klan was not unique in its formation of the Tri-K Klub. Alice Winter asserted that the continuing efforts to recruit a junior membership for the Federation of Women's Clubs would result in greater inter-generational understanding.[14]

The beliefs that Klanswomen wanted their children to understand, however, were frequently very different from the beliefs promoted by sister organizations. The Young Women's Christian Temperance Union, for example, expressed a "true religious spirit which has discounted race, religion, and prejudice. . . ."[15] The Women of the Klan taught their girls that there could be

> no promise of the continuance of either Protestantism or Democracy in our land unless the Anglo-Saxon race with its qualities of initiative and independence, of mental vigor and self-reliance and of the stability it evidences, continues in the supremacy.[16]

The League of Women Voters endorsed the World Court, and the Federation of Women's Clubs desired international efforts to achieve peace.[17] The Klan believed that any international interaction was a threat to the greatness of America, and that "the melting pot was a ghastly failure." World War I had proven to the Klan that "millions" of immigrants "had other loyalties: each was willing--anxious!--to sacrifice the interests of the country that had given him shelter to the interests of the one he was supposed to have cast off. . . ."[18]

World War I, and developments in the United States after its conclusion, contributed greatly to the spectacular growth of the Ku Klux Klan. The national government mounted an intensive propaganda campaign during the war in an effort to teach citizens to hate anything that was not 100 percent American. Various special interest groups, however, sponsored propaganda conflicting with that of the government, and many Americans, especially recent immigrants living in the Middle and Far West, had difficulty understanding or believing in the war.[19] "Spying and snooping became popular vocations. . . . It was the day of the busybodies . . . and the Klan merely re-employed [them]."[20] Just as patriotic feeling had mounted to a frenzy, the sudden end of hostilities abruptly removed the legitimate targets of animosity. Compounding this frustration was the disillusionment following the great war for democracy. Americans feared the displays of selfish national interests abroad, heightened labor strife, soaring prices, and scarcity of consumer goods at home. Returning soldiers joined the new national army of unemployed. A fresh tide of immigrants flowed out of devastated Europe. Society was changing rapidly because of urbanization and industrialization, and Americans, especially those of the rural middle-class who filled the ranks of the Klan, dreaded all of the changes.[21] One journalist expressed the feelings of many, declaring, "Had the principles of the Klan actuated the heads of the governments we would not have had the ghastly war."[22]

Central to the dissatisfaction felt by many middle-class Americans was a deep-rooted economic discontent. Proponents of the Klan implied that the order could satisfy the yearning for a preservation of the status quo. As one journalist suggested, members of the Klan hoped that the society could

> bring back the dear old days when income taxes were unknown, when you could ride a hundred miles on a good railroad for a dollar and a half, when coal was five dollars a ton, when you could hire an excellent gardener for twenty cents an hour, and when the cook in the kitchen knew her place and stayed there.

Although gross incomes were higher than before the war, American families could purchase less: "they can't keep their houses as warm, can't have as good meals, can't take as many trips back home to see the old folks as they used to. . . ." The writer proposed that the Klan intended "to secure protection and ascendancy for the middle class in the unending struggle of Capital and Labor." He explained that the frequent strikes threatened and effected by Labor continually cost the middle-class citizen. If Labor won the confrontation and gained better pay, the cost of production increased, as did prices. Even if Capital won, production had slowed and prices still increased. The income of middle-class Americans remained much too constant. The journalist concluded that as they read in their popular magazines about the growth of Italian Facismo and its success in restoring prosperity to the middle class and order to Italy, they turned to the Ku Klux Klan for financial relief.[23] That so many preferred the Klan to the Omaha-based Facisti of America suggested that the strict economic explanation for the popularity of the Klan ignored the impact of long-term nativist trends in the country.[24]

Historians have defined nativism in a variety of ways. The most simple definition calls it the policy "of favoring the native inhabitants of a country as against immigrants from foreign countries."[25] A more sweeping definition characterizes nativism as

> a deep-rooted aversion for everything that did not fit

> into the pattern of American life as conceived by men of rigid provincial concepts, who, lacking in historical, scientific, or social knowledge, considered everything different to be both inferior and a menace.[26]

Nativism is a state of mind, conscious or unconscious; its adherents, acutely aware of differences in dress, speech, foods and philosophies, have expressed antagonism toward members of different political, cultural, economic, racial, and religious groups. Nativists have believed in the status quo, fearing change and preferring the safety of a stagnating rigidity.[27] Alexis de Tocqueville described the national conviction that Americans were "the only religious, enlightened, and free people . . . [indeed] a distinct species of mankind." Old-stock Americans believed their society was "essentially finished, perfected, unchangeable." The nativist movement, therefore, has been a reaction to social and economic changes threatening the national equilibrium. Nativists were unwilling to believe that Americans could cause any disruption in the national social harmony, and they convinced themselves that alien influences had conspired to destroy their way of life.[28]

The expressions of nativism have traditionally embraced several slightly different themes. The oldest and most powerful of these was a strong anti-Catholic sentiment that characterized the adherents of the Church as dangerous foreign agents in national life. Anti-Catholicism, and the old-stock fundamentalist Protestant morality in general, accounted for a major portion of Klan rhetoric and appeal and it is necessary to examine in detail the religious and moralistic concerns of the order. At the same time, one cannot ignore another significant nativist theme, namely a general fear of any foreigner. While both the anti-Catholic and the anti-foreign impulses were essentially negative, defining enemies, another theme historically originated as a positive affirmation of the special qualities of the Anglo-Saxon race. By emphasizing the Anglo-Saxon capacity for political freedom and for self-government, however, nativists implicitly denigrated other races. For the Klan of the twenties, race was broadly tied to culture and nationality, as well as color.[29] The Klan used nativism as its basis for political movement, attracting "a wide variety of individuals, including sincere patriots, social reformers, bigots and opportunists, who exploited fear. . . ."[30] The reliance on the fear of these separate but similar themes is evident throughout the history of nativism.

Examples of nativist reactions to perceived dangers appeared as early as Christmas Eve, 1806, when a New York City mob rioted against Catholics. In 1807 in that city a native American ticket waged an unsuccessful bid for political office. In 1834 twelve letters written by Samuel B. Morse and entitled Foreign Conspiracy gave impetus to the newly created Native Democratic Association. The North American Association of the United States advocated the "repeal of naturalization laws, re-establishment of the rights of native Americans, and defeat of parties adverse to those interests."[31] As the Whig and Democratic parties disintegrated, political parties proliferated, including Native Americans, Sons of America, Order of United Americans, Order of the Star-Spangled Banner, Know-Nothings, Know-Somethings, Anti-Catholics, Carroll Hall Pro-Catholics, Adopted Citizens. The number of parties in the 1840s reflected the intensity of feelings between native Protestant Americans and the so-called aliens. The National American Democratic Association expressed nativist sentiment with its vow to "elevate no person of foreign birth to any office of honor, trust, or profit in the United States."[32]

The Ku Klux Klan was very similar in propaganda and program to most of the ultra-patriotic political societies, especially the southern Know-Nothing party of the 1850s. The Know-Nothings resulted from a merger of the Order of the Star-Spangled Banner, which required its leaders to be native-born Americans for at least three generations, and the American Party, which encouraged old-stock citizens to increase hostilities toward foreigners and decrease sectional concerns related to the slavery controversy.[33] Abraham Lincoln revealed their beliefs, similar to those of the Klan, in a letter in 1855:

> I am not a Know-Nothing, that is certain. How could I be? How can any man who abhors the oppression of negroes be in favor of degrading classes of white people? Our progress in degeneracy appears to me pretty rapid. As a nation we began by declaring that 'all men are created equal.' We now practically read it, 'all men are created equal, except negroes.' When the Know-Nothings get control, it will read, 'all men are created equal except negroes and foreigners and Catholics.' When it comes to this, I shall prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretense of loving liberty.[34]

Know-Nothingism, deriving its name from the refusal of members to divulge any information about the order, probably bequeathed many of the secret signs, solemn oaths, ritual ceremonies, and degrees of membership, as well as members and beliefs, directly to the Reconstruction Klan.[35]

Because of the similarities, the historical analysis of Know-Nothingism contribute to the understanding of the Klan of the 1920s, and to all expressions of American nativism. Many sincere patriots joined the Know-Nothings in an effort to alleviate certain social problems. Others, however, joined in an effort to feel superior to someone else. Representing a type of group behavior labelled gang cohesion, members banded together in a tightly knit brotherhood whose loyalties superseded other moral and social obligations. The gang deemed their own attitudes to be the only ones appropriate for all of society; members feared change as dangerous and immoral. The emotions, prejudices, and hatreds felt by the gang stemmed from a blind acceptance of gang beliefs and not from association with the so-called opponent, nor from any knowledge acquired by the open exchange of ideas.[36] In the specific case of Know-Nothingism, for example, only five of fourteen states in one study "had sufficient foreign-born . . . population to present serious economic, social, and political problems." Four of the states actually had the lowest percentages of foreign-born in the nation.[37]

In Oklahoma, in the 1920s, the men and women of the Ku Klux Klan also had little direct contact with those minorities they defined as inferior. The total white population in the state was 89.9 percent, and only 2 percent of those were foreign-born. Native whites with foreign parentage comprised only an additional 2.6 percent of the population. The 1920 census defined the non-white population as Negroes, at only 7.4 percent; Americans Indians, at 2.8 percent; Chinese, Japanese, and all others--"14 Filipinos, 1 Hindu, and 1 Korean" --at less than one-tenth of one percent. Indeed, the statewide native white population had increased by over 376,000 persons since the census of 1910, a gain of three percent, while the foreign-born population actually had declined by 116 persons. Although the Negro population increased by almost 12,000 persons, their percentage of the statewide population also declined.[38]

The homogeneous white population of Oklahoma was highly ethnocentric, but in the face of postwar frustrations and fears, the ethnocentrism became nativism. The rhetoric of the Klan which captured the antagonism toward foreigners was particularly successful. Historically, Americans feared foreigners either as slaves to religion and therefore to despotism, or as radicals prone to violent revolution. Similar in the two inconsistent views was the fear of any form of disloyalty to American freedom. Most of the foreign-born were victims of social intolerance, of a calculated resentment because the majority group vaguely perceived a menace to its well-being.[39] In other words, Oklahomans and Americans in general demanded of newcomers not just the fairly simple process of acculturation, the "acquisition of lifestyles and customs of the larger society," but the much more difficult process of assimilation, the "shrugging off of previous group loyalties, awarenesses, identities, and associations."[40]

Along with ethnocentricity, many old-stock Americans simultaneously embraced white supremacy, another favorite theme promoted by the Klan. They suspected the new immigrants of an inability to Americanize. By the 1920s, science equated culture and nationality, as well as color, with race, and people eminent in both natural and social sciences genuinely believed that the races, for hereditary reasons, varied greatly in innate intelligence and temperament. Americans appealed to the dicta of biology, anthropology, sociology, and psychology to reinforce their beliefs. When the white supremacists asserted that the blending of superior and inferior races resulted in the inferior qualities, their audiences feared the Darwinian concept of destruction confronting their species.[41] Further, the Klan proclaimed the existence of three great racial instincts: "loyalty to the white race, to the traditions of America, and to the spirit of Protestantism." Evans, the Imperial Wizard of the Knights, explained,

> . . . a man may be in all ways a good citizen, and yet a poor American, unless he has a racial understanding of

> Americanism, and instinctive loyalty to it. It is in no way a reflection on any man to say that he is un-American; it is merely a statement that he is not one of us.[42]

The Ku Klux Klan avowed that members had to be "Devoted to Pure Americanism," and Klanswomen affirmed the "distinction between races," pledging to "be ever true to the maintenance of White Supremacy and opposed to any compromise."[43] They warned the teenage members of the Tri-K-Klub that more Jews lived in New York City than in Jerusalem, and claimed that that same place was the third largest Italian city in the world. They broadly applied their definition of race, warning even of the Scandinavians, along with the Poles, who had "taken certain sections of the country [without changing] customs, traits, and religious outlooks."[44] Requirements for membership listed being white before any other, but as late as 1927, the Imperial Klonvocation in St. Louis refused to pass a resolution calling for a committee to devise some means of accepting those of foreign birth also considered white. By 1928, however, membership had deteriorated so seriously that the Klan did devise an auxiliary called the American Krusaders for "White, Protestant, Naturalized American Citizens of Foreign Birth."[45]

Klanswomen believed in "the supremacy of the white race and the Anglo-Saxon blood," convinced that "no other race of people have ever reached the place of unselfish leadership and of Christian idealism which has been reached by the Anglo-Saxon race." Klanswomen determined to "maintain rightfully the place we have attained," and to "prevent an inferior race of people with inferior convictions from assuming the direction of National life--either political or religious or industrial."[46]

The Klan linked the suspicion of foreigners to the suspicion of organized labor, and small cards circulated to Klanswomen in Oklahoma promoted "preventing unwarranted strikes by Foreign Labor Agitators," and the "Limitation of Foreign Immigrants."[47] One minister urged Klanswomen to demand fairness for capital as well as labor, and to issue a challenge to the "foreign hordes who will not adopt American ideas and standards of living."[48]

While the white supremacists adopted an attitude of dubious social intolerance toward most of the foreign-born, they expressed an unwavering racial prejudice against other minorities, most notably the blacks. Social intolerance has been described as suppressive; race prejudice,

> a social attitude propagated among the public by an exploiting class for the purpose of stigmatizing some group as inferior so that the exploitation of either the group itself or its resources or both may be justified,

has been called limiting.[49] The intolerant welcomed assimilation, but the prejudiced deeply resented efforts to change the status quo. During the 1920s, Klanswomen in Oklahoma expressed very little real concern over what they called "the Negro Problem." They indicated almost none of the overt antagonism apparent in their venomous attacks on other groups. They taught their teenagers "that slavery was not a good thing for the slave or for the slave owner."[50] The women specified that the Negro should be protected and his constitutional rights defended.[51] Nevertheless, the belief in white supremacy cherished by the Klan more clearly applied to the black man than to anyone else. When a Klansman asserted that "the Ku Klux Klan is the Negro's real friend," he justified his assertion by reasoning that "the white race is the only race which has ever been able to rule wisely and justly."[52] Imperial Wizard Evans rationalized that biology, anthropology, "and the experience of centuries [prove] that they can't attain the Anglo-Saxon level." Evans contended that the "low mentality of savage ancestors, of jungle environment, is inherent in the blood-stream of the colored race in America."[53] The Klanswomen warned the Tri-K-Klub "that the leadership of the Nation should [never] be given into the hands of colored races. We teach this, practice this and urge at all times no entangling alliances with the negro race." Within those kinds of limitations, several of the official proclamations from the Klan disavowed any desire to be "unkind," and the women desired not to "hinder the progress of the race."[54]

The lack of antipathy evident in the rhetoric of Klanswomen did not imply any concommitant lack of conviction that black people were inferior to white people. The members clearly explained that old-stock Americans had to "draw a sharp line socially and politically if we are to avoid the most dire consequences of close relationships with them."[55] They undoubtedly rejected the claims of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People concerning the economic, social, and educational progress achieved by the American Negro. And they were furious when the NAACP secretary asserted that "most of the negroes of the United States have already passed the level, intellectually and morally, of most of the Anglo-Saxon morons that make up the Ku Klux Klan."[56] Nevertheless, confronted with the violent legacy of the Reconstruction Klan, with the destruction of the Tulsa race riot in 1921, and with intermittent reports of racial atrocities throughout the South, the women in Oklahoma preached a patronizing tolerance. In Oklahoma, the women had little reason to fear that "white America with its present machinery [would not] be able to keep black folk down."[57] Even before statehood, Negroes in Oklahoma settled a total of twenty-seven all-Negro communities in an effort to avoid the humiliating subordination in bi-racial communities. With statehood, and the convening of the first legislature, Jim Crow dominated race relations, and legal separation affected all areas of life. In other words, the prejudiced were satisfied that the subordination of the Negro labor force was complete.[58]

The same sort of racial prejudice presumably governed relations between native Americans and two other groups in Oklahoma, the Indians and the Mexicans. Imperial Wizard Evans referred to the American Indians when he proclaimed that rugged pioneers had "[wrested] a continent from savages."[59] Klanswomen around the state never referred to them at all, and yet, according to the 1920 census, the Indians comprised 2.8 percent of the population, a greater proportion than that of the foreign-born. This ironic situation probably existed because even before statehood, the exploitation of the remaining Indian homeland was complete. The United States government stripped many Indians of their so-called objectionable tribal names, removed and re-educated most of the children, and attempted to train adults in the proper Anglo-Saxon techniques of American farming. After statehood, many Indians remained isolated on reservations. Many of those listed on the tribal rolls of the Five Civilized Tribes were mixed-bloods, at least half white. Many other members possessed no Indian blood, instead acquiring membership through intermarriage; these legal Indians could have joined the Klan. Thus, the Indians in Oklahoma were an invisible minority, completely dominated by the white culture.[60]

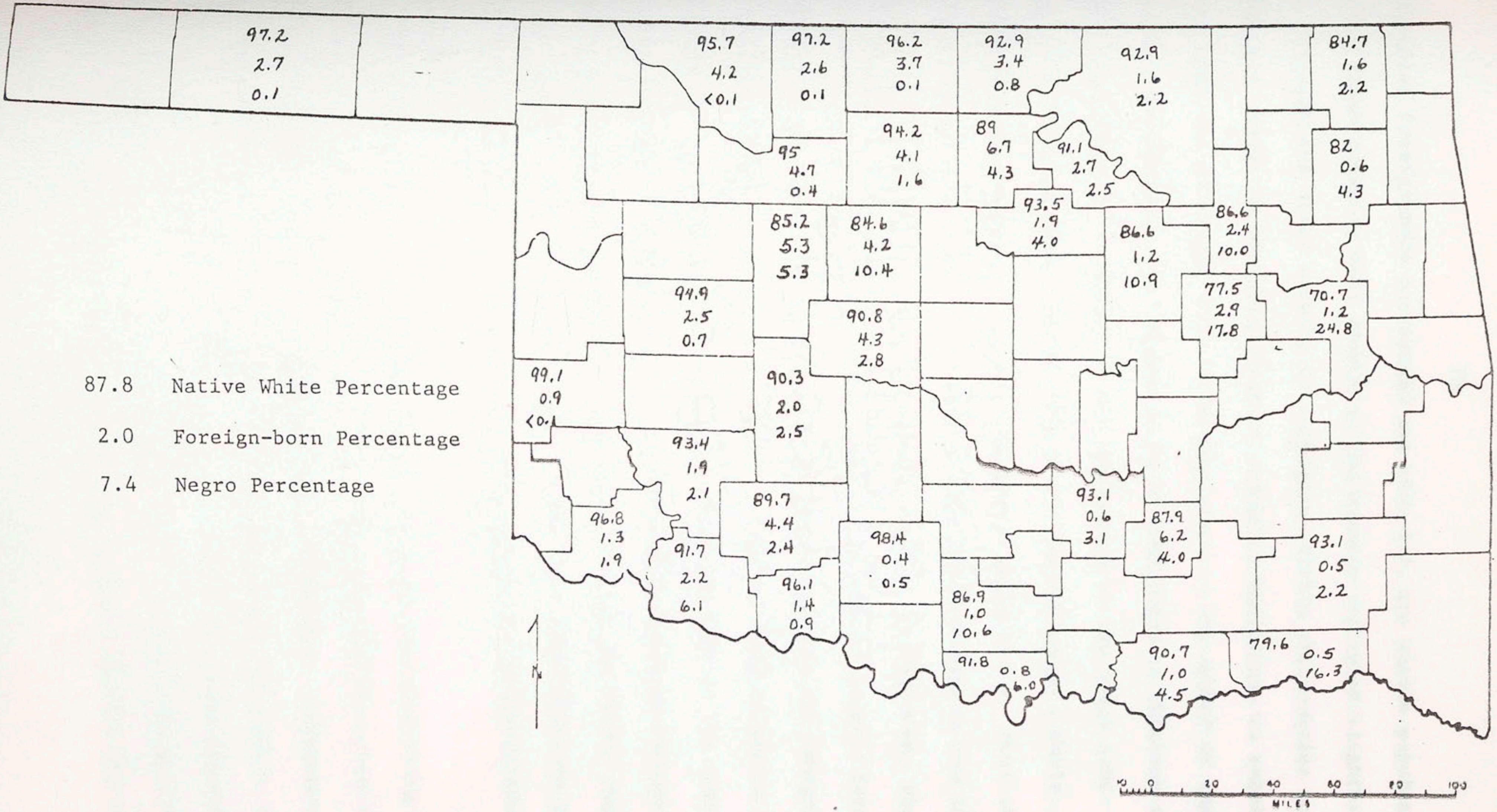
Mexicans have been described as another invisible ethnic group in Oklahoma. They comprised 16.8 percent of all immigrants in the state in

1920; they were the second largest minority following only the Germans. Nativists, however, seemingly reacted to them with the attitudes typical of the prejudiced rather than the intolerant. The Klanswomen, although appalled by the conflict in Mexico centered around the predominance of Catholicism in the country, never mentioned the presence of Mexicans in Oklahoma. They came from a neo-feudalistic society, and they rarely aspired to own land or attain positions of importance or power. They rarely sought citizenship, few of the adults learned English, and they retained their loyalties to Mexico. Old-stock Americans would not have desired the assimilation of such dark-skinned foreigners, and the nativists were content to exploit the cheap labor.[61]

It is difficult to determine which of the traditional nativist concerns could have impelled women in Oklahoma to become and remain members of the Ku Klux Klan. The rhetoric of the Klanswomen, or frequently its very omission, seemed to indicate a satisfaction that the objects of racial prejudice posed no threat to the status quo. For example, had the women secretly possessed the intensely hostile attitude toward blacks associated with the southern Reconstruction Klan, the largest number of klans should have been in southern Oklahoma where settlers from the South predominated. When present day Interstate 40 serves as a dividing line, however, thirty-seven klans in 1925 were in the northern half of the state, compared to only twenty-one in the southern half. Also, more blacks lived as part of the urban population. The Klan, however, drew more of its support from smaller rural towns; of the fifty-eight Klans, only four met in cities with populations greater than 10,000, although twelve Oklahoma cities maintained that size. Only an additional seventeen of the fifty-eight Klans maintained their membership in cities with populations between 2,500 and 10,000. Indeed, the central eastern counties which accounted for the highest percentages of black populations, Wagoner and McIntosh Counties, with 33.2 and 22.5 percentages of blacks respectively, were the two counties which did not attract any Klan activitiy in 1924, the year of greatest popularity for the Women of the Klan.[62]

The fear of foreigners, the victims of social intolerance, seems to have been a greater inducement to join the Women of the Ku Klux Klan. The actual populations of the counties with klans in both 1924 and 1925 were extremely homogeneous. The average percentage of native whites was 89.9, slightly higher than the state average of 87.8 (See Map 2). The percentage with relation to foreign-born whites actually is distorted by the presence of black populations greater than ten percent in seven primarily middle-eastern counties. Twenty-six of the thirty-seven Klan counties had native white populations greater than the state average. This equalled 70.2 percent of the Klan counties even though the forty counties without Klans also had a slightly higher average percentage of 88.6. When examined individually only twenty-five of those forty, or 62 percent, had native white populations greater than the state average. The greater the homogeneity, seemingly, the greater the propensity to unite in klannishness. Within these native white populations, however, some small amount of diversity existed, and as small as it was, it evidently had some impact. Among those counties without klans, thirty-one had lower percentages of foreign-born than the state average of two, and only nine had greater than or equal percentages. Conversely, among the Klan counties, while eighteen had less than two percent, nineteen had greater than or equal to the state average. Presumably, even though

Map 2: Ethnic Percentages for Counties with Chapters of the Klan, 1925


97.2 2.7 0.1
95.7 4.2 <0.1
97.2 2.6 0.1
96.2 3.7 0.1
92.9 3.4 0.8
92.9 1.6 2.2
84.7 1.6 2.2
95 4.7 0.4
94.2 4.1 1.6
89 6.7 4.3
91.1 2.7 2.5
82 0.6 4.3
93.5 1.9 4.0
86.6 2.4 10.0
85.2 5.3 5.3
84.6 4.2 10.4
86.6 1.2 10.9
94.9 2.5 0.7
77.5 2.9 17.8
70.7 1.2 24.8
90.8 4.3 2.8
99.1 0.9 <0.1
90.3 2.0 2.5
93.4 1.9 2.1
89.7 4.4 2.4
93.1 0.6 3.1
87.9 6.2 4.0
96.8 1.3 1.9
91.7 2.2 6.1
98.4 0.4 0.5
93.1 0.5 2.2
96.1 1.4 0.9
86.9 1.0 10.6
91.8 0.8 6.0
90.7 1.0 4.5
79.6 0.5 16.3
N
10 0 20 40 60 80 100
MILES

87.8	Native White Percentage
2.0	Foreign-born Percentage
7.4	Negro Percentage

Source: United States Department of Commerce, Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920: Population 3: 812-23.

the greatest foreign-born percentage was only 6.7, the native populations felt the alien presence more keenly as the numbers increased slightly.[63]

Although the sheer numbers of foreigners within the counties posed no apparent threat to the well-being of old-stock Americans, an examination of the countries of origin does yield some clues to the appeal of the nativist organization. The largest group of immigrants in Oklahoma was German, comprising 17.6 percent of all immigrants in the state even though they totalled only .003 percent of the population as a whole. The Germans were suspect, of course, because of World War I. Most of the German population came to Oklahoma during the Land Runs of the 1890s after living in northern states for several years. At that time, the territorial land distribution policy enabled families to acquire farms of 160 acres and consequently limited the opportunity for the immigrants to establish isolated insular communities. They did tend to settle in the north-central counties of the state, and by the turn of the century, they made efforts to rekindle pride in their native heritage through clubs, German-language newspapers, parochial schools, and German church services within various demoninations. These overt demonstrations of ethnicity ended with the war, but the native Americans suspected their loyalties.[64]

The native Americans probably had difficulties differentiating the countries of origin for many of the foreigners, and this distorted their perception of the number of Germans present in Oklahoma. Immigrants from Russia ranked third in numbers, following Germany and Mexico, and totalling 12.5 percent of all foreign-born. These were predominantly Germans who had maintained their ethnicity while living as farmers in Russia, and in the minds of the nativists they simply swelled the ranks of the already mistrusted Germans from the new German Empire. They also settled on the farm lands of northern Oklahoma, a little west of the Germans. They were deeply religious people with close-knit families who presumably appeared disinterested in assimilating.[65] They frightened the old-stock Americans, too, with the large numbers of children in each family, because the nativists envisioned their "unborn children . . . being crowded out of their birthright."[66] Other immigrants in Oklahoma, the Austrians and Swiss, for example, also spoke German and added to the confusion.

The literature of the Klan specifically warned against certain ethnic groups such as the Italians and the Czechoslovakians, respectively totalling 5.8 and 4.6 percents of the number of immigrants in the state. The two groups together barely equalled .001 percent of the population, but they were highly visible. The Italians epitomized the generally-used phrase Southern Europeans, with their darker skins, their Catholicism, and their presumed preference for garlic. They lived and worked principally in the coal-mining counties of Okmulgee, Coal, Pittsburg and Latimer. Although the women of the Klan warned that the Italians would steal American jobs and lower American wages, only Coal and Okmulgee Counties maintained membership in the Women of the Ku Klux Klan for two years in a row. The Czechoslovakians, frequently known only as Bohemians or Moravians for the provinces from which they originated, were as easily identifiable as the Italians because of their complicated surnames and their accents. They, too, came from a nominally Catholic country, and they frequently attended Catholic social functions. The Czechs, however, rarely joined the church, considering themselves free-thinkers. They settled in north-central Oklahoma, forming Sokol clubs which indicated to nativists an intolerable indifference to immediate Americanization. The hard-working Czech farm women toiled in the fields alongside the men, a custom not practiced and probably not approved by the Klanswomen. The children of immigrants frequently worked, too, and the Klanswomen worried that they would grow up as ignorant of native American values as their parents; only 63.9 percent of foreign-born children between the ages of seven and thirteen attended school, compared to 86.5 percent of native white children. Finally, even some of the obviously North European immigrants from England and Ireland were suspect because of their frequent leadership in unionization efforts, or because of their Catholicism.[67]

The Klan thus created and verbalized objections to American immigrants. The organization expressed pride in its intolerance, claiming it was based on "sound instincts," and not "bigotry or prejudice." The women even had a vague belief that the interbreeding "between closely related stocks of the same race [had] improved men," and that in the early days of America, that "kind of interbreeding . . . went on . . . between English, Dutch, German, Hugenot, Irish and Scotch." Even so, they clearly delineated those immigrants from the postwar hordes from Europe, conceptualizing all recent aliens as a unified force threatening the foundations of American civilization. On rare occasions, the Klan acknowledged that "every race has many fine and admirable traits, each has made notable achievements." The order insisted, however, that Americans learn from other races only that which would "best fit the peculiar genius of our own race, rather than have them choose our lessons for us, and then ram then down our throat."[68] The fears of the women were certainly more real than the menace. Their few foreign neighbors perhaps sparked their imaginations as to the potential evils in the urban centers far from their rural homes. As well, the fewer urban klans had a disporportionate influence over Klan rhetoric because they provided more officials and most official newspapers.[69] It seems likely, however, that few Klanswomen knew very many immigrants, and they probably viewed their foreign-born acquaintances as very different from the stereotypical images portrayed in the rhetoric.

All across the country, the Klan attracted large numbers of members from the old-stock Americans in small towns, and the organization especially flourished in the Middle West and South, sections of the country least disturbed by immigration and by the disruptive effects of industrialization. Oklahoma was in many ways a miniature model of the nation as a whole. The settlement of migrants from both the Middle West and the South created a distinctive cultural bifurcation in Oklahoma, with separate lifestyles replicated in respective parts of the state. The boundary was an imaginary band running from the northeast corner of the state, southwest to Oklahoma City and then west to the Texas Panhandle. The nativist tradition of social intolerance probably appealed more to the midwesterners north of the band in Oklahoma, because the aspirations of the large numbers of immigrants settled there were so similar to their own. Although the numbers of immigrants in the southern part of Oklahoma were very small, the intolerance of the foreign-born existed there, also, because nativism had long been a traditional rallying cry in the South. The tradition of racial prejudice particularly appealed to the southerners in Oklahoma for historic reasons, although the desire for institutionalized supremacy of the white race was not simply a southern conviction. In several Oklahoma counties along the divisional band--in Logan, Oklahoma, Lincoln, and Dewey counties, for example--where considerable intermingling occurred between the midwestern and southern groups, the Klanswomen could not sustain their membership after the initial year of organization. The exposure to varying values weakened the effectiveness of the Klan rhetoric based on stereotypes. Many of the women simply joined the Klan because of their desire to associate with their friends and to seek approbation for their roles at home. For those who remained members, the society legitimized their prejudices. The Klan soothed many postwar fears concerning urbanization and industrialization by over-simplifying their causes, by authoritatively laying the blame on groups with whom members had little contact. The society embraced so many varying threads of nativist hostility, hiding them under a blanket of 100 percent Americanism, that it offered something for everyone.[70]

CHAPTER V

"ONWARD CHRISTIAN KLANSMEN"

In 1928, Imperial Commander Robbie Gill Comer defined the role embraced by the "militant Protestant Christian women of America." The women united in the Klan in an effort to promote religion and patriotism, and to halt a variety of dangerous trends in American society:

> a wave of irreligion and agnosticism . . . lessened respect for the institution of marriage . . . and the inevitable increase in the number of broken homes and swift divorces . . . the spread of liquor drinking among many of the youth of our country, including, alas! some of the mothers of tomorrow . . . the threat against our American Constitution by those who would nullify any of its provisions with which they do not agree . . . encroachments . . . [by] that ancient sinister, foreign political power . . . Rome. . . .

The Klanswomen earnestly desired "that their sons and daughters have a better country in which to live," and they defined a better country as "a free country--freer of wickedness, freer of vice, free from the domination of either the powers of evil within or . . . without."[1] These religious and moral concerns closely parallelled their more secular fears. The women responded to the threat of perceived changes by defining enemies based on traditional nativist sentiments. They espoused a vicious intolerance of the numerous Catholics in the state and, to a lesser extent, other religious groups not in the mainstream of a fundamentalist Protestant revival. Their prejudice toward Judaism was not as evident only because of the tiny percentage of Jews, especially in rural Oklahoma.

The Klan in the 1920s, however, surpassed traditional bigotry with their preoccupation with morality. The order selectively espoused many of the Progressive themes popular before the war in an effort to control the consciences of their communities. At the same time, the Klan usually attacked liberalism as a philosophy in America because it tolerated or even embraced cultural and religious diversity. The following words written by an Oklahoma City Klanswoman, probably in 1928, seemed to capture the emotional fervor of the order; the word "onward," however, did not express the evident wish to return to an earlier and better day:

ONWARD CHRISTIAN KLANSMEN

Onward Christian Klansmen, marching as to war,
With the Cross of Jesus going on before
Christ the Royal Master, leads the Ku Klux Klan
Forging ever onward, popes and idols ban.

Chorus:
Onward Christian Klansmen, loyal every man
To our Cross and Banner, Emblem of the Klan.

At the sign of triumph, Romish hosts do flee
Give us men O Savior who will follow Thee
Rome's foundations quiver, popes will rule no more,
Danger now surrounds us, Thy help we do implore.
Chorus

Savior lead this army, keep us staunch and true
Help us on to victory, give us strength to do;
Gird us with Thy armour, help us by Thy might,
With the Cross we cherish, for that flag we'll fight.
Chorus

Onward ever onward, we will save the world
From the rule of tyrants, with our flag unfurled,
We'll go forth to battle, fight to the last man
Hear our prayer O Savior, onward lead the Klan.
Chorus.[2]

The concern which the Klan expressed about religion and morality almost always seemed to revolve around attacks on the Roman Catholic Church. Anti-Catholicism was the oldest and most powerful of the nativist themes; the nativists viewed the adherents of the Church as dangerous foreign agents in national life. Traditionally, Americans viewed political liberty as the primary accomplishment and attribute of their nation, and they associated Roman Catholicism with monarchies. Catholics seemed dangerous because they did not easily blend into an American cult of individual freedom.[3] The Klan stressed that the "Roman Church" was "fundamentally and irredeemably, in its leadership, in politics, in thought, and largely in membership, actually and actively alien, un-American and usually anti-American." Describing the church hierarchy as "almost wholly Italian," Hiram Evans noted that "the Italians have proven to be one of the least assimilable of people." Evans proposed that even if the alien clergy desired to promote Americanism, they would be unable to do so "because both race and education prevent their understanding what it is."[4]

The Klan taught its members that Roman Catholics endeavored to make America a Catholic nation. They quoted the Catholic Sun, a Church periodical, that "the Pope has given the order to make America Catholic," and they warned that a priest assured, "the Catholics of the world love the Church more than they do their own nation. If the government of the United States were at war with the Church we would say tomorrow, to hell with the government of the United States." The priest continued, admitting that "they say we are Catholics first and Americans decidedly afterward. There is no doubt about it." According to the Klan, the Roman Catholic Church called democracy "a mischievous dream," and it told Church members that, "the first lesson for all to learn and last to be forgotten, is to obey." Furthermore, they were to heed ecclesiastical authorities "whether right or wrong," and not civil authorities.

They owed "no allegiance to any principle of the government which is condemned by the Pope." The Klan pointed out that Pope Pius IX had said "the state has not the right to leave every man free to profess and embrace whatever he shall deem true," and they warned that the Pope believed he had the right to censor books, "annul state laws, treaties, constitutions, etc." if he deemed them detrimental to the Church.[5]

A predominant fear expressed by the Klanswomen stemmed from the alleged opposition of Roman Catholics to the public school system. According to an authorized Church periodical, the New York Tablet, "We hold education to be the function of the Church . . . we . . . will not accept the State as educator." The Klan quoted a priest who said "the public schools have produced nothing but a Godless generation of thieves and blackguards." Another source urged the abolition of the system, calling it "a foul disgrace in matters of morals. . . ." Most dangerous, one cleric claimed that "the day is not far distant when Catholics, at the order of the Pope, will refuse to pay the school tax and will send bullets into the breasts of the officials who attempt to collect them."[6] Protestant ministers reaffirmed the position of the Klan, noting that although hatred and prejudice toward Catholics and others did the order no good, taxpayers ought to oppose parochial schools that made "Catholics first and Americans maybe."[7] Hiram Evans questioned the effectiveness of Catholic education by contending that illiteracy in Europe was confined to Catholic countries. Many believed, too, that the separate schools worked to prevent assimilation.[8] Klanswomen explained to the Tri-K-Klub that parochial schools relied on both a foreign language and biased textbooks in their efforts to suppress the reading of the Bible. The women asserted that the "parochial school should go and that the Bible should be given a place some how [sic] in the Great American public school system."[9]

Many Protestants also feared the activities of the Catholics in politics; indeed, the Klan proclaimed "the real objection to Romanism in America is not that it is a religion . . . but that it is a church in politics. . . ."[10] The order warned that one Pope had advocated Catholic control of all legislative bodies. Presumably, Catholics voted as an alien bloc, frequently forming alliances with other alien blocs against American interests. The Catholic Church allegedly assumed the authority to control all publication and reading of books and periodicals, and it stated, concerning freedom of speech and press, that "the unrestrained reason for thinking and openly making known one's thoughts is not inherent in the rights of citizens and is by no means to be reckoned worthy of favor and support."[11] Imperial Wizard Evans had condemned the activities of the Church during the 1924 Democratic National Convention, when "the hotel lobbies and the corridors of Madison Square Garden were suddenly black with priests." Anti-Catholicism as a political issue intensified in 1928 when Alfred Smith, Governor of New York and a Catholic, ran for the presidency. The Klan warned that the Democratic candidate favored nullification of the Eighteenth Amendment providing for prohibition, and it reminded members that the great leaders of America believed with Andrew Jackson that "nullification leads directly to civil war and bloodshed. . . ."[12] Klanswomen in Oklahoma received a challenge to recruit new members in order to oppose the election of a Roman Catholic president; the Kligrapp for the state promised an engraved gold star to each of those who met the challenge.[13]

In an atmosphere of fear and ignorance, the Klan taught a variety of other things about Catholicism. The order revealed, for example, that secret agents of the Pope, infiltrating the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, had attempted to convert all of Protestant America "by introducing crosses, snakes and pictures of His Holiness among the decorations on the dollar bill of 1917."[14] Members of the Klan insisted that Christopher Columbus, a Catholic, had not discovered America. They warned that the Catholic Church approved of begging, and that Catholics condoned murder. Supposedly Lincoln was assassinated by order of the Pope, McKinley killed by a Catholic, and Harding poisoned by the Knights of Columbus.[15] Children learned to fear Catholics, believing that if a Catholic man "had the opportunity, he'd split the stomach" of a pregnant Protestant. A Klansman in Perry showed slides of paintings of nude women to a community meeting in the Methodist Chruch, warning that those were the immoral things with which the Pope surrounded himself. A Klan publication in Illinois advertised The Devil's Prayer Book, critical of Catholicism, as an "eye opener for husbands, fathers, and brothers" and for "real red-blooded HE-MEN" only.[20] The order also advertised a booklet for women only in the Oklahoma Fiery Cross. Called "Priest and Woman," the booklet included comments on the "priest ond [sic] the confessional," "slavery that unfits girls to become mothers," "Rome's infant murder factorie [sic]," and the "birth record of a Rome convent." The Klan attempted to prove that ninety percent of deserters in the war were Catholics following the orders of the Church. The Klanswomen resolved not to fill the minds of the members of the Tri-K-Klub "with poisonous stories of revolting nature"; they did caution, however, that in 1910, foreign and primarily Catholic mothers had given birth to the same number of infants as almost twice the number of native mothers.

They reasoned with the girls to assume their proper responsibility rather than "just work in an office or a fascinating business career."[16]

In addition to the intolerance of Catholics, the Klan expressed a prejudicial attitude toward Jews. The order tended to label the Jews a "far smaller" but "more complex problem." Hiram Evans, for example, was unsure whether to emphasize their religious or their racial differences, and he wavered in the degree of antipathy he expressed. In 1923, Evans proclaimed that the Jew, "by every patriotic test . . . [was] an alien and unassimilable." He blamed years of persecution for the Jewish unwillingness to "tie himself to the land," or even to own a home. Three years later, Evans concluded that certain Western Jews, differing essentially only in religion, could "cease to be a problem" when freed from persecution in the free atmosphere of the United States. Evans revealed, however, that anthropologists believed Eastern Jews, the "Askhenasim" [sic] to be different; these were "not true Jews, but only Judaized Mongols--Chazars," and they had little chance for real assimilation.[17] Although Evans once credited the Jews with great ability, others doubted his suggestion that they had made valuable contributions to any country in which they lived. One Klan newspaper asserted that

> The Jew produces nothing anywhere upon the face of the earth, does not till the soil, does not manufacture anything for common use and adds nothing to the sum of human welfare. Everywhere he stands between the producer and the consumer and sweats the toil of one and the necessity of the other for his gains.[18]

A Klan leader in Ohio contended that the Jews, desirous of nothing but money, gained control of the theatres, showed films "all worthless and immoral," and "were now upon every country cross-road taking in the money." Even worse, the Klansman proclaimed, young girls could not venture safely onto country roads without fear of abduction by Jews who would sell them as white slaves.[19]

The wilder accusations against both the Jews and the Catholics revealed the ignorance and the fears of many old-stock Americans. Opponents of the Ku Klux Klan denied all of the ludicrous accusations levelled against the religious minorities, and some members of the Klan attempted to justify their religious hostilities. One official spokesman for the Catholic church labelled Klan attacks as "deliberate, malicious misstatements." Noting that thousands of Catholics had died in the World War, he further asserted that "the first American officer killed was educated in a Catholic school and the last American officer killed was a Catholic priest."[20] Another spokesman defended the parochial schools for providing everything taught by the public schools as well as important lessons for character formation. He commented, further, that the first efforts in education in the nation were frequently denominational, represented by Quaker, Lutheran, and Episcopalian schools, among others. He contended that if first generation Catholic immigrants remained separate from old-stock Americans, it was because of the strangeness of language and custom, not because of their religion.

The Klan occasionally excepted some Catholics from the usual official hostility. Catholics of French and English extraction who had lived in America for generations, and who had attended the public schools, rarely exhibited the typical evils perceived by the Klan in other Catholics. The Klan was also willing to except any Catholic who fought those evils in the official Church policy, but the order feared that those Catholics were theoretical rather than real.[21]

Countering the Klan attacks on Judaism, The American Hebrew, published in New York, emphasized that Jews had formed nearly five percent of the armed forces during the war although they equalled only three percent of the population. Twenty percent of those soldiers were volunteers, the publication continued, and sixteen percent were either killed or wounded. Finally, the article contended that any perceived Jewish aloofness toward society resulted from their ostracism from clubs, hotels, apartments, and resorts.[22]

One spokesman for the Klan defended the exclusion of the Jew from the order as an act of religious necessity: "We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Jesus is the Klansman's criterion of character. It would be unfair to Him to place Him in an organization where He would not always feel comfortable."[23] Other representatives of the order frequently justified their exclusive Protestant membership requirements by noting the requirements for other societies; one Klansman explained that the Masons excluded cripples, the B'nai B'rith, Gentiles, and the Knights of Columbus, Protestants. The Klan had to "draw the line somewhere!"[24]

Klanswomen in Oklahoma undoubtedly were drawn to the society by its appeal to religiosity, expressed by both the suspicion of religious minorities and the appeal for a unification of Protestant churches. Because the Jewish population in the state was quite small, and urban in character, it attracted less overt hostility from the Klan of the twenties than did the more numerous Catholics. Although religious census information was not completely reliable, it suggested a Jewish population of less than one percent of all persons belonging to the various denominations in the state. The rural members of the Klan, espousing anti-Semitic stereotypes, knew very few Jews personally and did not necessarily apply their images to local Jewish merchants. In Perry, for example, Protestant residents did not generally socialize with the three or four Jewish families, but they respected them and patronized their businesses. Although the Klan applied economic boycotts against the Jews in other areas of the state, that minority simply was not a serious threat to the order. By the mid-1920s, emigration quotas had successfully reduced the numbers of Jews immigrating to the United States. Importantly, unlike the Catholics, the predonimantly middle class Jewish families were small, and this prevented the formation of visible congregations.[25]

The Catholics, however, were far more visible. They averaged just above eight percent of the religious membership of the state, but in the counties supporting the Women of the Ku Klux Klan, their average increased to approximately 11.9 percent. Just over half of those counties individually had Catholic populations greater than the state average. In contrast, the average Catholic percentage in the counties without the Klanswomen dropped to approximately 5.7 percent. Significantly, only eight of the forty counties without Klanswomen had Catholic populations greater than the state average; in eight counties, Catholic population was not even reported, presumably because of their extremely small numbers. Evidently, as Catholics increased even slightly, the fear of many Protestants increased disproportionately. Because the well-organized Catholic Church refused to publish its receipts of donations from members, or its expenditures, Protestants suspected the money could secretly shape the policy of their own public schools or the content of the public libraries, or could elect officials or affect various forms of national welfare.[26]

The concerns of the Protestants, however, seemed to have little basis in reality. Their own numbers were far greater than those of the

Catholics, especially in view of the ecumenical fundamentalist spirit of the Klan, of the tendency to overlook specific denominations in favor of Protestant unity. The largest memberships in Oklahoma belonged to the Southern Baptists, with 22.6 percent of reported church members; the Methodists, including both the Methodist Episcopal and the Methodist Episcopal South, with 8.8 percent and 13 percent respectively, totalling 21.8 percent of reported members; and the Churches of Christ, including the Disciples of Christ which separated in 1906, with 5.9 percent in the original church and 10.2 percent in the reorganized church, totalling 16.1 percent of reported members. The average of the three general groups totalled 70.6 percent of reported church membership, compared to the 8 percent average for the Catholics. Among the thirty-seven counties supporting the Women of the Klan, sixteen exceeded the state average for the Southern Baptists, and twenty-one exceeded the average for the Methodists. Only seven counties exceeded the average for the Churches of Christ, suggesting less relationship between its members and the Klan, possibly because the Disciples were traditionally a more progressive group.[27]

Some relationship undoubtedly existed, however, between the society and the Protestant Church. Following the international crusade of the First World War, much of rural America believed that the nation had misplaced its faith in the secularized culture and liberalized gospel of the cities. In the 1920s, many Americans returned to fundamentalism as an expression of theological and moral absolutism. The fundamentalist leaders were aggressive in sparking the postwar revival. They believed the country spiritually and emotionally was exhausted by the war and its consequences, and they seized the opportunity to consolidate public opinion and to enact moralistic legislation. Even the younger members of the churches shared the enthusiasm; in one town boys from the public high school would hurl rocks and names at their former neighborhood friends attending the parochial school situated across the street.[28] Parents nevertheless feared for the religious safety of their children; even children from good homes were "almost sure to return from college with their religious views profoundly modified . . . [and] their Fundamentalist parents clearly perceive that something terrible has happened to them. . . ." The Klan received support from countless clergymen, many officers of the order were ministers, and many congregations appreciated the periodic attendance by robed members of the Klan.[29]

More than one Oklahoman, however, believed that some Protestant churches taught religious hatred, and that the issue "turned friend agin' friend."[30] Other Protestants labeled the "Protestant Fundamentalist crusade and the revived Ku Klux Klan [the] twin hallmarks of reaction." Official church publications, conventions, assemblies, and councils usually opposed the Klan, at least in general terms. The nondenominational church press attacked the society. The Presbyterians, the Episcopalians, the Unitarians, and the Northern Baptists all denounced the Klan. A Disciples of Christ newspaper warned ministers not to become members. Various Methodist newspapers and the Southern Baptist press condoned the aims of the order but criticized its methods. Although many major denominational conventions avoided a direct confrontation with the Klan by adopting general resolutions against lynching or mob violence, none ever endorsed the order. Many Protestant ministers risked their positions and their safety to condemn the Klan as a malignant aspect of Protestantism.[31]

While the Klan illustrated a malignant aspect of Protestantism, it also represented a distortion of democracy. Many Americans evidently had grown skeptical of certain trends in American life. They feared that the courts administered little real justice, that judges bought their places on the bench or were given their positions in order to benefit special interests. They saw graft everywhere, and they perceived an unwillingness on the part of men of ability and character to make the sacrifices required to hold public office.[32] They wanted to be good citizens, but many honest-minded people expressed a regretful conviction that mob-rule was the only way to attain justice. Mr. Bob Shuler, editor of Shuler's Magazine, declared that mobs using violence were legitimate "gatherings of indignant citizens, bent on correcting conditions that the officers of the law refused to correct." Another journalist even claimed that "in every case of a whipping, when the facts are sifted, most [sic] anybody would say that he got what was coming to him." Indeed, the Women of the Klan called for "Preventing the Causes of Mob Violence and Lynchings," rather than condemning the violence itself.[33] Many Americans questioned the honesty of the press; the Klan claimed that "journalism [was] under the control of sinister interests," and that only Klan sources revealed the truth. Finally, the parents of the children of America detected an increasing "wildness of youth" with teenagers exposed to "petting parties," all-night "automobile escapades and bad gin." Good citizens identified lawless and immoral elements in their communities such as prostitutes who were undermining the foundations of their society. Exacerbating the dangers of all the trends was the bootlegger and his illegal traffic in liquor.

The Klan categorized the threatening trends they perceived under a variety of general labels, including modernism, intellectualism, radicalism, cosmopolitanism, alienism, and especially liberalism. Hiram

Evans defined the Klan as "an idea, a faith, a purpose, an organized Crusade" against those strange philosophies, on behalf of millions of Nordic Americans. These "plain people, very weak in the matter of culture, intellectual support, and trained leadership" earnestly desired "a return of power into the hands of the everyday, not highly cultured, not overly intellectualized, but entirely unspoiled and not de-Americanized, average citizen of the old stock." Even if these citizens were "hicks" and "rubes" and "drivers of second hand Fords," they were men and women of "convictions, not mere opinions." Perhaps the intellectual could never understand those convictions; nevertheless, they were not debatable.[35]

The Klan had begun to reject what members labelled the "modernistic cult" because "it produced pacifism and active disloyalty" during the World War. Members believed that modernism dominated "thought in the centres of retarded assimilation," especially the East with its vast hordes of foreigners.[36] Evans decried the so-called intellectuals who had "lost contact with the deeper emotions and instincts which, far more than their brains, control the majority of men." The Klan scorned "the purely theoretic philosophy of cosmopolitanism: of universal equality in character, social value, and current rights." Evans declined any debate concerning social equality, claiming, "science does not support it, and certainly the average American does not believe it." The members of the Klan relied on the veracity of the Imperial Wizard, who spoke convincingly and repeatedly about "facts." Evans insisted that "Americans all deny equality to ten millions of our citizens; deny it with facts and in fact, if we do not deny it in argument." The idea of equality was therefore "actually abhorrent in practise to the American mind," but Evans did not stop there. He went on to argue that "in fact, actual social equality between whites and other race [was] not practiced to any important extent anywhere on earth. Facts prove the idea unworkable." Because those people who held the "cosmopolitan view" did not even subscribe to the theory of white supremacy, Evans realized that argument could not reach them. His appeal, therefore, was to "those who [were] willing to face facts, including the facts of mind and emotion and race and instinct and human nature. . . ."[37]

One of the most encompassing appeals to the men and the women of the Klan was to reject American liberalism as a movement which had become "wholly academic, lost all touch with the plain people, disowned its instincts and common sense, and lived in a world of pure, high, groundless logic." Liberalism had provided no defense against the alien invasion, mouthing instead "platitudinous comfortings, and bally-hoo stuff about the beauties of alien things and ideas," and welcoming "alien criticism of everything American."[38]

In fact, the Klan charged liberalism "with nothing less than national, racial, and spiritual treason." Members feared that most liberals believed "those who [could] produce should carry the unfit, and let the unfit rule them." Their "alien 'idealism'" embraced the "Bolshevist platform of 'produce as little as you can, beg or steal from those who do produce, and kill the producer for thinking he is better than you.'" The Klan accused liberalism of possessing no conscience, no standards, and only one conviction. Liberals attacked the Puritan conscience as narrow: the Klan attacked the

> decadent religion of Liberalism toward everything: toward the right of every man to make a fool or degenerate of himself and to try to corrupt others; in the right of anyone to pull the foundations from under the house or poison the wells; in the right of children to play with matches in a powdermill.

Evans summed up the attack on liberalism made by the old-stock Americans, declaring that "it has undermined their Constitution and their national customs and institutions, it has corrupted the morals of their children, it has vitiated their thought, it has degenerated and perverted their education," and worst of all, somehow in the support of liberalized religion, "it has tried to destroy their God."[39]

Even as Evans exposed the evils of American liberalism, however, he hastened to mention that "old-stock Americans believed in Liberalism," but not the liberalism of the liberals who were "weaklings and parasites." The men and women of the Klan espoused a belief in "the utmost freedom, tolerance, liberalism . . . the greatest possible diversity and individualism," but all "within the limits of the American spirit." Evans defined the spirit of Democracy as

> one, fairdealing, impartial justice, equal opportunity, religious liberty, independence, self-reliance, courage, endurance, acceptance of individual responsibility as well as individual rewards for effort, willingness to sacrifice for the good of his family, his nation and his race before anything else but God, dependence on enlightened conscience for guidance, the right to unhampered development. . . .

The significance of the words, however, lay in their precision of meaning; the Klan believed that few aliens could ever understand Americanism, even when using the same words, because true comprehension came through "instinctive racial understanding."[40] An example of this was the Klan condemnation of Catholicism because of its various "illiberal doctrines," and its refusal to accept the tenets of American liberalism "that modern society rests on liberty of conscience and of worship, on liberty of speech and press." Indeed, the Klan scornfully revealed that an American Cardinal reported the position of the Pope "that for every good Catholic, liberalism in all times and all forms had been not only discredited but condemned by the Church."[41]

The simultaneous rejection and acceptance of the philosophy of liberalism was consistent with the ability of the Klan to "be--or seem--all things to all men. . . ." In fact, in many ways the Klan reflected some of the same concerns popularized by the progressive movement before the World War, at least in the sense that many progressives also were devoutly religious Protestants. They sought moral and psychological satisfactions through moral indignation and reform efforts. The white supremacist attitudes of the Klan even had their parallel in the imperialistic policies of progressivism.[42] Although the members of the Klan were not the optimists most progressives had been, at any meeting of the Klan, "the farmers, who arrived in automobiles, usually with their families, would have seemed perfectly at home eleven years [before] in a Progressive party rally--bronzed, homely, good-natured persons. . . ."[43]

The order itself proclaimed the Klan a "protest movement--protesting against being robbed," originating as did all great movements from the plain people.[44] While the order had not escaped "bigots and fanatics," Hiram Evans noted that "every such movement has them, as Roosevelt found when he dubbed the similar nuisances in his own movement 'the lunatic fringe.'" The members of the Klan believed that they "had produced . . . a sane and progressive conservatism along national lines," seemingly oblivious to the apparent incompatability of their philosophical preferences. As one contemporary journalist explained, largely because of progressivism, "politics has been democratized. Social usage has been democratized. Religion has been most astoundingly democratized." All of this democratization resulted in a glorification of the masses, and in "spurious history, spurious ethnology, spurious religion [that] produced a spurious patriot. . . . The klansman is one of the flowers of our democracy."[45]

In many ways, the Klan surpassed historical nativist trends. One Klansman wrote that the purpose of the Klan was not to fight Negroes, Jews, Catholics and foreigners, stressing that the order was "not fighting races or religion." Indeed, in one town, when one well-respected young woman received an anonymous letter, threatening in tone because of her engagement to a Catholic, the Klan responded to her indignant objections with an official letter of apology.[46] According to a Klan spokesman, the order dealt with problems of national scope that directly concerned all communities, and he listed many of the problems that Klanswomen studied in their klonklaves. He began with white supremacy, in its traditional and what he believed to be a positive sense, and he continued with "law enforcement, free public schools, Christianity, constitutional rights of citizens, protection of the home, chastity of womanhood, separation of church and state, liberty, pursuit of happiness and development of character," which he termed the "fundamental principles of America." The Klansman elaborated that the organization "materially and substantially" improved character. He listed four ways in which the Klan helped law enforcement: 1) because of their fear of replacement by vigilant Klansmen, officers were more "active and effective"; 2) the vigilant and secret membership of the Klan deterred criminal acts; 3) the Klan "minimizes danger of mob violence because no Klansman will participate in an unlawful mob"; 4) the Klan insisted that members report violations of the law.[47] In some areas, members held the status of "sheriffs or deputy constables," carrying guns and vowing to mobilize their great

Klan army if called to preserve the peace; no doubt the women felt safer in their homes with that kind of local militia ready to protect them.[48]

A spokesman for the Klan reported that the order had "high and holy regards" for home and marriage, and that it was interested in all aspects of education. Noting that the Klan respected the freedom of speech of all persons, that the order was the "very acme and personification of toleration and fairness," he indicated that the society was a "great force and influence in compelling men to take more interest in the church." The Klansman concluded that the order "seeks to bind all Protestants together in a common cause against a common foe . . . heathenism, infidelity, agnosticism, atheism and idolatry," to join "all native-born Americans against that ever-increasing horde of foreigners that come to our shores with their foreign ideals and influence," and to unite "the white Caucasian race against overwhelming hordes of colored races." He went beyond the traditional nativist elements, hoping "to bind law abiding, peaceful, liberty-loving people against vicious lawless elements," and good men [who] believe in clean government against crooked scheming politicians, grafters and un-American foreigners."[49]

In the 1920s, a crusading, evangelical spirit turned the Klan into an instrument for moral regulation. It embraced a variety of xenophobias and attempted to preserve the traditional values of the community against change and external influence. Individual Klan names from across the nation reflected the patriotism felt by the women after the war: Loyalty, Old Glory, Loyal Patriots, Patriotic Daughters of America, Betsy Ross, Martha Washington, Order of True Americans. They also reflected the growing concern with conformity and morality: Kling Klose, Progress, Klear Konscience, Samaritan, Kum Join Us.[50] The Women of the

Klan adopted as their slogan "Non Silba Sed Anthar," (Not for Self but for Others), and they dedicated themselves to protect the weak, innocent, and defenseless from the lawless, violent, and brutal; to relieve suffering, especially of widows and orphans; to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States; and to aid in the enforcement of laws. The society assured full liberty and opportunity for all people.[51] Klanswomen declared that a constructive approach was essential for ending crime, political corruption, selfishness, and church divisions, and they believed that "Klankraft has never in its history sponsored corrections of conditions by assuming law enforcement outside of regular channels." They admitted that "perhaps some trouble was traceable to enthusiastic and zealous Klansmen and Klanswomen," but that "the Order has ever condemned the use of force, and has advocated . . . the ballot . . . juries . . . support of officers."

The women who joined the Klan sought an organization which would supplement the existing forces of law, order, and morality. They perceived serious threats to their traditional Christian way of life, and they sought to identify and expose the sources of danger in their communities. They invariably focused on the visible Catholic congregations around them, resentful of the many foreigners in those congregations and fearful of Catholic cliques in their towns that seemed satisfied to remain distinct not only in religious but also social and educational endeavors. Although the Klan professed a profound tolerance for the American tradition of religious diversity, members of the order created endless lurid and ludicrous contentions about Catholicism and its potentially disloyal adherents; marriage to a Catholic created sufficient cause for banishment from the Ku Klux Klan. Members also expressed a less pronounced antipathy toward Judaism. While the members of the Klan resented the members of diverse religious minorities, they also deeply resented the native Americans who tolerated diversity, the so-called liberals. The Klan could point to the ramifications of liberalism as the causes for the decay in American values, and the members believed that their God had chosen the Klan to lead Americans back to lives of decency. Many of their community concerns reflected those of the pre-war progressives, but the Women of the Klan were fearful rather than optimistic about the future. Although they espoused a faith in modern science and correlated its discoveries about mankind with their own beliefs in white supremacy, they generally preferred to rely on their instincts and emotions rather than their intellects. Inconsistency in Klan rhetoric little concerned them, but daily contradictions felt in their own lives worried them greatly, and the women clung to the Klan for its explanations, justifications, and rationalizations.

CHAPTER VI

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WOMEN OF THE KLAN

When the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan sanctioned the formation of an official women's organization in 1923, many women in Oklahoma and all across the nation eagerly sought admittance. Yet within six years, membership in both orders was practically non-existent. The popularity of the Women of the Klan stemmed first from its attributes as a social organization, giving women an opportunity to unite in a mystical and religious atmosphere. It was a typical society in principal characteristics, including stringent membership requirements and substantial dues to make membership more desirable, frequent meetings ordered by written regulations, elections of numerous officers allowing as many members as possible to share in leadership roles, charitable works illustrating the benevolent concerns of the members to their communities.

The popularity of the Klan, however, stemmed also from its successful expression of the deep concerns of the early 1920s. Klan rhetoric and structured Klan teachings evidenced pervasive nativist trends; anti-Catholic sentiments showed the most strength, but anti-foreign and white supremacist sentiments were obvious also. In addition to the nativist traditions, the Klan expressed the feelings of alarm and confusion arising after the conclusion of the first World War. The Klan promised, along with President Warren G. Harding, a return to "normalcy," to decency, honesty, and happiness. The swift decline of the Klan indicated the order had promised too much, certainly far more than its own limited and largely negative programs could deliver.[1]

Ironically, the decision by the Knights to help create and sponsor the Women of the Klan as the one feminine association ideologically and organizationally consistent with Klan values served as a major catalyst for the dissolution of the order. By 1923, Hiram Evans, a Dallas dentist and a Mason with great leadership potential, had ousted and replaced William Joseph Simmons, the incorporator of the Knights and the first Imperial Wizard. Simmons was an idealist and a dreamer with few leadership abilities, and he delegated authority to many shrewd and scheming subordinates, including Edward Y. Clarke and Mrs. Elizabeth Tyler. The two typified the early Klan leadership with their devotion to power and money rather than to any of the ideal promulgated by the Klan; as early as 1921, the New York *World* had published an exposé of incompetent Klan leaders and rampant violence and corruption.

Evans assumed leadership of the order in an effort to end the widespread abuses, but he was a very practical Wizard, quickly recognizing that a society for the philosophical sisters of the Knights could greatly increase the revenues and political potential of the Klan. Before the Knights completed a preliminary survey of existing patriotic societies for women, however, Simmons attempted to regain his own lost power and prestige by forming the Kamelia, a society for respectable white Protestant American women. Many studies of the Klan have erroneously identified the Kamelia as an official auxiliary, but Evans hotly denied any relationship between the Knights and the Kamelia.

Upon the incorporation of the Women of the Ku Klux Klan, Evans launched a successful but lengthy legal action against Simmons to force the Kamelia to withdraw claims of any relationship to the Klan. The court battle crystallized the concerns of many principled members that the national leadership had more interest in revenues than in the causes they supposedly represented; many chapters of the Knights split over Evan's decision publicly to attack Simmons and the Kamelia, and many members of the Kamelia never switched their allegiance to the Women of the Klan.[2]

Nevertheless, the Klan estimated that as many as 115,000 women joined the order in the first month following incorporation. Much of the appeal of the new order was an aura of mystery and excitement. Prospective members received invitations to apply for membership in the Klan; the order accepted or rejected applications based on lengthy criteria of sincere patriotism, devout Protestantism, and something the Klan called pure white womanhood. Once accepted for membership, a woman paid her so-called donation to support the order, received her hood and robe, and participated in a naturalization ceremony closed to all aliens. She received various secret documents from the Klan, including the Kloran, the handbook for all ritualistic work, and the accompanying Musiklan, a collection of patriotic and religious songs adopted for use during Klan activities. Officers with strange titles conducted meetings filled with ritual, including numerous secret signs, a secret Ku Klux Kalendar, and programs conducted by a variety of committees. Members were very active in their efforts to contribute to their communities; the women even had a secret burial ceremony in order to comfort friends and families of deceased members. Desirous of a strictly regulated membership, the Klan maintained the right to banish

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any member who violated the secrecy of the order, or who committed any other offense designated in the Constitution of the Klan. Within its first year, a struggle over the leadership of the Women of the Klan resulted in the banishment of several national leaders and in the publicity of another damaging court battle, detrimental to membership recuritment. Also, while the excitement and exclusivity initially attracted members, the secrecy and ritual eventually became commonplace and were not sufficient to sustain the interest in membership.[3]

Meetings of the Women of the Klan did offer, however, a program of study for its members, encouraging them to believe they were nourishing their minds as well as their spirits. The national order published an Educational Year-Book with weekly lessons, and encouraged all members to prepare for each lesson. The Klan proposed to give its members the basis for a thorough understanding of all those concerns confronting the women of America, and the members in Oklahoma seemed to take their studies seriously.

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The topics presented in the Year-Book were very positive in nature. They presumably painted a picture of an ideal American way of life, usually emphasizing the kinds of things that touched the women daily. Studies began with the value of a strong public school system. The women firmly believed in a nationally mandated compulsory education network guided by a federal Department of Education. They asserted that quality education and carefully selected teachers were the ways to overcome illiteracy and eradicate prejudice. The women wanted their children, and the children of everyone else, to have a patriotic and Christian education. The women believed that good citizenship stemmed from good education, and the women wanted for their children a world free from corruption, and private and public immorality. The Year-Book suggested that the good American was an instrument of domestic tranquility, condemning intolerance, bigotry, and racial animosities.

The Klan encouraged the newly enfranchised women to use their vote after becoming well-informed on the issues. The vote of women ideally could ensure the protection of women pursuing goals in their own appropriate sphere, at home or in limited workplaces such as a school board. Along with the vote, women acquired new responsibilities to help protect American morality. The Women of the Klan, however, valued the traditional responsibilities of motherhood and homemaking; they believed any new activities should not supplant those more important duties. They studied a unit on civics, which included such varied topics as historic and inspiring American figures, the importance of immigration quotas, and the role of women in protecting public health.

The Women of the Klan believed that motherhood was a divinely-ordained vocation, and that women should even seek special educational training in areas that could help them with their homemaking. They asserted that women were not inferior to men, that they complimented the other half of humanity, and in areas such as religiosity, women even surpassed men. They believed, though, that the country needed its women at home and not in the workplace displacing men. They wanted simple, happy homes for their families, and they endeavored to promulgate their values with Klan klubs for youngsters. In essence, the members sought a static existence, free from the dangers of modernization and urbanization. They idealized the lives of their own mothers, fondly remembering their own childhoods as free from the threats of vice. They were willing to adopt selectively a few of the innovations of their own age, especially those that obviously improved their quality of life. Robbie Gill Comer lauded labor saving devices which made women "less a slave to household drudgery," and she appreciated automobiles, good roads, and radios which brought women "in touch with the wide world, its activities and its vast concerns." She asserted that "woman will no more go back to her place of yesterday than the civilized world will go back to brick ovens instead of stoves, messengers instead of telephones, and ox-carts instead of automobiles." The women, however, feared many of the changes that they perceived in the country. Klanswomen believed the "inherent rights" of all women encompassed only their roles as "mothers of the race" and "companions of man" which contributed to a safer world for their children. The greatest appeal of the Klan was not in its limited positive program, but rather in its ability to exploit suspicions about liberal attitudes and about various minorities present in the members' communities. The order especially excelled in detailing the culpability of minorities for any and all grievances.[4]

Implicit and occasionally explicit in the Educational Year-Book and in other Klan publications were expressions of both racial prejudice and social intolerance. The reliance on nativism with its emphasis on negative, defensive feelings set the Women of the Klan apart from its sister societies in the Federation of Women's Clubs. Even though organizational characteristics of all the clubs of the 1920s were the culmination of decades of effort by women desirous of societal improvement, the Klan wanted reactionary reforms, benefitting only native-born white Protestants. Many old-stock Americans believed themselves to be a special breed of people who had created the perfect society. When the World War and the following years of economic turbulence forced them to seek causes for the disruption in the national equilibrium, the Klan quickly suggested the culprits. Using the same emotionalism promoted by the Know-Nothing movement in the 1850s, the Klan attacked the foreign-born, the non-whites, and Catholics as the threats to historically successful white supremacy in America.

In Oklahoma in 1920, white people constituted 89.8 percent of the total population. This included large numbers of settlers from the Midwest, who established farms in the northern and central parts of the state; settlers from other southern states who remained primarily in southern Oklahoma; and a tiny two percent of the settlers from foreign, especially European countries. An additional 2.6 percent of the native-born whites had parents from other countries. In retrospect, the foreign threat in Oklahoma seemed negligible, but the Klan preached social intolerance to receptive nativists. They demanded that the immigrants attempt to become 100 percent Americans and deeply resented any form of nostalgia for the old country. Simultaneously, however, the Klan believed in white supremacy, and equating culture and nationality as well as color with race, they did not regard many of the foreign-born as white. The Klan contended that a true understanding of Americanism was an instinctive racial phenomenon, and while demanding complete assimilation of foreigners, they actually doubted the ability of those aliens to Americanize.

Few Klanswomen in Oklahoma had any real personal contact with many of the foreign-born in the state, but they feared them as a threat to their ideal way of life. The decision by the essentially conservative women to accept the franchise, for example, was due to their desire for white votes to outnumber those of the foreigners. The largest group of immigrants was from Germany, and the Klan suspected the settlers of a hidden loyalty to the very country America had battled during the war. The threat from the German immigrants seemed even greater because the nativists could not differentiate many other European settlers with similar languages, customs, or dress from Germans. Oklahomans from the Midwest probably resented the competition from many immigrants for the north central farm lands of the state. Settlers from the South had less cause for antipathy toward foreigners with even fewer immigrants in their counties, but the South had long been receptive to the nativist allegations against aliens. The desire to form a Klan usually was greater in the counties with the highest percentages of native-born white population. Within those extremely homogeneous populations, however, any increase in the percentage of foreign-born seemed to be an important factor in encouraging klannishenss. In several counties located in the middle of the state, an intermingling of values and cultures had occurred between midwestern and southern settlers, and the Klanswomen could not sustain their memberships. Evidently, the appeal of emotional stereotyping was less effective among even slightly more heterogeneous populations.

The appeal of white supremacy provided a rationale not only for the social intolerance of foreigners, but also for another almost secondary appeal of the Klan. While racial prejudice directed towards the 7.4 percent black population in the state presumably was a significant issue at least among the working-class southern settlers, concern about blacks was much less overt than other fears. While the socially intolerant demanded change from foreigners, the racially prejudiced expected blacks, and probably Indians and dark-skinned Mexicans as well to remain a stigmatized, inferior, and separate labor force, filling less desirable or menial posts. For the Oklahoma Klanswomen of the 1920s, the concern about blacks was more rhetorical than real, because segregation successfully controlled all aspects of life. Generally, the Klan pronouncements about blacks were condescendingly kind, promising protection as long as the races maintained separate, and not necessarily equal, lifestyles. The presence of a large percentage of blacks within a county did not seem to create the same sense of alarm caused by foreigners, as evidenced by an absence of women's klans in two central eastern Oklahoma counties with extremely large percentages of blacks.

While the Klanswomen did not perceive blacks as particularly alarming, they certainly did perceive Catholics as dire threats to the ideal American way of life, and doubly dangerous because they were frequently foreigners. According to the Klan, Catholics preferred the Pope to the President, and parochial rather than private schools where children learned Latin and blind obedience rather than the Bible, democracy, and freedom. The Klan suggested that Catholics condoned a variety of illegal or immoral activities, and the order supplied the lurid details to satisfy curious Protestant imaginations. A significant Catholic population within a county seemed to be a factor impelling women to klannishness. Among the counties with chapters of Women of the Klan, for example, over half had Catholic populations greater than the state average; in those counties without women's klans, only eight had greater than average Catholic populations. The religious issue was the most divisive in Oklahoma, alienating supporters of the Klan position from friends and relatives.

Fear of a perceived Catholic menace, and concern about the tiny

Jewish population in the state, seemed completely unwarranted when the numbers of the religious minorities were juxtaposed with the far greater numbers of Protestants. The religious appeal of the Klan, importantly, was part of a larger postwar fundamentalist crusade for moral absolutism. The Klan encouraged unity among Protestant denominations and acquired the support of both lay persons and clergy. Some denominations officially denounced the Klan, but the Southern Baptists and the Methodists both approved its general goals even if they denounced some of its methods. Memberships in Oklahoma congregations were greatest in those two churches, and counties supporting the Klan tended to have greater than average numbers of both Southern Baptists and Methodists.

The Klan encouraged God-fearing Americans to take their desire for fundamentalist simplicity out of their churches and into their communities. The women perceived graft and corruption all around them, and they believed the Klan could restore law and order. They feared for their children growing up with the temptations of the automobile and the bootlegger, and they relied on the Klan to curb the excesses of youth. The intellectuals and liberals in the huge urban areas angered the Klanswomen because they challenged old-stock Americans to accept and benefit from change and diversity. The women preferred the soothing assurances of the Klan that they, the average unspoiled members of the order, instinctively and emotionally knew the facts of Americanism. The members of the Klan had their own liberalism completely different from the philosophy of the liberals they scorned. Members spoke glowingly of justice, opportunity, liberty, but they believed that the full meanings of their pronouncements were understood only by old-stock

Americans. The Women of the Klan sought many of the same kinds of moral reform as had the progressives before the war, but they did so out of a postwar sense of fear. Members saw the Klan as an instrument of moral regulation in a society with questionable and too often foreign values. They believed that the Klan could ensure them, and their children, places as the rightful leaders of the American way of life.

The sense of urgency felt after the shock of the war faded within a few years. Passage of immigration quota laws robbed the Klan of one of its most salient issues. The Democratic presidential nomination of Catholic Governor Al Smith in 1928 gave some Klan members renewed incentive for a few brief moments, but the limited appeal of the Klan could not sustain an effective membership for long. The women had other responsibilities, and they had other clubs. Publicized court cases revealing the opportunism and ineptitude of Klan officials, continued accusations of atrocities committed by robed Klansmen, and the basic negativism of the program apparent throughout moralistic and patriotic proclamations encouraged most well-intentioned patriots to disavow any association with the order.[5] Many Americans came to agree with the indictment by the Chicago Journal of Commerce that the Klan revealed "gross ignorance of the vital principles of government, a strange hostility to the brotherhood of man, a profound indifference to human rights, and an utter contempt for liberty of conscience and the free exercise of religious rights."[6]

The disaffection with the order, however, did not indicate any complete cessation of the way of thinking that fostered the Ku Klux Klan. Hiram Evans asserted in 1926, that although "men and women drop from the ranks they remain with us in purpose, and can be depended on fully in any crisis." A journalist for the *New Republic* suggested that recurrences of the Klan would continue until education could "raise the general intellectual level of the community, and . . . puncture the specific superstitions as to the malevolent designs of any one religious or racial group." He added that only adequate historical education could present true American ideals and illustrate the violation of those ideals "by the creed of the 'little Americans.'" Without that education, the scenario for susceptibility to the Ku Klux Klan would remain the same as one drawn by W. E. B. DuBois during the decade. Imagining the comments of an average American with nativist sympathies, he wrote:

> 'The Klan? Silly--*but*!--You see these Catholics, rich, powerful, silent, organized. Got all the foreigners corraled--I don't *know*. And Jews--the Jews own the country. They are trying to rule the world. They are too smart, pushing, impudent. And *niggers*! And that isn't all. Dagoes, Japs; and then *Russia*! I tell you we gotta *do* something. The Klan?--silly, of course--*but*--!'[7]

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[2] "Onward Christian Klansmen," words by an Oklahoma City Klanswoman, Women's K. K. K. Papers, Box 5.

[3] Higham, Strangers in the Land, pp. 4-6.

[4] Evans, "Fight for Americanism," pp. 45-46.

[5] Out of their Own Mouths Shall They Be Condemned (N. p.: Women of the Ku Klux Klan, n. d.) pamphlet, Women's K. K. K. Papers, Box 5, pp. 1-12.

[6] Ibid., pp. 13-20.

[7] Eight C's, pp. 12-13.

[8] "The Klan's Challenge," p. 32, quoting Evans; Evans, "Defender of Americanism," p. 812.

[9] Races, p. 11.

[10] Evans, "Defender of Americanism," p. 811.

[11] Evans, "Fight for Americanism," p. 47; Out of their Mouths, p. 31.

[12] Evans, "Fight for Americanism," pp. 47-48; Out of their Mouths, p. 35.

[13] "A Challenge," Official document of the Women of the Ku Klux Klan issued on 8 May 1928, Women's K. K. K. Papers, Box 7.

[14] Gerald W. Johnson, "The Ku-Kluxer," American Mercury 1, No. 2 (February 1924): 208.

[15] Out of their Mouths, pp. 36-37; Pattangall, "Is the Ku Klux Un-American?," p. 325.

[16] Betty Pinkston interview; Vera H. Roark interview; The Railsplitter (Milan, Illinois) 11, No. 4 (April 1926), quoting The Devil's Prayer Book, Harmon Liveright Remmel Papers, Box 6, Series 7, File 6, Item 107, Special Collections, University of Arkansas; Oklahoma City Fiery Cross, 12 November 1924, Western History Collection, p. 2; Pattangall, "Is the Ku Klux Un-American?," p. 325; Races, p. 13.

[17] Evans, "Defender of Americanism," p. 812; Evans, "Fight for Americanism," pp. 60-61.

[18] The Dawn: A Journal for True American Patriots (Chicago, 21 October 1922), Microfilm, McFarland Library, p. 8.

[19] Bohn, "The Klan Interpreted," pp. 387-88.

[20] "The Klan's Challenge," p. 33, quoting Father John J. Burke, General Secretary of the National Catholic Welfare Conference.

[21] Scott, "Catholics and the Klan," p. 275; Evans, "Defender of Americanism," p. 8.2; Hiram Wesley Evans, "The Catholic Question as Viewed by the Ku Klux Klan," Current History 26 (July 1927): 563.

[22] "The Klan's Challenge," p. 33, quoting The American Hebrew (New York).

[23] Herring, "Ku Klux to the Rescue," p. 342.

[24] The Guymon Tribune, 22 May 1924, Henry Simpson Johnston Papers, Box 25; "Ku Klux to the Rescue," p. 341.

[25] U. S. Department of Commerce, Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957: Census of Religious Bodies, 1926, pp. 226-27, 236; Vera H. Roark interview; Henry J. Tobias, The Jews in Oklahoma (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), pp. 25-26, 55, 60.

[26] Historical Statistics: Religious Census, 1926, pp. 238, 661-63; Mary W. Herring, "The Why of the Ku Klux Klan," New Republic 33, No. 427 (February 1923): 289.

[27] Historical Statistics: Religious Census, 1926, pp. 661-63.

[28] Higham, Strangers in the Land, pp. 292-94; "The Klan Sheds its Hood," New Republic 45, No. 584 (February 1920): 311; Vera H. Roark interview.

[29] "The Klan Sheds its Hood," p. 311.

[30] Frank Marshall interview.

[31] Robert Moats Miller, "A Note on the Relationship between the Protestant Churches and the revived Ku Klux Klan," Journal of Southern History 22, No. 3 (August 1956): 355, 357, 359, 360-63, 366-68.

[32] Herring, "Why the Klan," p. 289.

[33] "Defense of the Klan," p. 18, quoting Mr. Bob Shuler; Rork, "Defence of the Klan," p. 44; A Patriotic Call, Women's K. K. K. Papers, Box 5.

[34] "Rise of the K. K. K.," p. 34; "The Klan Sheds its Hood," p. 310.

[35] Evans, "Fight for Americanism," pp. 34, 49, 52.

[36] Evans, "The Catholic Question," p. 563.

[37] Evans, "Defender of Americanism," pp. 802-804.

[38] Evans, "Fight for Americanism," p. 42; Evans, "Defender of Americanism," p. 808.

[39] Evans, "Fight for Americanism," pp. 42-43.

[40] Ibid., pp. 42, 53.

[41] Evans, "The Catholic Question," pp. 564, 566, quoting Cardinal Gasparri in the New York Sun, 7 May 1927.

[42] Duffus, "The End of the Klan," p. 528; John C. Burnham, John D. Buenker, and Robert M. Crunden, Progressivism (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Publishing Company, Inc., 1977), p. 75.

[43] Duffus, "The End of the Klan," p. 528.

[44] Evans, "Fight for Americanism," p. 51; Evans, "Defender of Americanism," p. 808.

[45] Evans, "Fight for Americanism," pp. 58, 35; Johnson, Ku-Kluxer," pp. 209, 211.

[46] Guymon Tribune, 22 May 1924; Cecil Leehan interview.

[47] Guymon Tribune, 22 May 1924.

[48] A. I. Harris, "The Klan on Trial," New Republic 35, No. 445 (June 1923): 68.

[49] Guymon Tribune, 22 May 1924.

[50] Higham, Strangers in the Land, pp. 294-95; List of Klans in Good Standing. For special chapters names in Oklahoma, consult List I.

[51] Women of America!, p. 12; Constitution, p. 7.

[52] Eight C's, pp. 23-24.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER VI

[1] Jackson, The Klan in the City, p. 254.

[2] Julie E. Johnsen, "The Ku Klux Klan," The Reference Shelf 1, No. 10 (April 1923): 2; Jackson, The Klan in the City, p. 16.

[3] Ibid., p. 254.

[4] Address by the Imperial Commander, Women of the Klan, pp. 6, 7, 10-11.

[5] Chalmers, Hooded Americanism, pp. 242, 295, 296, 299.

[6] "The Klan's Challenge," p. 32, quoting Mr. Bob Shuler.

[7] Evans, "Fight for Americanism," p. 34; "Why They Join the Klan," New Republic 36, No. 468 (November 1923): 322; DuBois, "The Shape of Fear," p. 302.

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