

**THE 1920s TEXAS KU KLUX KLAN REVISITED:
WHITE SUPREMACY AND STRUCTURAL POWER IN A RURAL COUNTY**

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

The second Ku Klux Klan made its first public appearance in Texas at a United Confederate Veterans parade in October 1920, then quickly expanded across the state. Founder William J. Simmons created this organization as an exclusive, secretive fraternal group that both celebrated the original Ku Klux Klan (KKK) and responded to contemporary societal concerns of white native-born men and women in post-World-War-I America. Using a propaganda campaign, the organization preached the supremacy of a racialized Anglo-Saxon American identity, defined in terms of contemporary pseudo-scientific racial ideology as white, Protestant, native-born, and anti-radical, to recruit millions of members from across the nation within a few short years.

Based on membership rolls and minutes of a Texas Klan chapter, this dissertation argues that, behind a façade of moral law and order, the Ku Klux Klan in rural Texas was a 1920s manifestation of a long-held racist ideology that utilized traditional practices of control through kinship, violence, and structural power to assert and protect white supremacy. It uses a localized case study approach to re-examine the second Ku Klux Klan in Texas, one of the largest and most powerful Klan organizations in the country, and challenge previous claims that the Texas KKK functioned more as a force for moral law and order and less as a white supremacy group. This particular Klan chapter, worked within the KKK's Houston Province, operated out of a rural county most noted for its plantation past and relatively recent end to Reconstruction, which firmly entrenched white structural control in the local economy, government, and social

affairs. Based on an analysis of this Klan chapter's individual members, their targets, and regional events, the Texas Klan used organizational power and vigilante violence to protect Anglo-Saxon white supremacy and maintain its centrality to the American identity. They conceptualized their nativistic and religious tenets through the lens of pseudo-scientific concepts of race that excluded Mexican and Japanese communities from whiteness. Furthermore, they utilized their members' access to privileged structural power to plan and implement targeted attacks, coordinated between several chapters, on black and white individuals whose behavior they saw as threatening to the race, or for personal gain. They protected the organization's extralegal violence through controlled police investigations and newspapers' published narratives that surrounded the violence. When this failed, they utilized traditional white southern tools of white collective economic power and white respectability to undermine due process.

DEDICATION

To Matt,

Jackson, Annagrace, and Charlotte,

And my parents, Ann and Joe Kuehler

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: THE 1920s KLAN AND WHARTON COUNTY

In 1916, Albert Horton Foote, Sr., and his wife Hallie Brooks Foote had their first child, a son. Named for his father, everyone called him Little Horton. He spent his first seventeen years living, learning, and listening to all around him, then used all he had absorbed to write a lifetime of stories. Because of his ability to capture the authenticity of a place and its people, Foote has been compared to some legendary writers, including Chekhov, William Faulkner, Katherine Anne Porter, Flannery O'Connor, and Eudora Welty. In 2000, President Bill Clinton awarded him the National Medal of Arts as recognition of his lifetime of work as a playwright and screenwriter. During the ceremony, President Clinton told the audience, "Believe or not, the great writer Horton Foote got his education at Wharton—but not at the Business School. He grew up in the small town of Wharton, Texas. His work is rooted in the tales, the troubles, the heartbreak, and the hopes of all he heard and saw there."¹

Although most of Horton Foote's work is rooted in his small Texas hometown,

¹ Horton Foote has won numerous awards, including a Pulitzer Prize for *The Young Man From Atlanta* (1995), and Academy Awards for screenwriting for *Tender Mercies* (1983) and *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962), as well as a National Medal of Arts in 2000. "Horton Foote, Jr.," *Handbook of Texas Online* (hereafter *HOTO*), <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/ffomk>; Rebecca Briley, "Southern Accents: Horton Foote's Adaptations of William Faulkner, Harper Lee, and Flannery O'Connor," *Horton Foote: A Casebook*, ed. Gerald C. Wood (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998; second edition, Routledge, 2013), 55-61; Wilborn Hampton, "Horton Foote, Chronicler of America in Plays and Film, Dies at 92," *New York Times*, March 4, 2009, found online at <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/05/theater/05foote.html>; Clinton quoted in Marion Castleberry, "Introduction," *Horton Foote: Genesis of an American Playwright*, by Horton Foote, ed. Marion Castleberry (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2004), 1.

he is not considered a writer of Texas, but of the South, because the Wharton of his youth was quintessentially southern. His screenplay of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, adapted from Harper Lee's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel of the same name, won him an Academy Award in 1962. Both now classics, the film conveyed the book's racial tensions, class disparities, and gendered expectations seen by a child in a small Alabama town with nuance and subtle rejection of stereotypes typical in films about the South. Of his adaptation, Lee called it "one of the best translations of a book to film ever made." The words spoken on screen by Scout, Jem, and Atticus were as much his as hers, but they felt seamless. His adaptation echoed her story so well, that many thought his dialogue had been directly taken from the novel. It was a testament to his understanding of her characters, their world, and their time, who grew out of her own childhood in Monroeville, Alabama. Much of his understanding came from growing up in Wharton.²

His body of work and his memoir have particular importance to this study

² Lee's novel told the story of a child watching her father, an attorney, and her town struggle with racial tensions as he defends a black man accused of raping a white woman in the early twentieth century. Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1960); Tom Pilkington, *State of Mind: Texas Literature and Culture* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1998), 169; Rebecca Briley, "Southern Accents: Horton Foote's Adaptations of William Faulkner, Harper Lee, and Flannery O'Connor," *Horton Foote: A Casebook*, ed. Gerald C. Wood (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998; second edition, Routledge, 2013), 55-61; Carmel Dagan, "Harper Lee, 'To Kill a Mockingbird' Author, Dies at 89," *Variety*, February 16, 2016, (Lee quote), found online at <http://variety.com/2016/film/news/harper-lee-dead-dies-to-kill-a-mockingbird-author-1201710486/>. Despite his notable national awards and concentration on Texas, Pilkington's *State of Mind* mentioned him in passing; Joseph A. Cincotti, "Horton Foote: The Trip From Wharton," in *Backstory 3: Interviews with Screenwriters of the 60s*, ed. Pat McGilligan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997; UC Press E-Books Collection, 1982-2004), 133, found online at <https://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=ft138nb0zm&chunk.id=d0e5974&toc.id=&brand=ucpress>.

because they reflect the stories and memories of white middle-class Wharton of the World War I era—the group of people who made up most of the local Ku Klux Klan. Although he set some of his work in other decades, he pulled the stories from this specific time and place in ways that not only gave the *feel* of times for his particular subset, but told specific and historically accurate events also seen in newspapers and court records. They were not his stories really, but those of the white men that gathered in his father’s haberdashery and on downtown sidewalks, who proudly told stories of murder in the streets or swindling blacks out of their mineral and oil rights. He listened to his aunts retell their Confederate and Texas Republic pedigree, gossip on recent divorces, and remorselessly share their role in the lynching of an innocent black man. From his uncles, he learned which local white elites they saw while they frequented gambling houses, black prostitutes, and speakeasies in the county. From Eliza, who cooked for his grandmother, and Sarah, who cleaned the neighboring house, he heard the secrets of other white families filtered through a chain of black women employed as domestics. He absorbed them all then peppered his parents with questions about cause, history, race, and moral reasoning to explain what he had heard.³

He listened to Wharton until 1933, when he left town for his theater education in California and New York, then wrote down the stories of love, grief, bankruptcy,

³ Horton Foote, *Farewell: A Memoir of a Texas Childhood* (New York: Scribner, 1999); Charles S. Watson, *Horton Foote, a Literary Biography* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 2-5. For more on Foote, see Horton Foote, *Beginnings: A Memoir* (New York: Scribner, 2002); Horton Foote, *Horton Foote: Genesis of an American Playwright*, ed. Marion Castleberry (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2004).

divorce, and murder for the stage. He changed people's names and set them in a fictional town of Harrison. The older he got the more historically accurate were his plays. His memoir of his early childhood reiterated many of the same stories, but with real names. In it, he mentioned the order only twice. He vaguely remembered the Wharton Klan parade and recalled his mother's disgusted reaction when he found his father's robe. Still, the Wharton of his white middle-class childhood perspective was the world of 1920s Wharton, and the names given appeared on the membership rolls of Hamilton B. Dickson Klan No. 6. Putting the two together, with corroborating documentation, provides a backstage pass to see past the illusions created by the Klan in a small Texas town.⁴

Based on these Klan records, newspapers, court records, the writings of Horton Foote, and other documentation, this dissertation argues that, behind a façade of moral law and order, the Ku Klux Klan in rural Texas was a 1920s manifestation of a long-held racist ideology that utilized traditional practices of control through kinship, violence, and structural power to assert and protect white supremacy. To support this argument, this dissertation first traces the use of these practices over time and geographical space, using as a vehicle the regional history of Wharton County, Texas, and the family histories of

⁴ Ibid. Horton Foote turned seven-years-old in March, 1921, a few weeks before Wharton County's Klan parade. Psychologists think that the age of memory, or the age a child can build autobiographical memory is around seven years old. For more information, see, Kate Gammon, "Birth of Memory: Why Kids Forget What Happened Before Age 7" in *Popular Science*, January 31, 2014, found online at <http://www.popsci.com/blog-network/kinderlab/birth-memory-why-kids-forget-what-happened-age-7>. Foote's *Beginnings* starts with his bus trip to Pasadena, California, to enroll in drama school. He took the trip alone, so it marked the beginning of his adult life and his career, hence the title.

area Klansmen, then shows how the organization employed these old practices to unify its members and enforce a modern, pseudo-scientific white supremacy to privilege themselves and protect the Anglo-Saxon race. Although the focus of this dissertation is on Wharton County, Texas, the findings presented here incorporate evidence found elsewhere in the state. Since this county seemed more culturally akin to the South than western regions of Texas, patterns explained here may be found in other regions of Texas and the American South.⁵

This dissertation will examine rarely found 1920s Ku Klux Klan records from Wharton, Texas, a rural southeast Texas county, where they were donated to a local archive and made publicly available in the 1980s. Other historians have examined Klan records found elsewhere and their findings have provided conclusions that countered long-held ideas about who joined this group and why. Their answers have varied

⁵ For more on this era in U. S. history, see Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, division of Farrar, Staus, and Giroux, 1967); David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980); David A. Shannon, *Between the Wars: America, 1919-1941*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1979); Ellis W. Hawley, *The Great War and the Search for a Modern Order: A History of the American People and Their Institutions, 1917-1933* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992); Arthur S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 1910-1917* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1954); William A. Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992); George Brown Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South, 1913-1945* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press and the Littlefield Fund for Southern History of the University of Texas, 1967); Walter Buenger, *Path to a Modern South: Northeast Texas Between Reconstruction and the Great Depression* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001); Don H. Doyle, *New Men, New cities, New South: Atlanta, Nashville, Charleston, Mobile, 1860-1910* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Lewis L. Gould, *Progressives and Prohibitionists: Texas Democrats in the Wilson Era* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1992); Norman D. Brown, *Hood, Bonnet, and Little Brown Jug: Texas Politics, 1921-1928*. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1986).

depending on region, availability of sources, and interpretation in an on-going effort to understand an organization which continues to demand attention into the twenty-first century. This dissertation will add to that conversation a rural Texas county that had deep roots in Texas's plantation past.

In an effort to be objective, some historians have made a concerted effort to evaluate the KKK, both in Texas and the nation, in the most neutral and "sensitive manner possible," warning "it should never be forgotten that beneath the threatening white robes and hoods walked millions of otherwise respectable Americans, many of them earnestly striving to forge a better life for themselves and their families." While this author agrees with the statement, she disagrees with the sentiment. With the benefit of the race, ethnicity, class, and gender analysis done in the twenty-five years since the original sentiment was published, no one should forget that beneath the hoods and robes were millions of white Americans who held respectable positions in their communities and considerably more political and economic power than many of the marginalized groups they targeted. While they may have earnestly strived to forge a better life for themselves and their families, they chose to do so with a robe and hood when many other avenues for collective and individual action existed. By doing so, they collectively joined an imagined community that asserted Anglo-Saxon whiteness as the only true American identity and demonstrated its willingness to use violence as a matter of exclusive privilege. If objectivity is the goal, perhaps equal sensitivity should be paid to those who were excluded from that power structure, wore the tar and feathers, had

warning notes on their doors, or died untimely deaths.⁶

Historians' views on the 1920s Ku Klux Klan have varied considerably since the order grabbed attention over a hundred years ago, and since then, four dominant theoretical frames have emerged: rural versus urban, status anxiety of rural versus urban; status anxiety of traditionalism versus modernism; and populist-civic response or reactionary populism. All but the latter divides American society into a dichotomous relationship with itself, discussing those in differing geographic locations or with differing views of morality as if those two parts together contained the whole of American society. But, of course, they do not. African American Protestants lived in rural and urban areas, held traditional and modern views of morality but few historians would claim the Klan targeted them over these concerns without a context of white supremacy. Likewise, Jews, immigrants, Catholics and other target groups of the Klan shared societal concerns stemming from "urban morality" or "modern" changes in their communities, such as divorce, extra- or pre-marital sex, substance abuse. These moral concerns were not new and did not just exist in cities. Wharton County, a rural county, had a long history of these societal problems stemming more from unrestrained white male elite privilege rooted in the county's antebellum period. The elevated importance of beneficial marriages and land inheritance in the area combined with the destructive self-gratification of some men in the planter class led some fathers to favor the more lenient

⁶ Shawn Lay, "Introduction," *The Invisible Empire in the West: Toward a New Historical Appraisal of the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s*, ed. Shawn Lay (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 12.

divorce laws of the modern era and white women suffrage as a matter of protection for their daughters.⁷

While vestiges of these early dichotomous arguments can be seen in the first major wave of studies written on the 1920s Klan during the 1960s, the violence of the contemporary KKK during the modern Civil Rights Movement largely influenced how the historians approached their subject. David Chalmers' *Hooded Americanism: The First Century of the Ku Klux Klan, 1865 to the Present* and William Pierce Randel's *The*

⁷ For more on early historiography on the 1920s Klan and the early dichotomous arguments concerning the nation as a rural and traditional versus urban and modern, see Charles W. Eagles, "Urban-Rural Conflict in the 1920s: A Historiographical Assessment," *Historian* 49 (November 1986): 26-48; Lewis Mumford, "The City," 16-17; H.L. Mencken, "Politics," 24; Louis Raymond Reid, "The Small Town," 287-90, all in *Civilization in the United States: An Inquiry by Thirty Americans*, ed. Harold E. Stearns (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1922; reprint, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1971); Walter Lippman, "The Causes of Political Indifference Today," in *Men of Destiny* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927), 18-34; John Moffatt Mecklin, *The Ku Klux Klan: A Study of the American Mind* (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1924; reprint, 1963), 99-101; 103-107; Leonard J. Moore, "Historical Interpretations of the 1920's Klan: The Traditional View and the Populist Revision," *Journal of Social History* 24 (Winter 1990), 343; Frank Tannenbaum, *Darker Phases of the South* (New York: G. P. Putnam Sons, 1924), 3-38; H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (Hamden, Conn.: Shoestring Press, 1954); H. Richard Niebuhr, "Fundamentalism," in *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, ed. Edwin R. A. Seligman (New York: Macmillan and Company, 1931); Harold J. Laski, *The American Democracy: a Commentary and an Interpretation* (New York: Viking Press, 1948) 157, 287; Wyn Craig Wade, *The Fiery Cross: The Ku Klux Klan in America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 219-221; Rupert N. Richardson, Adrian Anderson, and Ernest Wallace, *Texas: The Lone Star State*, 6th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993), 349; Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (New York: Random House, 1955; reprint, 1961), 293-294, 296; Frank Bohn, "The Ku Klux Klan Interpreted," *The American Journal of Sociology* 30 (January 1925): 385-407; Frederick Lewis Allen, *Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the Nineteen-Twenties* (New York: Blue Ribbon Books, Inc., 1931), 48, 62-67; William E. Leuchtenburg, *The Perils of Prosperity, 1914-1933* (Chicago, 1958), 204-205, 9-10; Richard Moats Miller, "The Ku Klux Klan," in *On Change and Continuity in Twentieth-Century America*, eds. John Braeman, Robert H. Bremmer, and David Brody (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1968), 217-220, 234-35 (quote); Moore, 348; Richard Moats Miller, "A Note on the Relationship Between the Protestant Churches and the Revived Ku Klux Klan," *Journal of Southern History* 22 (August 1956): 355, 367.

Ku Klux Klan: A Century of Infamy, both published in 1965 drew continuity between the Reconstruction-era Klan and the 1920s order in an effort to present a comprehensive history of the Klan since Reconstruction. Randel focused on Klan violence, with some attention to politics in Texas and Louisiana, and characterized the order as against any group contrary to Anglo-Saxon Protestant views which included all who the Klan perceive would “make the big cities more sinful and un-American than ever.” Yet both kept one foot in older schools of thought. Randel argued, “Our historic agrarianism played a part here; in the Klan thinking village and farm people were the best variety of Americans.” Chalmers took a national view of post-World War I order and used forty-eight relatively short chapters to look at each state or group of states. His study, using national newspapers and American Civil Liberties Union archives, was the first to recognize the organization’s national dominance, including the Northeast which had previously been seen as resistant to Klan propaganda. Drawing on status anxiety and urban-rural conflict, he explained that those who joined the Klan, primarily recent urban arrivals from the country, believed their small-town values threatened in “the changing world of the 1920s, which saw postwar restlessness and new waves of immigration combined with the Prohibition-accented erosion of both the small town and fundamentalist morality.”⁸

However, unlike his predecessors, Chalmers examines the KKK’s national effort

⁸ William Pierce Randell, *The Ku Klux Klan: A Century of Infamy* (Philadelphia: Chilton Book Company, 1965; 3rd Printing, 1971), xv-xvii, 182-185, 186 (quote); David M. Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism: The First Century of the Ku Klux Klan, 1865-1965* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1965), vii-ix, 3-5, 2 (quote).

to work through a political framework to achieve their goals, that their targets varied from state to state, and that violence, exploitive leadership, and internal division led to the group's demise. He touched on the organization's political involvement nationwide in 1924 and 1928, political domination in Colorado and Texas, win of the governorship in Maine, attack on Catholics in Oregon and Michigan, and radicals in Wisconsin, and sin, Catholics, immigrants, and Jews in Long Island. His devotion to a national scope, however, prevented any kind of thorough examination of these claims with each state only receiving a few pages each. And his emphasis on violence in every region, giving several examples in each chapter, overshadowed his main purpose but allowed for continuity with the 1960s Klan, filling his last seven chapters.⁹

During the late 1950s and 1960s, historians' view of the Klan significantly shifted as more regional studies dug deep into primary sources and sought out former members to pull away the secrecy. Instead of a fringe, ignorant, small-town secret society that used violence to break the monotony of their dull lives, historians found the membership less homogenous, more mainstream, and more traditionally Protestant than previously thought. They used regional case studies to argue that the 1920s Klan was less violent and less about racism than about Anti-Catholicism and nativism and contrasted it with the 1960s Klan. Against the backdrop of contemporary televised beatings, fire hoses, and bombings in Southern cities, the 1920s Klan seemed more benign and business-like. Yet the historiography remained adhered to a dichotomous

⁹ Chalmers, 48, 85-87, 126, 195, 254-256.

frame, replacing rural with traditional and urban with modern. Historians found anxieties remained, but argued that these anxieties were not about African Americans wanting equality but Catholics and immigrants infiltrating cities with their “anti-American” views on alcohol, sexuality, drug use, labor unions, socialism, and even anarchy.¹⁰

To this new wave of historians, the KKK gained strength from cities and saw Catholics and immigrants as the true threat to Americanism in a traditionalist vs. modernist duality. Regional studies pulled apart the status anxiety of rural/urban conflict by finding inconsistencies in other parts of the nation. In his 1954 dissertation on Wisconsin, Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan, Norman Weaver continued to move Klan historiography to a national mainstream group. He found Protestant temperance values dominated regional Klan ideology, not nativism or racial violence. They voiced concern over changing behaviors, the duality of rural and urban again flip to traditional and urban. Weaver’s use of membership rolls overturned traditional assumptions that the order was filled with discontents and fringe elements with concrete evidence. Furthermore, his statistical approach and occupational categorical structure to designate class structure within the order established the nearly all future similar studies with membership records.¹¹

¹⁰ Eagles, 26-48; Leonard Moore, “Historical Interpretations of the 1920s Klan: The Traditional View and Recent Revisions,” *The Invisible Empire in the West: Toward a New Historical Appraisal of the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s*, ed. Shawn Lay (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 17-38.

¹¹ Norman Weaver, “The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in Wisconsin, Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan,” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1954).

Focused on Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas, Charles C. Alexander argued that 1920s KKK's main concern was morality, not white supremacy. Looking at newspaper reported attacks claimed by the Klan, Alexander found more "immoral" white victims than African American targets. He viewed the Klan as a well-organized body of middle-class businessmen who saw themselves as a law and order group policing society and enforcing traditional morality. Beyond the racist, nativist, and anti-Semitic rhetoric, 1920s Klansmen in Texas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana acted as a moral law and order organization to restore Protestant values disintegrating in a society under modern and urban influences so they punished white bootleggers, gamblers, and adulterers. According to Alexander, this concern led them to enter politics and, in that pursuit, curtailed the violence for votes. Even between these four states, Alexander found some regional differences, such as a greater concern over Catholics in Louisiana and fear of Socialists in Oklahoma. Overall, however, he stressed that the KKK mainly targeted immoral whites. In fact, Alexander states that race or "the New Negro" was not a concern since the black population had declined in these states and that the "non-white" immigrant population, such as the Italians or the Irish, was considerably smaller. His study, a standard in the field, has largely shaped the work of other historians, whether in affirmation or in contrast, since its publication. Many other historians have adopted his repositioning of Protestant morality as the core priority of the order over white supremacy and built on that foundation a swath of studies that argue the 1920s Klan's main attention nationally or regionally, outside of Texas, was on nativist and Protestant concerns about Catholics and Jews. His influential conclusion has now

become the standard characterization of the national organization in most textbooks and encyclopedias, which repeat his moral reformer law and order description.¹²

These regional differences have crumbled Klan historiography into bits of variability and inconsistencies that make building a synthesis difficult. Taken collectively since Alexander, however, the 1920s Klan historiographically has become the benign aberrational second cousin of the more violent 1860s and 1960s organizations. Kenneth T. Jackson's work on the Klan in cities based the entire premise of his book on answering and ending the rural v. urban debate. Based on his examination of the Klan in numerous urban areas of 100,000 or more throughout the nation, he argued that the membership strength of the national KKK centered in urban areas and that Anti-Catholic feelings in the nation was the primary draw for membership, of which the non-union blue-collar and low white-collar workers made the bulk. He found in Chicago working class members joined because of religion and labor competition. He discounted other motivations listed in Klan propaganda as undercurrents in mainstream American society as not as significant. Even in the South, Jackson argued, the New Negro attitude had been sufficiently suppressed by 1920. He based a large part of his thesis on quantified comparisons of election returns, recently-found Klan membership

¹² Charles C. Alexander, *The Ku Klux Klan in the Southwest* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1965; reprint, Norman, OK: Oklahoma University Press, 1995), 22-23; Thomas Cleveland Holt, Laurie B. Green, and Charles Reagan Wilson, eds., *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture: Volume 24: Race* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 233-234; Linda S. Watts, Alice L. George, and Scott Beekman, *Social History of the United States: The 1920s* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2008), 297-299; Mary Beth Norton, Carol Sheriff, David M. Katzman, David W. Blight, Howard Chudacoff, *A People and a Nation: A History of the United States, Volume 2: Since 1865*, 8th Brief Edition (Boston: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2010), 641-642.

rolls, and his revision of total membership estimates for every state, and confirmed that membership numbers were considerably lower estimates than previous historians argued. Although his findings are well-evidenced for urban areas in the Northeast, he largely ignored the strong racial tensions and attitudes of the regions he examined, attitudes which often defy quantification.¹³

From the shifts wrought by Alexander, Weaver, and Jackson, a new interpretation, called the Populist-Civic school, noted the diversity and importance of local conditions developed. More importantly, Shawn Lay and others from this school have dismissed the old dichotomies as well as the desire to pinpoint the most important “anti” element of Klan ideology because it depended on local conditions and found civic activism a common determinant in every region. Lay first illustrated the importance of local factors in his *War Revolution and the Ku Klux Klan: A Study of Intolerance in a Border City*. He argued that the unique position of El Paso on the Mexico-United States border and its unique history significantly shaped the growth and quick demise of the Klan. In El Paso, race, religion, and morality contributed to the KKK’s rise, and, due to the dependence on the Catholic Mexican population from both sides of the border, contributed to a large anti-KKK organization which helped cause its demise. Yet, a stronger case for how white American Protestants racialized morality and religion could

¹³Kenneth T. Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967. Reprint, Chicago: Elephant Paperbacks, division of Ivan R. Dee, Inc., 1992), ix, xiv, xv, 15, 22-27, 66-79, 235-247.

have been made.¹⁴

In *The Invisible Empire in the West: Toward a New Historical Appraisal of the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s*, Lay pulled together a collection of essays which collectively stressed the wide variety of conditions and concerns underscoring the Populist-Civic school. Essays covered various cities in the West, a region in which Lay included West Texas with a submission of his own on El Paso. Other historians cover Denver, Salt Lake City, Anaheim, and Eugene and La Grande, both in Oregon, and each represented larger studies done by those historians, whether books or dissertations. All found different reasons for growth in their respective regions dependent on unique local characteristics or conditions, but all found the Klan an avenue for political and social activism. In the conclusion, Lay argued that nationally members were drawn to the organization by their “commitment to civic activism,” and that the order provided the “medium” through which “citizens discussed local problems, formulated plans of action, and vigorously pursued their social and political agendas.”¹⁵

Findings of this dissertation on the Wharton County Klan in Texas contrast this previous scholarship, and instead, corresponds closely with other studies on the South, specifically Glenn Feldman’s comprehensive coverage of the Klan in Alabama and

¹⁴ Shawn Lay, *War, Revolution, and the Ku Klux Klan: A Study of Intolerance in a Border City* (El Paso, TX: Texas Western Press, 1985). The information above is a summary of the book. Lay states his thesis several times but most succinctly on page 159.

¹⁵ Lay, ed., *The Invisible Empire in the West: Toward a New Historical Appraisal of the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1992), iii, iv, 8-11, 217-222, 220 (quotes).

Nancy MacLean's in-depth examination of the Georgia Klan. Both found the region's local conditions supported Populist-Civic interpretation in the former Confederacy. Since the second incarnation of the order began in Georgia and moved to Alabama within its first two years, these studies cover a longer span of time and, perhaps, greater infiltration into every-day life. Furthermore, both existed as much under the leadership of William J. Simmons as his successor Hiram W. Evans. Since the Wharton Klan's most active period was in 1921, its correlation to other southern Klan during the same period is unsurprising. Both found racism, in both rhetoric and action, as a primary focus of the organization, and considerably more violence against African Americans than found in other regions. Feldman purposefully expanded the time parameters of his study to illustrate that the 1920s incarnation of the KKK "shared many features" with the organization that came before it and remained active into the 1930s and 1940s. Based on his evidence, Alabama's Klan had two phases. In the first phase, ending in 1925, the organization had considerable support from the planter class and industrialists, who jointly held political control over the state, as well as plain folk. In the second phase, membership declined significantly as those holding structural power saw the Klan as political competition. Although not on the same state-level scale, Wharton County's Klan pulled membership from the local planter elite and the business classes, many of whom had large land holdings as well. They did not have considerable power individually but members had kin in high government offices in Texas and Washington

D.C.¹⁶

With the benefit of membership rolls for Athens, Georgia, MacLean found considerable evidence that both men and women in the order wanted to preserve traditional gender rolls and a patriarchal family structure as well. Encapsulating the populist-civic school of Klan history, she argued that the Athens, Georgia, KKK chapter waged war against whites to preserve Protestant “family values,” but her evaluation of the organization extends far beyond the South. This view allows for earlier contradictions by arguing that the secret order was built on what she calls reactionary populism, a desire of everyday people to maintain or restore a conservative status quo, as based on local conditions which dictate Klan rhetoric and action. In the Georgia counties of her study, she found considerable evidence of local middle-class anxiety caused by increased divorce rates. But, she added that this populism sprung from middle-class anxiety over “rapidly changing social relations” and being “trapped between capital and labor,” which provides a useful method for synthesis but has some outliers such as the Klan’s appeal among Chicago’s skilled working class. MacLean’s reactionary populism covers much of the theoretical ground missed in other studies but it does not fully explain its membership’s need for this particular organization. It does not explain why millions of white Americans joined a secret organization during its most violent period.

¹⁶ Glenn Feldman, *Politics, Society, and the Klan in Alabama, 1915-1949* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999); Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994; reprint Oxford University Press paperback, 1995) xiii-xiv (page citations are to the reprint edition). Not having the benefit of any significant archival membership rolls, Feldman compiled names through thorough research.

By the 1920s the middle-class had hundreds of fraternal and service organizations through which they could mollify their anxieties.¹⁷

Furthermore, reactionary populism does not explain the mask. The need for hiding one's identity while committing acts of violence may seem obvious, and, perhaps in some parts of the country fear of prosecution may have been the reason; however, in the South, whites had been lynching black and white alleged criminals for decades and continued to do so through the 1920s. Not only did members of these mobs not wear masks to hide their identity, they purposefully exposed their identity. Many often took pictures with the lynched victim afterward to make postcards to mail to friends and family.¹⁸

One way of explaining the mask, the Klan rhetoric, the violence, and regional differences is by extending MacLean's reactionary populism to include David Roediger's concept of whiteness. In *Wages of Whiteness*, he argues that white workers developed a racialized class consciousness because they feared emasculating dependency, in contrast to the American Revolutionary ideal of independence. At the same time, they desired the "preindustrial, erotic, careless" life style of dependency which they projected onto African Americans to create an essential "other" to separate themselves from Blacks and gain the privileges of whiteness. Roediger draws upon

¹⁷ MacLean, xii-xiii.

¹⁸ For more on photographs of lynchings, see Hilton Als, John Lewis, and Leon F. Litwack, *Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America*, James Allen ed. (Santa Fe: Twin Palms Publishers, 2000) and the companion website: www.withoutsanctuary.org.

W.E.B. DuBois' concept of psychological wages of whiteness, found in DuBois' 1935 *Black Reconstruction*, written, in part, as a response to racist interpretations of Reconstruction seen in *Birth of a Nation*. Applying the concept of whiteness and race privilege to the Klan brings this concept full circle.¹⁹

The Klan publically promoted a certain kind of whiteness—Anglo-Saxon whiteness—through social control that forced conformity among all classes and all religions of whites, rural or urban, roughnecks, farm labor, socialists, and “slackers”. Klan propaganda against groups they labeled as not white or less white, such as Jews, Catholics, and Eastern and Southern European immigrants, directed violent and political action for these purposes nationwide. In the South, they directed their violence toward working-class and middle-class whites who failed to assimilate or uphold certain idealized values. The “wages” or privilege of whiteness came at a cost—the cost of conformity. This coercive assimilation process existed in Wharton prior to the Klan through an exclusive white private political machine, called the White Man’s Union Association of Wharton County, that controlled local offices by having its own primary election for its members and used violence to coerce compliance of any white man who challenged the organization. In exchange for conformity, the KKK offered all members inclusion into an exclusive group that had an extensive network of chapters and power in politics, business, and a private system of redress through surveillance, threats and

¹⁹ David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, revised edition (London: Verso, 1999); W.E.B. DuBois, *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880* (New York: Atheneum, 1969).

violence—all shrouded in the nostalgia of idealized white heroic cavaliers seen in *Birth of a Nation*. For both men and women, it intertwined the appeal of middle-class independence and power, Progressive-era ideas of the best organizing to bring order, and with a 1920s mythic perception of antebellum and, in the South, pre-industrial gender roles. Furthermore, it provided fluidity between classes—a psychological equality among whites made possible by the white hooded anonymity, robed social gatherings, and shared secret codes. Even for those whites who did not join but conformed to the prescribed “values” benefited from the organization’s intimidation of the groups it opposed through Klan philanthropy and easy access to intimidation.

To understand how the Klan viewed morality, religion, and nationality in terms of race, whiteness needs to be defined in early twentieth-century terms. According to historian Neil Foley, whiteness was “a complex social and economic matrix wherein racial power and privilege were shared, not always equally by those who were able to construct identities as Anglo-Saxons, Nordics, Caucasians, or simply whites.” This complex matrix constructed race according to cultural concepts of race, class, progress, gentility, religion, and democratic ideals and equated them with a nation’s progress in a global competition. This matrix of pseudo-scientific racism, crystallized by white American and British social scientists, informed progressives reformers of the Progressive Era and World War I, who saw as social imperative for the future greatness of America the need to the institutionalization of these ideas in government policies. The Darwinian elements of pseudo-scientific racism demanded the continual pursuit of societal betterment in mind, spirit, and body to keep Anglo-Saxons superior to other

racism and America competitive in the world. For those who saw white supremacy in these terms, the fight was a collective one to improve the race to preserve its supremacy.²⁰

The 1920s Klan's menu of American nationalistic racism offered a buffet of tenets already held by many white Americans, and historians have long argued that certain ones held more sway with Klan members nationally. When looked at from the perspective of pseudo-scientific racism, however, all chapters fought the same war, just on different fronts.²¹ This idea does not negate arguments made in any particular region, just re-centers the Klan as a white supremacy organization and provides a continuity that reconnects the second Klan with its parent and offspring. More importantly, by re-

²⁰ Neil Foley, *White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 6-8, 34-37; Madison, Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race: Or the Racial Basis of European History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916); Charles C. Alexander, "Prophet of American Racism: Madison Grant and the Nordic Myth," *Phylon* 23 (Spring, 1962): 73-90; Carol M. Taylor, "W.E.B. Dubois's Challenge to Scientific Racism," *Journal of Black Studies*, 11 (June, 1981): 449-460; John Clark Ridpath, *Great Races of Mankind: An Account of the Ethnic Origin, Primitive Estate, Early Migrations, Social Evolution, and Present Conditions and Promise of the Principal Families of Men*, Vol. 1 (Cincinnati: Jones Brothers Publishing Company, 1892), v-viii.); Lothrop Stoddard, *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World-Supremacy* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921); Lothrop Stoddard, *The Revolt Against Civilization: The Menace of the Under Man* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922). For more on eugenic policies in the United States, see Edward J. Larson, *Sex, Race, and Science: Eugenics in the Deep South* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996); Nicole Hahn Rafter, *White Trash: The Eugenic Family Studies, 1877-1919* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988); and Jonathan P. Spiro, *Defending the Master Race: Conservation, Eugenics, and the Legacy of Madison Grant* (Burlington: University of Vermont Press, 2009); Buenger, *The Path to a Modern South*, 87-89; James R. Green, *Grass-Roots Socialism: Radical Movements in the Southwest, 1895-1943* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), 99-102, 317.

²¹ The children's parable "The Blind Men and the Elephant" provides a useful way of looking at this concept. The parable has six blind men touching different parts of an elephant and argue about what type of animal it was based on their own perception, without being able to see the whole or another point of view.

centering race in Klan historiography, the racist elements of long-held components of American identity become more visible.

Influenced by Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, David Roediger's *Wages of Whiteness*, Critical Race Theory, this dissertation, as a social history, will focus on people, both individuals and groups, and how they constructed their identities within their community. The first chapter will analyze the records of the Hamilton B. Dickson Klan No. 6 found in Wharton County to illustrate the authenticity of the documents, explain how they were interpreted, and argue the 1920s Klan was built upon the old order and made to appear new using elements of the Progressive Era.²²

The second chapter will explain nineteenth-century Wharton County history through the kinship ties of those found in the Klan membership records, to introduce local planter class members who held considerable power in the county and the Klan and

²² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983; revised edition, 1991); David Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991; revised edition, 1999); Cheryl I. Harris, "Whiteness as Property," in *Critical Race Theory: the Key Writings That Formed the Movement*, eds. Kimberlé Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, and Kendall Thomas (New York: The New Press, 1995), 276-291; Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, "Race, Reform, and Retrenchment: Transformation and Legitimation in Anti-discrimination Law," in *Critical Race Theory: the Key Writings That Formed the Movement*, eds. Kimberlé Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, and Kendall Thomas (New York: The New Press, 1995), 103-122; Gregg Cantrell and Elizabeth Hayes Turner, eds, *Lone Star Past: Memory and History in Texas* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2007); W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005); Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, trans. Francis J. Ditter Jr. and Vida Yazdi Ditter (New York: Harper & Row, 1980); Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, 3 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996-98); Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de mémoire," *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 7-24; David Thelen, "Memory and American History," *Journal of American History* 75 (Mar. 1989): 1117-29; David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War In American Memory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001); Walter L. Buenger, "Texas and the South," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 103 (Jan. 2000): 309-24).

the White Man's Union Association (WMUA), when ended localized Reconstruction only thirty years before many of the same members established Klan No. 6. The importance of that history on the people in the county cannot be understated as it shaped their world view, local customs, economic dependencies, and local political organizations. Even in the twenty-first century, this history holds relevance in political outlook, social interactions, and physical space. In addition, methods of structural, social, and political controls used during that period were replicated by the 1920s Texas Klan, and the importance of kinship patterns of the Old South became a pattern of recruitment for the local KKK chapter.

The third chapter will explain the emergence of the Klan chapter and the role local conditions played in building membership, locally prioritization of the Klan agenda, and why some groups which faced violence elsewhere were not targeted locally. It will explain the significant demographic, economic, and infrastructure changes used by the WMUA to whiten Wharton County's population and profit those in the association, as well as how political access through whiteness unified recent arrivals, including Jewish and Catholic immigrants, with the old landed class in the WMUA and protected them from the Klan.

The fourth chapter will analyze numerous incidents of violence in and around Wharton County or involving Wharton residents to argue that the Klan in Wharton and its Klan Province of Houston was a parasitic white supremacy organization that used the structural and occupational powers of its members to commit both physical and psychic violence, control the public narrative, undermine the court system, and protect members

from prosecution. While it tried to socially control the behavior of whites who threatened racial integrity, such as bootleggers and social race equality, it simultaneously privileged its own members with access to that behavior.

“I like to think of my play as a moral and social history of Harrison [Wharton]. I try to choose for my characters problems which are specific to their particular section and yet will have some meaning for the outer world. In my writing of the past, I have concentrated mainly on the problems of the upper and middle classes and the old land-holding aristocracy. Actually, aristocracy as it is known in the rest of the South is just memory kept alive by the great aunts and the old men in Harrison [Wharton]. It did exist and the tradition is kept alive through tales of the past.”

—Horton Foote²³

²³ Horton Foote, *Horton Foote: Genesis of an American Playwright*, ed. Marion Castleberry (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2004), 101.

CHAPTER II
BUREAUCRATIC BANALITY OF VIOLENCE:
KLAN RECORDS AND METHODS OF INTERPRETATION

Historians who study the 1920s Ku Klux Klan face a unique set of challenges created by the group's secrecy. Regardless of region or size, chapter records and membership lists rarely survived the demise of their chapter, much less find their way to an archive for historians to use. Without organizational documents, historians often cull information from newspaper accounts and government records, interpretively handicapped by not knowing if those accounts came from Klansmen. Ceding the idea that a group predicated on secrecy and intimidation necessitated a standard operating procedure to be in the shadows, the records created by this bureaucratic terror group appear incongruently ordinary. On paper, the 1920s Klan seemed to function like the Rotary Club, the Kiwanis, or any other Progressive era organization. This banality, however, is only an illusion, a veil over their vitriolic message, violent means, and hereditary legacy.

Although having chapter records removes this particular hurdle, using chapter minutes and membership lists present other challenges. First, the authenticity of such a rare set should be questioned and verified through corroboration with other available sources. Second, record-keeping patterns and practices found within the documents need to be analyzed to determine what information routinely appeared, as well as how and where in the records it was written. Learning the record-keeping patterns of a particular

Klan chapter secretary, or Kligrapp, can illuminate gaps and discrepancies, which informs the corroborative process, and highlights pattern deviations that may signal significant local or organizational changes. Finally, an examination of the papers as tangible artifacts, particularly their physical appearance, condition, and organization, can provide insight into a local group's purpose and priorities, as well as illustrate the inner workings of the larger organization.¹

Since this dissertation depends heavily on one set of Klan records, not previously

¹ A sample of other Klan archival holdings with membership rolls include: Athens Klan No. 5 (Athens, Ga.) records, MS712, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, GA; Ku Klux Klan (Anaheim, Calif.) records, 1924-1925, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington D. c.; Knox County Klan No 14 (Knoxville, Tenn.) records, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta, GA; Ku Klux Klan Baton Rouge No. 3 records, 1928-1939, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA; Buffalo Ku Klux Klan papers, 1922-1927, Buffalo History Museum Research Library, Buffalo, NY; New York Klan No. 260 (Herkimer County, NY) records, Manuscripts and Special Collections, New York State Library, Albany, NY; Ku Klux Klan General Correspondence, RG 030-A17, Commissioner of State Police, Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, PA; Tillamook No. 8, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR; Wheatland Klan No. 29 (Harlowton, Montana) records, 1923-1928, Montana Historical Society Research Center, Helena, MT (hereafter cited as MHSRC); Kontinental Klan, No. 30 (Butte Mont.) records, MHSRC; Pine River Klan No. 69, Bayfield, CO, Ku Klux Klan Records, Center of Southwest Studies, Fort Lewis College; Ku Klux Klan- Wayne County, Indiana records (Whitewater Klan No. 60, Richmond, IN, and Fountain City Klan No. 3), 1916-1933, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, IN (hereafter cited as IHS-IN); Odon Klan No. 90 records, 1923-1924, IHS-IN; Crown Point Klan No. 72, IHS-IN; Wood County Klan records, microform, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH; Newaygo County Ku Klux Klan Membership Cards, 1923-1926, microform, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI; Ku Klux Klan(Amarillo, Tex.) records, 1921-1925 and undated, Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas. Ku Klux Klan No. 279 Records, 1921-1936 (hereafter cited as KKK No. 279), Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, the University of Texas in Austin, Texas (archives hereafter cited as DBCAH-UT). To see an example of Klonklave meeting minutes from a Klan No. 279, Uvalde, Texas, see Rebecca Onion, "Minutes From a 1920s Meeting on Special KKK Stationery," *The Vault* history blog, *Slate Magazine*, 24 July 2013, found online at http://www.slate.com/blogs/the_vault/2013/07/24/kkk_meeting_minutes_from_a_1920s_konklave_show_bureaucracy_of_national_organization.html.

subject to academic scrutiny, this chapter will explain the material conditions and informational arrangement of the records, why they exist as they do, and how I have interpreted them, including the corroborative process I used to evaluate their authenticity and confirm the identities of the individuals found in the records. To confirm this set of documents' validity, I will contextualize and compare them with Klan records found in other locations, as well as corroborate the information they contain, such as local events and Klansmen's names, to enumerated censuses, newspapers, and other primary sources. Then, this chapter will present a broad view of Wharton's Klan membership, with a breakdown of the chapter's demographics by age, birthplace, residence, occupation, marital status, and military experience, to determine the Klan's integration into the local community.

The seemingly conventional archival holdings of Wharton's Hamilton B. Dixon Klan included seven components: a blank membership form, an undated membership list, a letter-size binder containing meeting minutes, a small binder containing individual Membership and Dues Record forms, carbon copies of letters sent to the national headquarters, a note on who donated the materials to the archive, and a local officer's copy of the K-UNO *Kloran*, the order's main handbook that contained various rituals and lectures. Although the basic day-to-day workings of a secret group may seem mundane and inconsequential, the level of formality held in the records and the attention to detail within them allow historians to gage the group's character, whether serious or frivolous, business or purely social, and the attitudes of its membership as to interests and involvement. What did the records look like? What type of paper was used, plain

paper or pre-printed forms? If so, what forms were used and for what purpose? Were copies made? What was kept and what was discarded? Were they typed or handwritten? Were they written in pen or pencil? Were corrections made? What questions were asked and why? Which questions went unanswered? How often did the group meet and how structured were the meetings? How detailed were the minutes and what topics were discussed? Did the attention to detail remain consistent throughout the life of the organization or vary depending on who wrote them or when they were written? How were these records organized, maintained, and stored? And, finally, how did they survive? The answers to these questions tell us much about the values and motivations of the people who kept them, the place they lived, and the organization they joined.²

The records themselves, as physical objects, reflect the times in which they were written and mark the order as distinct from its predecessor. Yet, the pages within this archival collection seem somewhat unremarkable and ordinary when compared to those of other Progressive Era groups. Evidenced by the lists of officers, approved meeting minutes, typed-letter carbons, and mass-produced forms typify the modern recordkeeping practices which conformed to parliamentary procedure, formal documentation, and concern for efficiency and uniformity. According to historian Robert Wiebe, between the 1890s and World War I (WWI), American society fixated on order, uniformity, regulation, and efficiency in reaction to a growing sense of diminishing local

² Hamilton B. Dickson Klan No. 6 records (hereafter K6R), Wharton County Historical Museum, Wharton, Texas (hereafter WCHM). This chapter will focus on the main elements of the collection.

control as urban areas siphoned people and political power from the neighboring countryside and economic power concentrated in fewer, more distant hands. As part of this effort, an organizational wave washed through the country, including heritage societies, professional associations, economic-based coalitions, political activist organizations, and youth-focused groups, that addressed an array of interests. Most adhered to a multi-tiered geographic hierarchy, where power and communication emanated from national officers to those at the state level, followed by district, then to local chapters. This structure provided the national leadership greater control, whether over resources, collective political power, or organizational message.³

The second KKK's founder, William J. Simmons and his business partners, Elizabeth Tyler and Edward Clarke, the sole employees of the Southern Publicity

³ Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search For Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, a division of Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1967), xiii-10. Historians have long debated the central elements and character of the era, with some arguing that no such unifying element existed. Likewise, historians' views on when the era began or ended vary considerably, with most including the period between the 1890s and World War I. For more on the Progressive Era and American society's increasing effort to create order through organizations and specialization, see Louis Galambos, "The Emerging Organizational Synthesis in Modern American History," *Business History Review* 44 (Autumn 1970), 279-90; Kenneth E. Boulding, *The Organizational Revolution: A Study in the Ethics of Economic Organization* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1953); Jerry Israel, ed., *Building the Organization Society: Essays on Associational Activities in Modern America* (New York: The Free Press, 1972); Allen F. Davis, *Spearheads for Reform* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1967); Ellis W. Hawley, *The Great War and the Search for a Modern Order: A History of the American People and Their Institutions, 1917-1933* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992). For more on the Progressive Era, see Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (New York: Vintage Books, division of Random House, 1954), Arthur S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era: 1913-1917* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954); David Thelen, "Social Tensions and the Origins of Progressivism," *Journal of American History* 56 (Sep 1969): 323-341. For more on the Progressive Era in the South, including Texas, see William A. Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Lewis L. Gould, *Progressives and Prohibitionists: Texas Democrats in the Wilson Era* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992).

Company, used a recognizable framework, based on their experiences with other national groups. Before he recreated the order in 1915, Simmons worked as a professional organizer for the Woodmen of the World, a fraternal society with life insurance benefits. During that time, he lived the life of a traveling salesman, selling lodge memberships and building networks through the dozen fraternal groups to which he belonged, including the Masons and Knights Templar. Despite his experience, financial success in the Klan's first few years eluded him. So, in 1920, only a few months before the Klan came to Texas, he partnered with Tyler and Clarke's publicity company to improve profits. They used this previous experience running recruitment campaigns for the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and the Anti-Saloon League to expand the Klan from three southern states to a national phenomenon, and a profitable business.⁴

⁴ MacLean, 4-5; Alexander, 2-8; Mary Ann Clawson, *Constructing Brotherhood: Class, Gender, and Fraternalism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2014), 4, 218-220; Kenneth T. Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan in the city, 1915-1930* (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 1967; paperback ed., Chicago: Elephant Paperbacks, div. of Ivan R. Dee, Publisher, 1992), 5-8; Michael Newton, *The Ku Klux Klan in Mississippi: A History* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2010) 70; Kenneth E. Harrell, "The Ku Klux Klan in Louisiana, 1920-1930," PhD diss., Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1966, viii. Before 1920, the KKK only had chapters in Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. In 1920, they expanded into Texas and Louisiana, then nationally and internationally. In 1926, after Simmons, Clarke, and Tyler lost control over the Klan, the organization expanded internationally. That year Klan recruiters moved into Canada and started chapters in Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba, British Columbia, and Ontario. By the 1930s, they had chapters in the Panama Canal Zone, China, Wales, Germany, England, France, Mexico, and New Zealand. Glenn Feldman, *Politics, Society, and the Klan in Alabama, 1915-1949* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999), 16. For more on the KKK in Canada, see, James M. Pitsula, *Keeping Canada British: The Ku Klux Klan in 1920s Saskatchewan* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013); Robin W. Winks, *The Blacks in Canada: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971; second edition, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997). Little has been published on international chapters outside of Canada. The recent 2015 *Mapping the Klan* project, viewed online <https://labs.library.vcu.edu/klan/>, created by John T. Kneebone and Shariq D. Torres, and sponsored by Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) History Publications and VCU

Simmons, with Clarke and Tyler, created a top-down hierarchy with the national leadership over state, district, and local levels, and managed their Invisible Empire from the national headquarters, referred to as the Imperial Palace, in Atlanta, Georgia. With language partially borrowed from its 1860s parent, each level also had an internal hierarchy of officers, and every aspect of this structure had its own unique title. Hired by the national office, Kleagles worked as professional organizers to recruit new charter members and establish chapters in individual rural towns or counties, or urban areas. The local-level Klan officers, collectively called Terrors, continued recruitment of new members, called aliens, until inducted as members, and oversaw the general day-to-day business of the order. The Exalted Cyclops, or E.C., ran the individual Klan chapters, and reported to and received directives from the district or Province level, which was led by Great Titan and his officers, called Furies. Provinces collectively made up a Realm,

Libraries, mapped chapters in the Panama Canal Zone, but not other international chapters, including those in Canada. Although useful to visually illustrate the Klan's growth and national strength, the *Mapping the Klan* project contains several factual errors as of the writing of this dissertation, hence should only be used as a reference. As of September 2017, notable errors include the dates assigned to the founding of individual chapters correspond to when the chapters' first appeared in *The Searchlight*, the official national Klan newspaper, published by the national office and sent to every member, not the actual charter date. Also, errors in location printed in *The Searchlight*, inevitable for any national newspaper, went uncorrected as well. To illustrate this, the map shows the Hamilton B. Dixon Klan, the subject of this dissertation, as Klavern number 8, founded in 1922 in Glen Flora, Texas, when local records indicate it began in 1920 as Klan number 6 in the town of Wharton, then approximately ten miles south of Glen Flora. Texas Klan number 8 was established in Bryan, Brazos County, Texas. Most historians agree the Klan's number, i.e. Wharton's number 6, follow the order in which the chapters were founded. Although slight, these errors in time, place, and number have been repeated frequently. In Colorado County, Texas, the Eagle Lake Klan began in 1921, but the map shows 1923. Nearby chapters missing from the map include Klans in Humble (no. 2), Conroe (no. 19), Brenham (no. 20), Edna (no. 27), Fayette County (no. 39), and Wharton County's other Klan chapter in El Campo, no 27, as well as several others.

or state organization, led by the Grand Dragon and his officers, or Hydras. Simmons borrowed the basic structure from the original Klan and reused the terms realm, province, cyclops, titan, furies, grand dragon, hydras, among others.⁵

On the national level, Imperial Wizard Simmons and his fifteen officers, or Genii, directed the order's expansion, emanated propaganda through hired lecturers and official newspapers, manufactured official Klan robes and hoods, and published internal Klan documents, including stationary, membership forms, dues records, minutes sheets, robe measurement forms, and the *Kloran*, the order's handbook of rituals and lectures. Although Kleagles used a buffet of popular mainstream issues to draw a range of new members, every meeting and every chapter conformed to the rituals and procedures laid out in the *Kloran*. Pre-printed lectures fed the same history, ideology, and message to every Klavern across the country. All Klansmen, except officers, wore the same uniform, which consisted of a hood and robe, made at the same factory and sold to them by the order. Membership came with a subscription to the Klan's official newspaper, *The Searchlight*, an organ that allowed the Imperial Palace to control the order's message

⁵ *Kloran*, 5th edition (Atlanta: Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, 1916), 52-54, K6R, WCHM; John C. Lester and Daniel L. Wilson, *Ku Klux Klan: Its Origin, Growth and Disbandment*, introduction by Walter L. Fleming (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1905, originally published 1884), 137-181. Lester belonged to the original order, established in Pulaski, Tennessee, in 1867, and with Wilson, published the original 1867 Prescript and 1868 revised Prescript of the Reconstruction-era Klan in 1884. Fleming republished them, along with other documents and warnings given him by former members. Due to the numerous similarities, Simmons likely read Fleming's book or inherited similar documents from his father, who belonged to the original order. Other titles Simmons reused or slightly modified, seen in the Prescript, include genii, wizard, giant, nighthawk, and conclave, as well as cave, which Simmons modified to Klonklave. For more on the 1860s KKK, see Elaine Parsons, *Ku-Klux: The Birth of the Klan During Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

and provided them a centralized method to communicate to members nationwide.⁶

Unlike other national organizations of this period, however, the Klan claimed secrecy as central to its power. Yet, its material culture, including the significant amount of paper documents generated for and by every Klan chapter, worked against this secrecy. The *Kloran*, the official handbook of the organization, might be the most commonly found and most easily authenticated archival record from the 1920s Klan, since every chapter received a set of copies, each specifically marked for one of the thirteen officers who participated in the rituals. The copy found in the Wharton archives, a fifth edition K-UNO *Kloran*, copyright 1916, was officially assigned to the Klokard officer, or lecturer, indicated by the officer name printed across the cover's top. Within, Simmons had written an "Imperial Decree" in which he called the *Kloran* "THE book" of the order. His decree emphasized the need to study it and keep it secret, stating, "The book . . . MUST not be kept or carried where any person of the "alien" world may chance to become acquainted with its sacred contents." At approximately 3.5 inches by 6.5 inches, the handbook could be carried discreetly in a pocket. Its cover, however, lacked any hint of discretion and could be easily read from across a room.⁷

⁶ Ibid., Newton, 70; Clawson, 218-220; Jackson 5-8.

⁷ *Kloran*, 5th ed., front cover, 5. Copies of the *Kloran* can be seen online with various digital archival collections, including a Klarogo or inner guard copy, dated 1916, in Klan Ephemera, 1925-1970, University of Wisconsin Digital Collections, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, found online at <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/WI/WI-idx?type=header&id=WI.KlanEphem&isize=M>; or at the Internet Archive, found at https://archive.org/details/KloranOfTheKKK_201404. Henry Peck Fry first described the fifth edition *Kloran* in 1922, see Henry Peck Fry, *The Modern Ku Klux Klan* (Boston: Small, Maynard, and Company, 1922) 82-93. Other archival holdings and online sources, such as auction sites, show designated copies for the Exalted Cyclops, the Kludd, the Klokard, the Kladd, and the Klarogo have been located. *Kloran* copies for other officers have not been found,

On a white background, “Kloran” appeared in large, bold black print. Above it read “White Book” and below it read, “Knights of the Ku Klux Klan” in Old English type. Under this appeared an image, larger than a postage stamp, which removed any doubt as to the book’s affiliation. Drawn in black, a robed man, with black eyes peering through his triangular hood, holding a torch, rode on a robed and reared horse, both with the Klan imperial cross, followed by two other Klansmen, as if leading a parade over a hill. The lower portion of the cover read K-UNO in bold letters, followed by the words “Karacter, Honor, Duty.” Even the back cover, with picture of eyes staring from a white hood, a sideways K, and burning cross, challenged any modicum of secrecy.⁸

K-UNO referred to the entry level in the KKK’s fraternal degree system, somewhat similar to those found in the Freemasons. Simmons had imagined this to be an integral part of this re-creation but had not completed it when an internal power struggle removed him from Imperial power. Beginning in 1924, the national headquarters, under Imperial Wizard Hiram W. Evans, published the K-DUO, K-TRIO, and K-QUAD copies of the *Kloran* containing rituals for conferring second, third, and fourth fraternal degrees. Local archival records include only the K-UNO, perhaps because Wharton’s Klan No. 6

which may indicate those officers did not need one. Those officers include the Kligrapp, the Klabee, the Klexter, the Nighthawk, and the Klokann committee. Several copies found have blank covers, perhaps for secrecy purposes. According to a few auction websites, such as Atlantarelics.com, found at http://atlantarelics.com/cgi-bin/Print_Item.asp?4611 (viewed September 1, 2017), blank covers allowed Klansmen to read these books in public, but this has not been verified. For an example, see *Kloran*, 6th edition (Atlanta: Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, 1928), KKK No. 279, DBCAH-UT. See Appendix for a glossary of Klan terms, including officer titles.

⁸ *Kloran*, 5th ed., front cover, back cover.

had diminished considerably by 1924.⁹

Within its fifty-four pages, the K-UNO *Kloran* contained the ceremonial and parliamentary procedures to be used at every regular meeting, or Klonklave. Its use promoted ritualized conformity throughout the national organization with prescribed language and procedures for opening, closing, and induction ceremonies. Every induction ceremony, whether held inside the Klavern or outside in an open field, was supposed to follow the same format. Every meeting, regardless if in a rural town or large metropolis, was supposed to begin with the same “Opening Ceremony” and close with the same “Closing Ceremony.” On the page, each ceremony resembled a play with a script and stagecraft. The script included specific dialogue, printed in bold text, for each officer throughout the ceremony and included prayers, chants, and songs to be performed by all members. The stagecraft incorporated a detailed description of prescribed physical movement for all ceremonial participants.¹⁰

For the induction ceremony, the handbook detailed a choreographed performance

⁹ For more on the KKK degrees, see Alexander, 102, 234; Marion Monteval, *The Klan Inside Out* (Claremore, Okla.: Monarch Publishing Company, 1924) 69; Feldman, 163-164; U.S. House of Representatives, Eighty-ninth Congress, second session, *Activities of Ku Klux Klan Organizations in the United States, Report to the Committee on Un-American Activities, Part 4*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967), 3980; U.S. House of Representatives, Ninetieth Congress, first session, *The Present-Day Ku Klux Klan Movement: Report to the Committee on Un-American Activities*, Vol. 1, Issue 377 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967), 63. For more on Simmons pushed out of the Klan, see David Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism, The First Century of the Ku Klux Klan: 1865 to the Present* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1965), 100-108.

¹⁰ *Kloran*, 5th ed., 8-20. Klavern, Simmons’ word for cave, was the prescribed Klan name for where a Klan met. Klan referred to the local unit or chapter, and Klonklave referred to the local unit’s meeting. See Klan glossary in appendix, reprinted from *Kloran*, 5th ed., 4, 52-54.

through a carefully staged space designed to enhance the spectacle atmosphere for the new members. Underscoring the ceremonies' play-like quality, the *Kloran* included a diagram of the Simmons-approved Klavern structure, space, and ceremonial movement to which every Klan was to adhere. It mapped out the placement of doors and furniture in three connected rooms—an Outer Den, an Inner Den, and the main Klavern space—in a way that would maintain secrecy to possible passersby outside. Bystanders walking would only catch a glimpse into the Outer Den and see a group of men, dressed in regular attire, standing around a table in an otherwise empty room. This space led into the Inner Den, which was guarded by the Klexter, or inner guard, and furnished with lockers to store hoods and robes. It also had the only door into the Klavern, a square room, where the diagram illustrated placement of officers in the corners, which symbolically represented the four points of an imaginary cross, with a “sacred altar” in the center. Illustrated by arrows, ceremonial movement of new members through the space formed a large circle, then moved to a smaller inner square around the altar, drawn as a square inside a circle. The series of concentric circles and squares formed by the production and space might have added an air of fraternal authenticity, carrying weight from the past, drawn from Simmons' extensive fraternalism experience.¹¹

¹¹ *Kloran*, 5th ed., 7. Considering his numerous fraternal society memberships, Simmons may have prescribed some symbolic meaning to the induction ceremony's concentric circles and squares but that meaning is unknown at this time. His successor, Imperial Wizard Hiram Evans changed this aspect of the induction ceremony to squares only. For Klavern diagram under Evans, see *Kloran*, 6th edition (Atlanta: Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, 1928), 3, which can be viewed online at Catalog Number 13338-32, Nebraska State Historical Society, found at <http://nebraskahistory.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/826CAB93-5D62-4F2C-8B30-522422142721>. Klorans from the 1950s and 1960s use a mixture of Simmons' and Evans' Klorans. The Mississippi Klans of the 1960s, notorious for their terroristic brutality toward African Americans and civil rights activists, re-used Simmons' diagram, as described above, as

Also in the fifth edition *Kloran*, Simmons' Ku Klux Creed served as mechanism to unify members behind a set of beliefs grounded in the past. He built a modern Klan on the bones of the past and provided his followers a direct bridge to the order's Reconstruction-era ancestor. Along with inheriting the name, the identity-shielding hood, and racial violence, Simmons re-used the entire 1868 creed for the first half of his new 1916 Ku Klux Creed. In his first of four sentences, he copied the older one word for word to claim "the majesty and supremacy of the Divine Being." Borrowing his second with slight alterations, he "recognize[d] our relation to the government of the United States of America, the supremacy of its Constitution, the Union of States thereunder," to which he added, "and the Constitutional Laws thereof, and we shall be ever devoted to the sublime principles of a pure Americanism and valiant in the defense of its ideals and institutions." This addition reflected a contemporary concern shared by many white Americans over immigration to the United States from countries outside of western Europe. Yet, "Principles of pure Americanism" remained an abstraction that was both vague and patriotic so individuals, regardless of history or geographic location, could adapt it to their own preconceived definition. The third sentence included the dominate racist premise of white supremacy—a vow to keep "the races of mankind" distinct, or separate, to maintain "White Supremacy" and their belief that this racial order had been divinely ordained. The creed ended with a fraternalist statement of loyalty to their

well as the same opening, closing, and induction ceremonial wording and rituals. See *Kloran*, White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Realm of Mississippi, 1963, 4, found online at <https://archive.org/details/Kloran>.

brotherhood.¹²

Along with these changes, Simmons included an approved “order of business,” typical of many Progressive-Era organizations, for all Klunklaves, or meetings, which added the air of banality to the archival records of a hate group. After the ritualistic opening ceremony, the structure of these Klunklaves moved to the more mundane with the reading of the approved minutes, followed by a reading of the unapproved minutes and amendments, reports of standing and special committees, a reading of bills and communications, unfinished business, general business, announcements, the treasurer statement of receipts, disbursements, and balances, and, finally, the reading and approving of minutes. In many ways, these meetings followed Roberts’ Rules of Order like so many other organizations, and, when reading this list, forgetting what this group did and stood for can be easy until one remembers that the treasurer who recorded the receipts and disbursements wore a blood-red “Imperial Cross” emblem, that the secretary who read the minutes did so wearing a white Klan robe, that those saying the yays and nays wore conical white hoods, and that the special committee organized a

¹² Kloran, 5th ed., 2; J. C. Lester and D. L. Wilson, *Ku Klux Klan: Its Origin, Growth and Disbandment*, introduction by Walter L. Fleming (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1905; originally published 1884), 135-181; David M. Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism: History of the Ku Klux Klan*, 3rd edition (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965; 3rd ed., New York: F. Watts, 1981; reprint, Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2003), 28; J. William Harris, *Deep Souths: Delta, Piedmont, and Sea Island Society in the Age of Segregation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 275-276; Michael Newton, *White Robes and Burning Crosses: A History of the Ku Klux Klan from 1866* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2014), 35. Although the creed did not specify a Christian God, the membership certainly understood the creed in those terms. Simmons’ successor, Hiram Evans’ changed the creed significantly in the 6th edition which the later generations followed. See, *Kloran*, 6th edition, 4, KKK 279, DBCAH-UT; *Kloran*, 1963, 1.

silent parade and decided the path should move through the nearby African-American neighborhood.¹³

Interspersed between the routine business of committee reports, announcements, and the reading of minutes, the meeting's pre-approved agenda listed the contrasting Klan business of "citizenship" applications, the "naturalization" ceremony, payment of "Klan dues," and the Imperial Palace-approved speeches, listed simply as "for the encouragement and edification of the Klan." Printed within the *Kloran*, Simmons included the first two speeches, the K-UNO and the Klonversation, he wanted read to new inductees to explain the organization's purpose and Reconstruction heritage. On January 20, 1921, Exalted Cyclops (E. C.) James R. Cox and his Klarogo gave these two speeches "for the benefit of new member[s]." According to the minutes of that fourth meeting of the Hamilton B. Dixon Klan, Kligrapp Leland Brooks described the speeches' collective subject as "why Klan organized and what it stands for." Using the

¹³ *Kloran*, 5th ed., 3. *Robert's Rules of Order* had become commonplace by turn of the century, with many clubs and organizations adopting it due, in large part, to the era's stress on efficiency through structural conformity. The Wharton County Historical Museum had a copy from 1915, but not included in this or any particular collection. For more on its use during the era, see Anne Firor Scott, *Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, Illini Books edition, 1993), 101,120, 209 fn 5; Kate Rousmaniere, *Citizen Teacher: The Life and Leadership of Margaret Haley* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 42. The 1920s KKK would have used the following edition, with page numbers referring to the prescribed order of business: Henry M. Robert, *Robert's Rules of Order Revised for Deliberative Assemblies* (Chicago: Scott, Foresman, and Company, 1915, original copyright 1876), 20-40. Perhaps of interest, the introduction of a later edition, the first complete revision since 1915, noted the parliamentary process' fifth century Anglo-Saxon tribal roots. Henry M. Robert, *Robert's Newly Revised Rules of Order*, introduction by Sarah Corbin Robert (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman, and Company, 1970), xxviii. No evidence has been found to indicate the Reconstruction-era KKK followed any pre-structured or set meeting order; however, 1960s Mississippi realm did use a set order of business similar to their 1920s parent. See, *Kloran*, 1963, 3.

Kloran as a guide, the E. C. recited the Klonversation to explain to new members the importance of secrecy and meaning of KKK symbols, before he shared the secret password and pinned to their robe the official Klan insignia, a red circular patch with a white cross.¹⁴

In the K-UNO oration that followed, the Klarogo framed the new order as inheritors of the righteous protectors of white supremacy and white womanhood. The lecture intertwined the conventional Lost Cause mythology of Reconstruction with literary hero tropes echoed in the 1915 D. W. Griffith movie *Birth of a Nation*. As written, Kemp's reading described the fallen Confederacy in innocent terms, calling them "unarmed, defeated, defenseless, and submissive people" as prey of the "shameful devilry of . . . unscrupulous manipulators", the controllers of the "National Government", and faced "a pestilence . . . more terrorizing than the seven plagues of Egypt." Perhaps more reflective of Simmons' meaning of his Klan Creed allegiance to country, in written the same year as *Birth of a Nation*'s debut, the first lecture explained that "Might ruled over Right" and argued that the "misguided" federal government "stripped" white southern men of constitutional law, as "virtuous vestments of civilized sovereignty", and, by doing so, endangered "the chastity of the mother, wife, sister, and daughter . . . to the licentious longings of lust-crazed beasts in human form." In this Reconstruction myth, the Klan embodied knighthood and came to save the defenseless,

¹⁴ *Kloran*, 5th ed., 46-47. Since Simmons' created the *Kloran*, the KKK has called this insignia patch as the MIOAK, or Mystic Insignia of a Klansman, often referred to as the "blood drop" cross, which remains the white supremacy group's insignia today.

restore “racial rights and the sovereignty of constitutional law, . . . and made possible the birth of the greatest nation of all time—the Re-United States of America.” As in *Birth of a Nation*, the Klan narrative makes them the hero. Along with the creed and nomenclature, this short lecture provided a rhetorical conduit between the original Reconstruction Ku Klux Klan and the men standing in the Woodmen of the World Hall in 1921 Wharton, Texas.¹⁵

At each meeting, after the speeches and before he gave his receipt and disbursement report, the Wharton Klan Klabee, or treasurer, received dues payments from individual Klansmen and someone recorded the amount on an official Klan dues form. Since the handwriting on the Wharton forms matches the script found in the minutes, the Kligrapp, Leland Brooks in 1921, probably recorded these payments on the individual member’s form. Wharton’s first Klabee, Louis F. Worthing, a bank cashier like Brooks, might have recorded the same in his own records, but, if so, those records have either not survived or been found. According to the Klavern map in the *Kloran*, the Klabee and Kligrapp sat together at a desk placed near the E.C.’s raised chair. In 1921, he flipped through a small binder filled with a stack of “Member and Dues Forms,” Form K102, each made out with individual member information, and quickly recorded the amount provided. This small loose-leaf binder, sitting on the archive shelf, bore no outward markings of its purpose or use, and was possibly purchased locally.¹⁶

¹⁵ *Kloran*, 5th ed., 48-51.

¹⁶ *Kloran*, 5th ed., 3; Klan Member Dues Binder (hereafter KMDB), K6R, WCHM.

This binder, filled with Membership and Dues forms, contained a wealth of information that could be corroborated in newspapers, census records, vital records, government documents, and Klan minutes, which collectively allowed for identification of individual Klansmen. Inside its nondescript canvas-covered cardboard cover sat a stack of over three hundred K102 forms, many still attached in the three-ringed binder spine, although several had their punched holes completely ripped out and one had a significant tear, making the individual's name unreadable. When compared to the names that appeared in the meeting minutes, some individual Klansmen's dues forms have been removed or lost over time, or, for those few who did not have to pay dues, perhaps the treasurer felt a form unnecessary in the spirit of efficiency. The aged, yellowed papers varied in condition depending on their placement in the binder. Whereas those in the middle appear in remarkable condition, those near the covers have weathered significantly, with frayed edges and ripped binder holes. Their placement within the binder indicates the treasurer made an effort to organize them in alphabetical order by last name, presumably to find each individual member's sheet quickly and efficiently make a record of the amount paid in the appropriate place. Generally the forms followed this order, with A-names together, followed by B-names, however, within each letter grouping, the organization is lost, "Aschenbeck" appeared first, followed by "Arnold", "Ahldag", "Aiken", "Andrews", then "Armstrong."¹⁷

Despite the clandestine nature of the organization, the format on K102 seemed

¹⁷ KMBD, K6R, WCHM.

designed to be efficient and intuitive, not secretive or coded, even when read decades later by a nonmember. Approximately the size of a small index card, each pre-printed form contained a fill-in-the-blank grid pattern that allowed for the inclusion of a significant amount of information in a small space. Across the top of each, read labels for an individual's personal information with corresponding blanks for name, residential address, business address, occupation, mailing address and phone number. Consistent with common practice of the period, most Klansmen's first and middle names had been shortened to initials, followed by his surname. The body of the form was divided into three sections. From left to right, the first column was written vertically and held blanks for the chapter name and number, the realm to which it belonged, and the town and state in which it was located. For the members who joined in the first half of 1921, 1922, and early 1924, this section has been completed in a variety of ways, dependent on the Kligrapp handling the documents.¹⁸

The second column contained an odd assortment of personal and membership information. It included, from top to bottom, transfer information, date of naturalization (induction), age in years, hair and eye color, height and weight, and marital status. Several Wharton members transferred from other Klan chapters and, in this column, their forms have written notations as to the date of transfer instead of an induction date, and the Klan chapter number from which they transferred. The purpose of including the personal information remains unclear and, on its face, seems superfluous. If the national

¹⁸ Ibid.

organization included personal description labels and blanks for security reasons, perhaps to identify membership, local Whartonians probably found such measures unnecessary, unlike urban Klansmen, since most of the membership knew each other from other fraternal and business groups, church, business, school, and family relationships. Even those living outside the town of Wharton had to come into town as the county seat to pay taxes and conduct business. Since the Kligrapp used Form K101 to record the chest, sleeve, and body length measurements necessary for sizing individual robes and hoods, the height and weight record on the membership dues record did not serve much purpose. As to members' marital status, the form had only three choices: single, married, and widower. As a national organization, the KKK frowned upon divorce which explained the absence of it as a choice. Since the record failed to show changes in marital status for any Klansmen during their tenure with the hooded order, the Wharton Kligrapp only recorded this information at the time of a member's "naturalization." Those who had previously divorced prior to their membership, marked single as their marital status.¹⁹

When the Wharton Klan began in late 1920, annual membership dues consisted of four dollars, which was quickly raised to five dollars in 1922. Klan leadership in Atlanta allowed for quarterly payments, a policy which opened membership to more financially strapped white Protestant men who could not afford to pay the full amount at

¹⁹ Ibid.; KKK 279, DBCAH-UT; David A. Horowitz, ed., *Inside the Klavern: The Secret History of a Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1999), 149.

one time. The Kligrapp recorded these payments in one of two columns that divided right side section into years with twelve boxes in each column, preprinted with month and dollar sign. Unlike a grid pattern in a ledger or bank book, the form did not contain a place for total amount paid or have additional lines to specify number placement or divide dollars from cents.²⁰

Wharton's Kligrapp rarely used the bottom portion of the "Membership and Dues Record form," a preprinted section used to record when and how Klansman's membership ended. Within the five labeled boxes marked "Suspended", "Exiled", "Banished", "Transferred", and "Died", the Kligrapp simply needed to write the date a member ended his connection with the Hamilton B. Dickson Klan in the appropriate box. Of the three hundred and two forms, only six had dates, with at least one of each category: John R. Bolton, banished September 20, 1923; C. L. Bolton, suspended February 21, 1924; J. O. Dockery, died August 15, 1924; J. F. Jolly, transferred December 24, 1923; F. I. Moore, suspended March 31, 1924; J. R. Moore, suspended March 31, 1924. According to the directions, which said "Write ALL REMARKS on other side," circumstances surrounding an individual Klansmen's departure should have been written on the back; however, no remarks or explanations were made. Only penciled numbers, which resemble notes on membership counts, appear on the back of the yellowing pages and none on those five who left.²¹

²⁰ KMBD, K6R, WCHM.

²¹ Ibid.

From the level of detail included by the Kligrapp on the dues forms, including the lack of attention paid to how and when a Klansman withdrew from the den, indicated that some local Klan leaders' enthusiasm declined significantly during that chapter's first two years. When comparing the forms of the charter members and those of Klansmen who joined six months later, one might imagine, like an excited child carefully writing his name on his notebooks in preparation for the first day of school, Kligrapp Leland Brooks meticulously filled in the chapter name and address, and each member's personal information before the first Klavern meeting on December 30, 1920. He used a typewriter for these sections on nearly all of those first forty-three. On a few, he carefully wrote out personal information in black ink, but still typed the chapter name and address. His use of a typewriter suggests he prepared these forms either at home or at his office at the Wharton Bank and Trust prior to the meeting since lugging a typewriter to the first meeting seems unlikely. Beginning in March, 1921, Brooks typed less and wrote more information but still filled out nearly all of the pre-printed blanks, such as hair and eye color, age, weight, height, occupation. Beginning in May 1921, he stopped including all of a Klansman's personal details, including address and occupation.²²

One unusual consistency, Brooks misspelled the chapter's name on the forms he so carefully prepared. Sheriff Hamilton B. Dickson's legendary status in Wharton County history began immediately after his death and continued into the twenty-first century. A founding member of the local White Man's Union in 1889 and its first

²² Ibid.

sheriff, his role in the WMUA and his death while in pursuit of a man who allegedly murdered a constable in a nearby county made him a martyr of the local white establishment—their symbol of righteous law and order in a racist social structure that criminalized African Americans and fed the convict labor lease system so pervasive in the region. Born months after Dickson’s death, Brooks bore no personal memories of the sheriff but certainly would have heard the story of his death and seen the white granite obelisk memorial purchased by Brooks’s father and other WMUA members and placed in the courthouse’s shadow on the town square in 1894. Standing eighteen feet high, the memorial still towers over anyone who uses the town square walkway to the courthouse. Its original 1894 plaque reads, “Brave, gentle, faithful and beloved citizen and Sheriff of Wharton County, who rose to the need for leadership in the 1880s and as Sheriff cleaned the County of vicious criminal elements and later was killed in the line of duty by a murderer waiting in ambush.” Reasons for Brooks’s error are unclear. Perhaps, he confused the spelling with Thomas Dixon, the author of a trilogy of historical novels, *The Leopard’s Spots*, *The Traitor*, and *The Clansman*, which glorified the Reconstruction-era Ku Klux Klan as saviors of white womanhood and the South and became the basis of the 1915 D. W. Griffith blockbuster movie *Birth of a Nation*, that so clearly inspired William J. Simmons to establish the second KKK the same year. Considering Sheriff Dickson’s roles as county sheriff and charter member of the WMUA, an organization which forced out the democratically elected Republican county government and ended, in the WMUA’s narrative, Reconstruction in Wharton County, the charter members chose their namesake because they equated Sheriff Dickson with

Dixon's fictionalized Klansmen.²³

In the summer of 1921, Leland Brooks became less active in the Klan, and his attention to detail on the Klan records indicate his interest in the organization declined. By July, he spent less time preparing the dues forms that he had been so meticulous with only six months before. On examination, the dues records of members joining from July through December, most handwritten, included little information beyond a Klansman's name, amount paid, and sometimes a naturalization date and residential address. The chapter name and address, so dutifully typed in January, remained blank on all of the forms during that period. Based on the penmanship, Brooks filled out numerous dues forms during the latter half of 1921 but the minutes show him absent from many Klonklaves beginning in mid-August. According to the Klonklave minutes, Brooks' last attended meeting as a Klan officer was November 7, 1921. In his absence, William F. Needham, a thirty-two-year old bookkeeper, assumed the Kligrapp responsibilities until new officers were selected in February 1922. Leland Brooks did not appear again in the minutes. From his membership dues form, however, when and if he ended his membership is unclear since neither he nor his predecessors filled out the lower portion of the form.²⁴

Brooks's successor, Mentor F. Taylor, a fifty-five year-old divorced confectionary merchant in the town of Wharton, held the Kligrapp office from early

²³ Ibid.; *Brenham Daily Banner*, August 26, 1894, 1; *Shiner Gazette*, December 20, 1962, 15.

²⁴ KMBD, K6R, WCHM.

1922 through mid-1924, having joined in September 1921. Taylor left most sections of the K102 form blank, rarely including the details that Brooks did during his first 6 months as Kligrapp. Instead, he limited the included information to the Klansman's name, residential address, and occupation and dues paid. During the first half of 1922, he filled out the induction date and chapter name, abbreviated to "H. B. Dickson," but by fall, these sections remained blank as well. In the year/months columns, he often did not include the year for 1922 and 1923. In 1924, when the chapter focused their efforts on regaining their membership numbers, in decline since early 1923, he erased or wrote over 1922 and replace it with 1924, sometimes erasing previous payments or, for those who paid the full amount in January, reused a previous payment record.²⁵

This analysis of the various Wharton Kligrapps' record-keeping patterns, seen in the Membership and Dues Record and Klonklave minutes, provided a way to assess and fill gaps in membership enrollment when dues forms lacked induction dates or when the minutes presented discrepancies that contradicted the recorded information on dues forms. A spreadsheet, created for this dissertation, compiled a comprehensive list of the 379 individuals mentioned in the Klonklave minutes and member dues record binder. Of these, 365 names could be confirmed as members of the Wharton Klan No 6. The remaining fourteen names, which all appeared in the minutes only, included several Klonklave speakers from other Klan chapters, two reluctant inductees who changed their minds, and a few non-members slated to receive Klan charity.²⁶

²⁵ KMBD, K6R, WCHM.

²⁶ Ibid. Spreadsheet in author's possession.

Of the 365 members, 339 men, or 92.9 percent, of the named membership, have been fully identified by cross-referencing census data, birth certificates, death certificates, marriage records, obituaries, newspapers, probate records, World War I draft registrations, and other local archival materials. Occupational information has been found for 96.4 percent of the membership, or 352 members. The ages of 348 members, or 95.4 percent, at the time of their induction has been taken from membership dues forms or determined from birth certificates, death records, or census records. The remaining eleven Wharton County Klansmen, whose names appeared in minutes or on membership dues records, could not be identified with certainty. For the purposes of creating a statistical profile of Klan No. 6, these eleven individuals have been removed.²⁷

Of those 366 members, only 302 men, or 79.5 percent, had a dues form in the binder. Names for the other sixty-four men without a dues record had been listed as

²⁷ The sources predominantly used to identify individual Klansmen include birth certificates, death certificates, marriage records, the population schedules of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Censuses for Wharton and neighboring counties, all found online at ancestry.com, and the *Wharton Spectator* newspaper, 1917-1927, found on microfilm at DBCAH-UT. The relatively small membership number made creating a random or cross-section sample typically used in other Klan membership studies unnecessary; therefore, the entire list, minus the eleven men whose identities could not be confirmed, has been used for this dissertation. Of the 379 individuals mentioned in the Klan records, fourteen did not belong to the local Klan chapter, of which five received a charitable donation, two initially wanted to join but changed their minds, and seven belonged to other Klaverns and spoke, or were asked to speak, at a local Klan meeting, including one Klanwoman. The eleven men excluded from the list appeared in the Klan records as new inductees and did not serve in any other capacity according to the minutes. Individuals' names often were written with initials and a surname only, making corroborative evidence essential in finding the individual's identity with enough certainty for inclusion. The process had to be rigorous for the author to assert a local individual belonged to this white supremacy group. The eleven excluded from the overall list could not be found in the 1920 or 1930 U.S. Census for Wharton or neighboring counties, in local newspapers. In one case, two individuals had the same initials and last name.

either new inductees or as Klansmen leaving the chapter, whether by transfer, resignation, or death. These individuals' induction dates have been approximated from patterns and gaps in the minutes and dues records for the individual Kligrapps. Brooks listed new inductees on the back of meeting minutes beginning in late March 1921, but recorded only the number of new members for the first three months of the chapter. Taylor also listed new Klansmen but did so on the facing page, the back of the previous minutes. In regard to the discrepancy between the dues binder and minutes, Taylor and Brooks may have removed dues forms for some who ended their membership from the binder to simply make room in the binder's small rings or because those individuals had ended their membership. It is unknown if any forms or minute records were removed before they were donated to the local museum in the 1980s; therefore, this study cannot state, with certainty, who did not join the local Klan.²⁸

²⁸ According to an attached post-it note and bank check deposit slip included in the records, retired county sheriff and former member of the Texas House of Representatives Thomas W. Buckshot Lane donated the records to the Wharton County Historical Museum in the 1980s. The fact that he donated them is notable, especially when considering the county's use of police powers to enforce whites' racist views and the local Klan's choice of another sheriff to memorialize by taking his name. In 1951, Buckshot Lane gained national notoriety when *Life Magazine*, a popular national publication of the period, named him the nation's most efficient sheriff. Intended to chronicle his work day, the included photos showed his plane purchased by white tax payers to police the county, his deputizing white children, his arrest of a black man, and, in a graphic set of three consecutive action shots, him striking a black woman across the face with such force that he pushes her backward. To black readers in 1951, the included magazine photos clearly highlighted Lane's use of police power to maintain the county's racial order, a perspective lost on the magazine and whites in Wharton County. One letter to the magazine from an African-American woman in Chicago, published in the next issue, described her surprise and disappointment that the magazine would praise such brutality as efficient, as well as her need to hide the magazine for fear that her children would see the photos. How Lane came by these records is currently unclear. In the 1920s he was a child and his immediate family lived in New Mexico. His uncles, however, lived in Wharton and established a local town called Lane City. Although one uncle joined the Klan, he never served as an officer so should not have had possession of the records. In a more plausible scenario, based on his family's enthusiasm for the order, the last Kligrapp shown in the records likely saved them, and a descendant gave them

The banality of 1920s Klan records created an illusion that this generation of the KKK had more in common with the Rotary, Kiwanis, or Lions' Clubs than with its Reconstruction-era parent or its descendants of the tumultuous Civil Rights era. Certainly, from the archive collection left behind, Wharton County's Hamilton B. Dickson Klan No. 6 shared the bureaucratic hierarchy, accompanied by mundane paperwork and ordinary parliamentary procedures, like any other Progressive-era organization. Beyond this illusion, however, exists the hereditary character of the order—elements of its DNA passed from one generation to the next for over a century. In essence, Simmons' new Klan carried on the family name, inherited ancestral genes of white supremacy, secrecy, and racial violence, and modernized old creeds, rituals, and nomenclature for a new age. As the Wharton Klan No. 6 performed the rituals found in the *Kloran*, it bridged the past to find order in its present, while simultaneously binding itself to a national modern Ku Klux Klan organization.²⁹

to Lane decades later. "Life Visits Sheriff "Buckshot" Lane," *Life Magazine*, Vol 29. No. 3, July 17 1950, 114-120, found at <https://books.google.com/books?id=fUoEAAAAMBAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>; "Thomas W. Lane, Texas Legislators: Past & Present, Legislative Reference Library of Texas, found online at <http://www.lrl.state.tx.us/mobile/memberDisplay.cfm?memberID=1165>.

²⁹ Leonard Moore, *Citizen Klansmen: The Ku Klux Klan in Indiana, 1921-1928* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 94-96, 111-112; Elizabeth Dorsey Hale, *The Ku Klux Klan in Minnesota* (Charleston, S.C.: The History Press, 2013), 37-38; Michael E. Parrish, *Anxious Decades: America in Prosperity and Depression, 1920-1941* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1992), 114-115; Craig Fox, *Everyday Klansfolk: White Protestant Life and the KKK in 1920s Michigan* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2011), 196. Moore described the Klan as more open to a cross-section of society than groups like the Rotary and Kiwanis since it included blue-collared workers.

CHAPTER III

ROOTS OF THE WHARTON COUNTY KKK:

PLANTER CLASS PAST, WHITE MAN'S UNION, AND KLAN KINSHIP

On the chilly evening of December 30, 1920, before the courthouse bell tolled eight o'clock, Leland Brooks opened the door of Wharton's Woodman of the World Hall fully prepared for the night's events. His week had been busy with his cousins home from A&M College for Christmas break, his aunt's funeral in Galveston and burial at the old family plantation in Brazoria County, and the annual Masonic banquet at the Opera House on the town square just a few days before. Inside the hall, he saw many familiar faces. Many were absent, as well, perhaps visiting relatives during the holidays or preparing for New Year events. Yet, Brooks and the other charter members had been secretly preparing for this night for weeks. Previously they had agreed to a regular meeting time, place, and location, chosen an official chapter name, requested an official charter, and selected officers. Finally, what they had been waiting for had arrived. Along with official stationery and membership forms, Leland Brooks brought to the hall that night the official charter of the Wharton Ku Klux Klan (KKK) "Hamilton Dixon" Klavern No. 6, Realm of Texas, issued from the Imperial Palace in Atlanta, Georgia, and delivered to him by George B. Kimbro, Jr., the Klan's King Kleagle or recruiter. According to the minutes of the first meeting, Exalted Cyclops James R. Cox called the

attendees to order at eight p.m. and had the charter read.¹

Although Brooks did not take an official roll of all attendees, he listed the names, attendance, and mailing addresses of the fourteen men, including himself, chosen to fill the top leadership positions of the Klavern, the Klan word for chapter or lodge. Listed next to the officer titles, made up by Imperial Wizard and second Klan founder William J. Simmons, were names familiar to most Wharton County citizens. The Klabee, or treasurer, Louis Worthing worked as an assistant cashier at Security Bank and Trust and held the highest position of Worshipful Master in Wharton's Masonic Lodge No. 621. Charles A. Davis, the Klexter, or outer guard at meetings, had joined the military with Worthing and Brooks, and worked as a clerk in his brother-in-law's hardware store. The Klokard, or official lecturer, Charles C. Ingram, an attorney, had move to Wharton within the last year but, as a Mason and an American Legionnaire, he had integrated quickly into elite Wharton society. Also in attendance that December evening, Wiley Croom Hodges had been Brooks' teammate from the high school baseball team and held the position of Kladd, which acted as a "conductor" and led new members into and through the induction process. As the grandson and namesake of Judge Wiley J. Croom, Hodges had political connections and family pedigree equal to Brooks but lacked the

¹*Houston Post*, December 31, 1920, 1 (hereafter cited as *HPost*); Klavern Minutes, December 30, 1920, Klan No. 6 Minutes Binder (hereafter K6MB), Hamilton B. Dickson Klan No. 6 records (hereafter K6R), Wharton County Historical Museum Wharton, Texas (hereafter WCHM), *Wharton Spectator* (hereafter *WhSp*), December 12, 1919, 1; *WhSp*, December 24, 1920, 1, 3, 4; *WhSp*, December 31, 1920, 1, 7; *WhSp*, January 7, 1921, 5, 7; *WhSp* January 21, 1921, 8. The forty-five charter members include forty-three original members of the Hamilton Dixon Klavern No. 6 and two members of the Bay City Klan No. 5, Matagorda Texas. These men have been included in the charter member number because they held charter officer positions in Wharton's Klavern and transferred to Klavern No. 6 a few months later.

personal accomplishments necessary for a more significant office. Hodges' great-uncle Shaderick Pinckney (S.P.) Rowe did not attend nor did, Albert Hugh Armstrong or Sheriff Clarence D. Kemp, the other two members of the Klokan committee, which investigated prospective members. The sheriff's son, Taylor Kemp, also missed the first meeting as Klarogo, or inner-guard, perhaps because his wife expected to give birth at any time. Walter B. Grizzard, the Night-hawk or ceremonial cross-bearer, had gone to Waco to see his sick brother. The chaplain, called the Kludd, Joel Hudgins lived six miles out of town in Hungerford and may have been busy with preparations for his family's New Year's Eve party.²

As secretary or Kligrapp, Leland Brooks held a position of power that not only allowed him full access to confidential Klavern business, ritual handbooks, and membership records but required him to bring them to the meetings and keep them safe in between. Klan power relied on keeping its membership secret so the charter members' choice of Brooks to hold such a position of trust reflected other Klansmen's high regard for him and his family. Twenty-six years old, he represented a more modern Wharton, one with Progressive Era belief that, under the right-minded leadership, fixing the ills of society would improve the health of the nation overall. He voluntarily joined the military after the United States entered World War I, then helped found the local American Legion post after his return. He was vice chancellor of the local Knights of Pythias, a

² Klonklave Minutes, December 30, 1920, K6MB, K6R, WCHM; *Kloran* (Atlanta: Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, 1916), 52-54, Hamilton B. Dickson Klan No. 6 records, WCHM; "Past Masters," Masons folder, WCHM; *WhSp*, December 12, 1919, 1; *WhSp*, July 8, 1919, 4; *San Antonio Express*, July 1, 1913, 3.

volunteer fire man, a Mason, a member of the Red Cross, and a bank clerk at the Wharton Bank and Trust. Yet, several other men had similar resumes so what made him stand apart for this trusted position? Leland was Peter Gautier Brooks's son. He was the grandson of Captain Edward S. Rugeley, who lost twenty men in Matagorda Bay in 1863, participated in the 1875 Texas Constitutional Convention, and became the namesake of a United Daughters of the Confederacy chapter and a United Confederate Veterans Camp in Matagorda County. From his family, he inherited his race and class privilege, as well as the knowledge necessary to use his privilege, and the ideology of white supremacy that taught such privilege was part of the natural order. Furthermore, by joining the Ku Klux Klan in 1920, he accepted a role in promoting white supremacy as a national ideal to fix various weaknesses in society at large. In the history lessons taught to him, power in the "right" white hands had always established "order," often with violence, and restored the "natural" racial structure that benefited his race.³

The officers and the other charter members included many of the most prominent families and well-known individuals in the county. Their names appeared regularly in

³ *WhSp*, February 29, 1918, 6; *WhSp*, June 8, 1917, 3, 4; *WhSp*, January 16, 1920, 1; *WhSp*, June 8, 1917, 8; "P. G. Brooks" File, Individual and Family Vertical Files, WCHM; Horton Foote, *Farewell: A Memoir of a Texas Childhood* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000), 59-62; John Guare, "My Trip to Bountiful," in *Lincoln Center Theater Review*, 47 (Fall 2008): 11; "News Items," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, 16 (April 1913): 439; "Delegates to Convention," *Galveston Daily News* (hereafter cited *GDN*), 7 August 1875, 1; Kelly McMichael, *Sacred Memories: The Civil War Monument Movement* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2013), 86; Ralph W. Steen, "Constitutional Convention of 1875," *Handbook of Texas Online* (hereafter *HOTO*), accessed July 8, 2016, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/mjc05>; *HPost*, January 19, 1913, 3; *HPost*, December 22, 1897, 5; Cheryl I. Harris, "Whiteness as Property," *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed a Movement*, eds. Kimberlé Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, Kendall Thomas (New York: The New Press, 1995), 276-291.

the local newspapers, the *Wharton Spectator* and the *El Campo Citizen*, in business ads, in the society columns, or as elected officials. A few, including the Exalted Cyclops Cox, had moved to the county since World War I, and integrated quickly into local elite society through marriage, business ties, fraternal organizations, and church affiliations. Others moved to the county during a population boom between 1900 and 1915, drawn to the area's weather, soil, and promise of prosperous crops. Yet, most of the charter members, like Brooks, called the county home since birth and significantly shaped the history of the county and region, since the time of the Republic of Texas. For generations, these families held close business relationships among themselves, went to church together, and attended each other's baptisms, weddings, and funerals. They faced economies burdened by droughts, floods, boll weevils, and wartime restrictions. The women of these families joined together to improve Wharton society with a new library, a downtown restroom, and donations of United Daughters of the Confederacy-approved history books to black and white schools. Whereas their wives focused on "municipal housekeeping," the men directed municipal construction and operations. Together, local white men enforced the laws, raised and collected taxes, and oversaw convict labor used to work the fields and build the roads. When the elite families disagreed, sometimes they faced each other in court. Sometimes they took matters into their own hands. More importantly, the elite men and women of Wharton regulated and manipulated racial boundaries to maintain their privilege and reinforce a racial hierarchy reminiscent of

Antebellum times but fit for a more modern era.⁴

An analysis of the Hamilton Dixon Klan Klavern membership rolls indicated recruitment followed traditional lines of kinship, as well as through more modern networks of organizational recruitment outreach found in urban areas. Whereas many Progressive Era organizations provided a modern means to unify and access power, elite kinship in the Antebellum South similarly provided access to power through social organization. The Wharton Klan's use of traditional and modern social networks indicated that Wharton elites kept a firm hold to Antebellum traditions even as they moved toward modernity in the 1920s. To underscore the importance of kin in the Klan, the charter member list, with only forty-five men, had five pairs of fathers and sons, five separate sets of brothers (without a father as a member), and four pairs of fathers-in-law and sons-in-law. Klan No. 6 chaplain Joel Hudgins's family dominated the charter member list. Among the founding members, he had one brother, one brother-in-law, two uncles, three first cousins, and two second cousins. When considering his larger kinship group, such as brothers of sisters-in-laws or husbands of first cousins, thirty-five percent of the forty-five charter members called Joel Hudgins kin.⁵

⁴ Horton Foote, *Beginnings: A Memoir* (New York: Scribner, 2002), 21-23; Horton Foote, *Genesis of an American Playwright*, ed. Marion Castleberry (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2004), 23, 48; Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, "Race, Reform, Retrenchment: Transformation and Legitimation in Anti-Discrimination Law," *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed a Movement*, eds. Kimberly Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, Kendall Thomas (New York: The New Press, 1995), 103-122.

⁵ Klan Member Dues Binder (hereafter KMDB), K6R, WCHM; Frances E Kendall, *Understanding White Privilege: Creating Pathways to Authentic Relationships Across Race* (New York: Routledge, 2006; second edition, 2013), 129; Cynthia Stohl, *Organizational Communication: Connectedness in Action* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. 1995), 38; Andrew Chamberlin Rieser, *The Chautauqua Moment: Protestant, Progressives, and the*

Certainly not all of Klan No. 6 fit this kinship pattern; however, certain families seemed drawn to the organization and certain families did not. Along with the Hudgins family, the Armstrong family, the Brooks family, the Davidson family, and the Bolton family seemed drawn to Klan membership. The similarities of these families included concentration of significant political and economic power. All had Southern planter-class roots. All had a strong “Lost Cause” Confederate memory as evidenced by family stories and the frequency of United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) membership among women in these families. Another noticeable commonality included involvement of these same families, even some of the same individuals, in the formation of the White Man’s Union Association (WMUA), a local political organization that disfranchised black voters and forced out the democratically elected Republican county officials thirty-one years earlier. Wedded to white supremacy, these families continuously used their economic, political, and social power to fend off challenges to their hegemony by adapting their institutions to changing times and retrenching racism so that the racial order seemed natural and inevitable. In this context, the 1920s Ku Klux Klan in Wharton County was a modern progressive era organization that fed off of Lost Cause nostalgia yet remained consistent with the area’s ongoing white consciousness and systemic

Culture of Modern Liberalism (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 11, 164; Khalil Gibran Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 129; Diana Kendall, *The Power of Good Deeds: Privileged Women and the Social Reproduction of the Upper Class* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002), 170; David Sellers Smith, “The Elimination of the Unworthy: Credit Men and Small Retailers in Progressive Era Capitalism,” *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 9 (April 2010): 197; Trevor Burnard, “‘A Tangled Cousinry?’ Associational Networks of the Maryland Elite, 1691-1776,” *Journal of Southern History* 61 (February 1995): 17-44.

racism used to maintain racial order. Necessary to understanding who made up Klan No. 6 and why is an understanding of how deeply ingrained white supremacy was in both the people and the place of Wharton.⁶

Race, class, and power went hand-in-hand in the South, New and Old, Upper and Lower, and kinship often acted as the glue to keep them bound together. In Wharton County, as in other parts of the South, certain families assumed or won leadership roles in maintaining hegemonic control. Frequently these families used rags-to-riches stories or other meritorious tales to frame their histories, which legitimized their position in society. For example, how others perceived and treated Brooks depended, at least in part, on the power and prominence of his kinship group. In the rural area of Wharton, where towns were small, new, and few, and kin crossed county lines, “who’s your people?” revealed more than a question like “where are you from?” because the answer revealed an individual’s connection to the power structure specifically through kin.⁷

⁶ KMDB, K6R, WCHM; Annie Lee Williams, *History of Wharton County* (Austin: Von Beckmann-Jones Company, 1964), 62-72, 196-197, 311-320, 337-340, 366-367; Foote, *Farewell*, 42-43, 107, 128; United Daughters of the Confederacy J. E. B. Stuart Chapter No. 230 Papers, Wharton, Texas, WCHM, Wharton, Texas; *Confederate Veteran* (hereafter *CV*) 23 (September 1915): 416; *CV* 13 (October 1905): 466.

⁷ Gerald Wood, “Horton Foote,” *Film Voices: Interviews From Post Script*, ed. Gerald Duchovnay (Albany: State University of New York, 2004), 325; Horton Foote, *The Orphans’ Home Cycle: The Story of a Family* (Wharton, TX: Sunday Rock Corp., 2012), 54. For more on kinship in the South, see Lorri Glover, *All Our Relations: Blood Ties and Emotional Bonds Among the Early South Carolina Gentry* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000); Carolyn Earle Billingsley, *Communities of Kinship: Antebellum Families and the Settlement of the Cotton Frontier* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004); Donn M. Kurtz II, *Kinship and Politics: The Justice of the United States and Louisiana Supreme Courts* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997); Edward E. Baptist, *Creating an Old South: Middle Florida’s Plantation Frontier Before the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

As explained by historian Carl Moneyhon, family served as “the most important social organization” in rural life as it was a source for economic support and additional labor, and provided for education needs. Although family and kin seem synonymous, the term kin has a broader application which navigates through barriers of race and class more succinctly than family. Whereas family is more often used to define a household, kin refers to family-like relationships between people based on biology, legal responsibilities, and “fictive” family-like relationships not determined by biology or a legal connection. Following anthropological definitions used in *Deep South: A Social Anthropological Study of Caste and Class* and in Carolyn Earle Billingsley’s *Communities of Kinship: Antebellum Families and the Settlement of the Cotton Frontier*, kinship is a fluid social construction most often applied to biological relationships, such as parent-child or cousins, or legal relationships, such as those found in marriage and adoptions. Fictive kinship, defined as a close family-like relationship without a biological or legal connection, such as an “honorary” uncle, a taken-in orphan, or, in some cases, a servant. All three provided social and economic support in an age when more hands eased farm work and disease took unpredictably and frequently. In the antebellum South, kin spanned generations and geography but, as a social construction, adapted to the needs of the group and, thus, allowed for exclusion and inclusion based on race, class, and ideology.⁸

⁸ Carl H. Moneyhon, *Arkansas and the New South, 1874-1929* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1997), 5-9; Allison Davis, Burleigh B. Gardner, and Mary R. Gardner, eds., *Deep South: A Social Anthropological Study of Caste and Class* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941; new edition, Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2009), 88, 99, 112-115; Billingsley, *Communities of Kinship*, 10-18.

Although importance of kin was central to all classes and races in rural society, for the Southern elite, kinship became a primary tool of power and control—control of land, wealth, access, knowledge, political power, and the narrative that explained why that control seemed inevitable, beneficial, and necessary. In Wharton and other rural Southern counties, kinship ties, particularly through marriage, created a metaphorical net around the county which restricted access to economic, political and social power. This consolidation of power pattern had deep roots in both Texas Gulf Coast region and the antebellum South. Billingsley found kinship a primary component in migration and community-building across the antebellum South in her extensive study of one extended family's movement through seven southern states from the American colonial period through the Civil War. Along with migration, other studies found families used kinship to consolidate and maintain political power. Donn M. Kurtz II found a strong correlation between kin and political power in Louisiana, where sixty percent of justices had at least one other family member in public office. Similarly, in antebellum Florida, Edward Baptist argued that families built wealth through slavery and land speculation, and used their kinship alliances to concentrate and consolidate political power among certain families in Florida's frontier region. His research also indicated that migration out of a frontier region to another frontier region not only repeated the process of wealth development but also protected wealth in situations of debt by moving slaves out of reach from debt collectors.⁹

⁹ Kurtz, *Kinship and Politics*, 7; Baptist, *Creating an Old South*, 22-26.

One such example, Baptist explained that a Dr. Peter Gautier, Jr., moved his family and slaves from Florida to Texas to escape creditors. Although Baptist's Gautier story ends there, further evidence shows Peter Gautier, Jr., continued this pattern of migration, marriage, and power consolidation in the Texas coastal region. After moving to Brazoria County in the 1841, his daughters married into wealthy slave-owning families, the Terrys and Brooks, with whom Gautier shared positions of power. His daughter Adriane married Clinton L Terry, an attorney and law partner of John Austin Wharton, and their daughter married Judge Frederick J. Duff, an organizer of Brazoria County's White Man's Union in 1888. Gautier's youngest, Lucy married Clinton's brother, Aurelius J. Terry, who co-owned Willow Lake Planation in Brazoria County with Clinton. Clinton and Aurelius were the younger brothers to David S. Terry, who was named Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court in 1855 and married Mississippi Governor Hiram G. Runnels' niece, and Benjamin Franklin Terry, who co-owned a 12,500-acre sugar plantation in Fort Bend County called Sugar-Land and was first commander of the Eighth Texas Cavalry, also called Terry's Texas Rangers. Gautier's oldest daughter, Harriet, married John W. Brooks, a slave-owning merchant, who moved to Texas in the late 1830s. On the eve of the Civil War, they gave birth to a son named Peter Gautier Brooks, Leland Brooks' father.¹⁰

¹⁰ Baptist, *Creating an Old South*, 22-26; Ron Livingston and Linda Henderson, "Historic Marker Application: Tyler-Bryan-Weems House," (Texas Historical Commission, 2002): 7, accessed at The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries; accessed November 16, 2016, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth460275/?q=tyler%20bryan%20house>; Kenneth W. Hobbs, "David Smith Terry," *HOTO*, accessed November 16, 2016, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fte29>; Kenneth W. Hobbs, "Benjamin Franklin

In Southern elite society, as the Gautier family illustrated, marriage became the axle on which kinship turned, not biology. Paternity outside of marriage, especially when it crossed class and racial boundaries, threatened the kinship group's concentrated wealth. The group often excluded or failed to recognize kinship despite biological ties and denied access to its power and support. On the other hand, cultural traditions of parent-approved marriages protected and transferred wealth to maintain economic power within the family through inheritance. Furthermore, upper class whites often used marriage to build wealth and political alliances with similarly classed families. In addition, widowed individuals often married again, even several times over a lifetime. These marriages brought together biologically unrelated children from different marriages into a legal family and created households with numerous surnames. This process extended definitions of kin for those in the household to include kin of the living and the deceased spouses, for example nieces and nephews of the deceased spouse

Terry," *HOTO*, accessed November 16, 2016, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fte28>; Cecil Harper, Jr., "Hardin R. Runnels," *HOTO*, accessed November 16, 2016, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fru13>; "Hiram George Runnels," *HOTO*, accessed November 16, 2016, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fru14>; Dermot H. Hardy and Major Ingham S. Roberts, eds., *Historical Review of South-East and the Founders, Leaders, and Representative Men of Its Commerce, Industry, and Civic Affairs Texas*, Volume 2, (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1910), 624; Andrea Guy-Halat, *Historic Fort Bend County, An Illustrated History* (San Antonio, TX: Historical Publishing Network, division of Lammert Incorporated, 2010), 29; Clarence R. Wharton, *History of Fort Bend County* (San Antonio, TX: The Naylor Company, 1939; reprint, Austin: Eakin Press, 2001), 168-169. The *Handbook of Texas* entry for David S. Terry erroneously states that Terry married the niece of future Texas governor Hardin R. Runnels, who was actually her first cousin. Both lost their fathers at a young age and moved to Texas with their uncle, the former governor of Mississippi and Brazoria planter Hiram G. Runnels by 1842. Peter W. Gautier served on Texas annexation committees John Brooks, co-owner of Sugar-Land William Kyle, and David Terry's father-in-law. *Telegraph and Texas Register* (Houston), April 30, 1945, 1.

described as first cousins to the widow's children from a second marriage. For example, Joel Hudgins's father had a half-sister, Pricilla Taylor nee McKenzie, from his mother's first marriage, and a half-sister, Mary Ann Rebecca Richey Wilson nee Hudgins, from his father's first marriage. The two women never lived in the same state, much less the same household. No evidence has been found that they had ever met, yet their children considered one another kin. Although kinship descriptions of this type appear complicated here, such relationships happened often and seemed second nature in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.¹¹

Joel Hudgins's parents named him for his grandfather who came to Wharton County in 1838. Born in North Carolina, Hudgins had spent most of his early life among his extended kin in Mathews County, Virginia, his father's hometown. After marrying a

¹¹ Billingsley, 10-18; Edgar H. Hudgins, *Hudgins: Virginia to Texas* (Houston: Larksdale Publishing, 1983), 45-62; "Pricilla Taylor," Hudgins Cemetery, Hungerford, Wharton County, Texas, *Find A Grave Index, 1600s-Current*, accessed October 31, 2015, <https://www.findagrave.com/>; Rebecca Hudgins, *1850 United States Federal Census*, Madison County, Mississippi, Roll (hereafter R-) M432_376, 146B, Household (hereafter HH) 531, Record Group 29 (hereafter RG29), Records of the Bureau of the Census (hereafter RBC), National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter NARA), online database, Ancestry.com, *1860 United States Federal Census U.S. Census*, Canton, Madison County, Mississippi, R-M653_586, 785, HH 10, RG29, RBC, NARA, online database, Ancestry.com, accessed October 31, 2015; Mary Ann R. Wilson, Pension File Number 18526, August 28, 1909, Wharton, Texas, Confederate Pension Applications, 1899-1975, Collection CPA18506, R-251, Texas State Library and Archives Commission (hereafter TSLA), Austin Texas, *Alabama, Texas and Virginia, Confederate Pensions, 1884-1958*, online database, Ancestry.com, accessed October 31, 2015; A. R. Hudgins and Henry Wilson, *1900 United States Federal Census*, Wharton County, Texas, Justice Precinct 5 (hereafter JP), Enumeration District (hereafter ED) 0169, R-T624_1600, 11B, HH 219, RG29, RBC, NARA, online database, Ancestry.com, accessed October 31, 2015. Mary Ann Rebecca Hudgins Richey Wilson remained with a maternal aunt in Madison County, Mississippi, after her father, Joel Hudgins, moved to Texas. There she married twice and had children from both marriages. Her and her children moved to Texas in the 1870s. Pricilla McKenzie Taylor was born in Egypt, Texas, in 1839 and died there in 1866 after the birth of her third child.

distant relative of John W. Brooks, he moved his wife and slaves to Canton, Mississippi, and worked as a carpenter with his cousin to capitalize on white settlement there after the implementation of President Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal Act in 1830. After his first wife died, he left his two children in the care of his wife's kin and moved to Egypt, a settlement in what would become Wharton County, in the Texas Republic.¹²

Located on the coastal plain of southeast Texas, Wharton County sits in the Lavaca-Colorado and Colorado-Brazos river basins, with the Colorado bisecting the county. In 1846, just after Texas's annexation by the United States, the state legislature created the county from parts of neighboring Brazoria, Colorado, Austin, Fort Bend, Matagorda, and Washington Counties, the area of Stephen F. Austin's first land grant as an *empresario* under contract with Mexico. Originally in Colorado County, Egypt's location near the east bank of the Colorado River and at the head of Peach Creek had already gained a reputation as an advantageous agricultural location before Hudgins' arrival. With the Peach, Caney, and West Bernard Creeks, and San Bernard River, the county's coastal clay and alluvial soil attracted waves of migration from the lower South's planter class, who used their slaves to clear the thick cane along the creeks and plant cotton and sugar. In the northeastern section of Wharton County was Egypt.¹³

¹² Hudgins, *Virginia To Texas*, 32-38; "Indian Removal Act," Primary Documents in American History, Library of Congress, accessed online at <https://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/Indian.html>, accessed October 31, 2015. The death date of Joel Hudgins's wife, Louisa D. Hudgins nee Brownly, is unknown.

¹³ Williams, 2-6; Merle R. Hudgins, "Wharton County," *HOTO*, accessed, May 5, 2015, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hcw06>; Barbara L. Young, "Egypt," *HOTO*, accessed, May 5, 2015, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hne08>.

Egypt, the oldest settlement in Wharton County, derived its name from William J. E. Heard's Egypt Plantation, established in 1832. Heard travelled to Texas with the Northingtons, Menefees, and Mercers, referred to by locals as the "Alabama Contention" since all of the families lived there prior to migration. All owned slaves and, through Texas's headright system, a considerable amount of land upon arrival. Captain Andrew Northington and his teenage children, Rachel and Mentor, joined the Runaway Scrape as Sam Houston and other Texans fled from Santa Anna's Army's push east after the Alamo fell during the Texas Revolution. After the war, Mentor Northington married Elizabeth Heard, W. J. E. Heard's daughter, and had two sons; Rachel married Joel Hudgins, after the death of her first husband in 1845. Together they had six children who lived to adulthood. Twenty-one of Rachel and Joel's twenty-three sons, grandsons, sons-in-law, or grandsons-in-law, who lived in Wharton county in the 1920 census and were of membership age, joined Klan No. 6. All four of Mentor Northington's living adult sons, grandsons, sons-in-law, and grandsons-in-law, who were Wharton County residents in the 1920 census, also joined.¹⁴

¹⁴ Williams, 10-12; Register of Enlistments 1798-1815, U.S. Army, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780s-1917, RG 94, NARA, Washington D.C., 108, *Register of Enlistments 1798-1815* database, Ancestry.com; Hudgins, *Virginia to Texas*, 23-25, 36-39; Carolyn Callaway Covington, "Runaway Scrape," *HOTO*, accessed May 5, 2016, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/pfr01>. Mentor and Elizabeth's great-great grandchild George Heard Northington IV still owns and occupies the Egypt Plantation, which is now an historic site and event facility, see <http://www.egypttexas.org>. Both sons of Mary Ann Hudgins Richey Wilson, Joel Hudgins daughter from his first marriage, did not join the Klan. Henry H. Wilson was a restaurant keeper in Wharton in 1920. Clifford E. Wilson cannot be found for 1920 but had been an engineer on the rice farm of his niece and her husband in 1910 and was a farm laborer in the county in 1930. Neither ever married or owned property. They lived in different places with different jobs every census in which they could be found but stayed in area. Mentor only had two children who reached adulthood, George and William. William died in 1904 without children. George and his sons belonged to the Klan. George's son-in-law,

Joel Hudgins and Leland Brooks both came from slave owners on both sides of their families, as did many 1920s Klansmen in Wharton and the region. This commonality shared by those from older families in the area, however, was more indicative of the region's dependence on slave labor than as a prerequisite for Klan membership. The planter culture firmly rooted in the region before the Civil War, however, endured after—long after. By 1850, the county had a total population of 1752, which included 1242 enslaved men, women, and children or 71 percent of the county. In comparison, Wharton County ranked second in the state, behind its sister county of Brazoria with 72.4 percent. Fort Bend and Matagorda Counties followed with 61.4 percent and 56.9 percent respectively. Of these four counties, Wharton County had the fewest white individuals overall with only 510 listed on the 1850 census, followed by Matagorda County with 910. The county's early dependence on slavery and its small white population allowed for concentrated power in a few hands.¹⁵

Reid T. Westmoreland, lived in and was mayor of nearby Eagle Lake, Colorado County, which had a significant Klan chapter as well.

¹⁵ *United States Federal Census, 1850*, Texas County Data, Historical Census Browser, the University of Virginia, Geospatial and Statistical Data Center (hereafter HCB-UV), online database, accessed November 11, 2015, <http://mapserver.lib.virginia.edu/collections/>; *United States Census: 1850 Slave Schedule*, Wharton County, Texas, 52, NARA, online database, Ancestry.com, accessed 11 November 2015; *United States Census: 1850 Slave Schedule*, Matagorda County, Texas, 2, NARA (online database, Ancestry.com, accessed 11 November 2015); *United States Census: 1860 Slave Schedule*, Matagorda County, Texas, 14, NARA, online database, Ancestry.com, accessed November 11, 2015; *United States Census: 1860 Slave Schedule*, Brazoria County, Texas, 52, NARA, online database, Ancestry.com, accessed November 11, 2015; *United States Census: 1860 Slave Schedule*, Wharton County, Texas, 8-9, NARA, online database, Ancestry.com, accessed November 11, 2015; Randolph B. Campbell, "Slave Hiring in Texas," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 93 (Feb., 1988): 107-114; Richard Lowe and Randolph Campbell, "Wealthholding and Political Power in Antebellum Texas," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 79 (July, 1975): 21-30; Adrien D. Ivan, "Masters No More: Abolition and Texas Planters, 1860-1890" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Texas,

A breakdown of slave ownership among Wharton's white population in 1850 illustrates the region's dependence on enslaved labor. When comparing the number of slave owners and the per capita white population, 16 percent of all whites owned at least one slave and 72 percent of white households owned at least one slave. This meant that nearly all whites in the county had access to slave labor. Those who did not own slaves still had access either through kin or through the practice of renting slave labor from the planter class. According to John B. Boles, the definition of a planter required twenty slaves, the minimum needed for a plantation as opposed to a farm. Whereas, the planter class in the South made up 10 percent of all slaveholders in 1850, Wharton planters constituted 15.9 percent of all county slave owners and 11.6 percent of the 112 white

2010). Although numerous historians have argued that planter class families who politically controlled before the Civil War continued their political control after Reconstruction, a sufficient and thorough study of Wharton County or this coastal plantation region that takes kinship into account has yet to be done. In his dissertation, Adrien D. Ivan examined this specific region, including Brazoria, Matagorda, Fort Bend, and Wharton Counties. He argued that the antebellum planter class did not regain its wealth or political control after the war. This dissertation disagrees with his findings. According to the research used in this study, had Ivan considered kinship and examined marriage and probate records, he would have seen how power passed with wealth to sons, daughters, sons-in-law, and widows' second husbands after a planter's death, none of which is considered in his study. Nor did he consider the collective wealth of a family as significant, even in cases of living spouses where a husband often managed a wife's property, so he missed sons of planters who held political office. Furthermore, his lists of planters and wealthy property owners have considerable typos typical in census records but discerned through corroborative evidence so he missed recognizing the same individual in consecutive censuses. Also, several planters failed to appear in Wharton's 1860 census so he did not include them and their estate values, which provided evidence for his argument when they or their kin reappeared in 1870 or 1880. Finally, Ivan examined each individual within each county and did not allow for absentee landowners or inherited wealth in nearby counties, both of which were common in a state with recent headright receipt. Although no one can deny emancipation caused economic hardship for the planter class, and perhaps many families did not recover completely, elite whites, whether from the planter class on the Texas Gulf Coast or a transplant from the planter class in other Southern states, returned to position of power and maintained a significant hold throughout the region.

households. Of all county slaveholders, 24.4 percent owned ten to nineteen slaves. Such high numbers of slave ownership indicated a planter culture, brought with slave owners migrating in from across the South, recreated the same structures that protected wealth and power through kinship elsewhere and passed it down to future generations.¹⁶

In 1850, the Hudgins and Northington families represented the slave-owning non-planter class' investment in an economy based on the peculiar institution. Although individually they held fewer than twenty slaves each, collectively Andrew, Mentor, and Joel owned twenty-one slaves which meant they could pool their slave labor when needed. Hudgins and Andrew Northington probably sold livestock to nearby plantations and towns instead of investing in cash crops. From the agriculture census, Hudgins's had the third highest livestock value in the county, primarily horses, cattle, and pigs, but only fifty acres of improved land, with four hundred unimproved acres. His elderly father-in-law, who lived next door, showed no acreage but also had livestock and corn. Mentor Northington had nearly the same amount of improved and unimproved land as his

¹⁶ *United States Federal Census, 1850*, Texas County Data, HCB-UV, accessed November 11, 2015; *United States Census: 1850 Slave Schedule*, Wharton County, Texas, p. 52, NARA; John B. Boles, *Black Southerners, 1619-1869* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1984), 75-76; Randal M. Miller and John David Smith, eds., *Dictionary of Afro-American Slavery* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1988; reprint, Praeger Publishers, 1997), 669. Of the eighty-one individuals listed as slave owners in the county, only J. W. Gordon owned more than 100 slaves with 142 listed in Wharton County alone. He had holdings, including slaves, elsewhere in and outside of Texas. Three individuals owned between 50 and 99 slaves: John Newell, 52; A. Moore, 60; Lt. Gov. A. C. Horton, 91. Nine individuals owned 20 to 49 slaves and twenty individuals owned 10 to 19 slaves. Forty-nine individuals owned 10 or fewer slaves. Thirteen slave owners held twenty or more slaves, which when divided by total number of slave owners, equals 16.0493 percent of total slave owners. The percentage for planter class households is underestimated since, in some cases, more than one slave owner lived in a household and their combined ownership equaled more than twenty enslaved. For example, J. H. Lawson owned eighteen enslaved people and his wife owned three.

brother-in-law but his was valued twice as high, possibly indicating it was better suited for cash crops. He lived next to his father-in-law, sugar and cotton planter Heard who owned twenty-nine slaves, and had 200 improved acres, plus another 1107 unimproved acres. Hudgins continued to purchase land throughout the decade, registered numerous livestock brands, and, with Mentor and Heard, served on the county commissioners court.¹⁷

By 1850, both of Leland Brooks' grandfathers and kin had moved to the Texas Gulf Coast. His paternal grandfather, John W. Brooks, moved from Mathews County, Virginia, with his Smith cousins, to Brazoria County in 1839. His brother, Dr. Thomas Brooks soon followed as did more Smith cousins. Although his other siblings remained in Virginia, their fascination with Texas showed in their daughters' names, including Texana, Austina, and Brazoria. Although a merchant by trade, Brooks owned nineteen slaves in 1850, the year before he married Harriet Gautier. Her father, Peter W. Gautier, owned twenty slaves in 1850. In 1855, he invested in a sugar plantation, modernized it with a steam mill, then sold it for a profit in 1859. In 1858, Brooks formed a merchant company with his cousin William Smith, and Dr. Mason Locke Weems III, Smith's Virginian-born brother-in-law and the son of a Wharton judge.¹⁸

¹⁷ *United States Federal Census:1850 Agriculture, Selected Federal Census Non-Population Schedules*, Wharton County, R-3, Line 39, RG29, RBC, NARA, online database, Ancestry.com, accessed February 26, 2014; Hudgins, *Virginia to Texas*, 71-83. Andrew Northington owned four slaves. Mentor owned seven and Joel Hudgins owned nine slaves. W. J. E. Heard owned twenty-nine slaves and his mother owned two. His brother Stephen Rhodes Heard, who married Mentor's cousin Susan Northington, owned twenty-two slaves.

¹⁸ *Telegraph and Texas Register*, April 10, 1839, 2; P. A. Champomier, *Statement of the Sugar Crop Made in Louisiana* (New Orleans: Cook Young, 1856-1857); *Democrat and Planter*, Columbia, Texas (hereafter *D&P*), August 16, 1859, 2; *D&P*, July 3, 1860, 4; James Smith,

Leland Brooks' family on his mother's side supported the kinship migration and power consolidation patterns noted elsewhere by Baptist and Billingsley. Brooks's maternal grandfather, Edward S. Rugeley moved to Matagorda County, Texas, in 1846 to join his father, John Rugeley, and his brothers, cousins, and uncles in the early 1840s. The family had migrated before, in 1835, leaving Rugeley's grandfather's plantation, the Retreat Plantation on Wateree Creek in Fairfield County, South Carolina, to capitalize on President Andrew Jackson's forced removal of Creeks and Choctaws in Alabama. By 1835, John Rugeley and his brothers had over 1600 acres in homestead land patents in Lowndes, Wilcox, and Butler Counties, Alabama. They repeated the process in Texas, gaining 1920 acres through headright and war service grants. By 1850 Edward, his father, and brothers called themselves planters and collectively owned 130 slaves and land valued at \$26,700 in Matagorda County. Personally Edward owned twenty slaves.

"William Rose Plantation," *Archives of Brazoria County*, accessed July 23, 2016, <http://lifeonthebrazosriver.com/Archives.htm>; *1850 United States Federal Census*, Mathews County, Virginia, R-M432_960, 33B, RG29, RBC, NARA, online database, Ancestry.com, accessed 31 October 2015; *1860 U.S. Census*, Mathews County, Virginia, R-M653_1362, 19, RG29, RBC, NARA, online database, Ancestry.com, accessed October 31, 2015; *1900 United States Federal Census*, Mathews County, Virginia, R-1717, 7A, ED 0048, RG29, RBC, NARA, online database, Ancestry.com, accessed October 31, 2015; Last Will and Testament of Mason L. Weems, Sr., September 3, 1856, Bond Record, Vol A-D, 1837-1875, Probate Records, Brazoria County, Texas, *Texas Wills and Probate Records, 1833-1974*, online database, Ancestry.com, accessed July 23, 2015; "Mason Locke Weems," *HOTO*, accessed September 11, 2015, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fwe12>; Hudgins, *Virginia to Texas*, 71. John Brooks signed as a co-surety on the will of Dr. M. L. Weems II, a Wharton physician and judge, with his wife and son, indicating his strong relationship with the family. It further shows how extended kinship connections translated into legal and financial relationships and bound these counties together. Mason Locke Weems III was the grandson of Parson Mason Locke Weems, who wrote the George Washington biography in which the "cannot tell a lie" carry tree story originated. For more information, see Lawrence C. Wroth, *Parson Weems: A Biographical and Critical Study* (Baltimore: Eichhelberger Book Company, 1911).

John owned sixty-seven slaves, an elite number that indicated power and wealth. That year, he helped found and led as president the county's Southern Rights Association, an organization formed to unify the white men, and "to prepare the mode and means of protection against the arrogant and ceaseless encroachments of the North." In 1860, their collective county land holdings were valued at \$102,500. Their personal property, valued at \$160,000, included 110 people held in bondage. John owned thirty-three people and Edward's slave holdings had increased to forty-seven people.¹⁹

By 1860, Wharton County's devotion to a slave-based economy and race-based society intensified over ten years. Like the rest of the state, Wharton's overall population had grown significantly, by 93 percent. For Wharton and surrounding area, slaves made

¹⁹ *CV*, Vol. 13 (October, 1905): 466; *1820 United States Federal Census*, Fairfield, South Carolina, R-M33_118, 43, RG29, RBC, NARA; *1840 United States Federal Census*, Lowndes County, Alabama, R-6, 229, RG29, RBC, NARA; Land Patent No. 6986, Lowndes County Alabama, August 1, 1831, United States General Land Office Records, 1796-1907 (hereafter US-GLO), *Homestead and Cash Entry Patents* database (hereafter USBLM), Ancestry.com, accessed October 14, 2015; Land Patent Certificate No. 11432, 14 November 1833, Lowndes County, Alabama, US-GLO, USBLM; Jeanette H. Flachmeier and Rowland Rugeley, "John Rugeley," *HOTO*, accessed June 14, 2016, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fru10>; Michael D. Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal: Creek Government and Society in Crisis* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 2-5; Christopher Haveman, "Creek Indian Removal," *Encyclopedia of Alabama Online* (hereafter *EAO*), accessed May 5, 2016, <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-2013>; Greg O'Brien, "Choctaws in Alabama," *EAO*, accessed May 5, 2016, <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1186>; "John Rugeley Artifacts Will On Display," *Matagorda County Advocate*, July 7, 2005, 4E; *Texas State Gazette*, Austin, Texas, December 14, 1850, 2; Frank Rugeley, Pension No., 4590, *Confederate Pension Applications, 1899-1975*, TSLA. Migration dates above are based on land records which contradict dates in the John Rugeley entry for the *Handbook of Texas Online* information. John Rugeley had two brothers, Rowland and Henry. Rowland Rugeley had five homestead and cash entry land patents in Lowndes County, Alabama, dating from 1830 to 1835 for over 363 acres and gained over 655 acres in Indian allotments in 1843. He died that year at his Mulberry Grove plantation in Lowndes County. Henry Rugeley's land patents in Alabama range from 1825 to 1837 for nearly 1000 acres in three counties. In 1843, Henry moved to DeSoto Parish, Louisiana, and expanded his land holdings to over 1375 acres.

up most of this growth as more planters arrived and local slave owners, like Edward Rugeley, increased their holdings. In practical numbers, the county's white population increased by only 136 individuals, or 27 percent, with most from Alabama or Georgia. The enslaved population, however, expanded 120 percent and made up 80.89 percent of the county—the highest slave percentage in Texas. Slave ownership in the county increased 58 percent. Wharton's planter class increased 142 percent over 1850 and made up nearly 36 percent of the county's slave owners, with 8.7 percent of county slave owners with fifty or more slaves. Of all white families in Wharton, 29 percent were considered planter class, which included Joel Hudgins who owned twenty-two. His brother-in-law Mentor Northington had seventeen. In Brooks' Brazoria County, 16.87 percent of white families fit in the planter class definition. Rugeley's Matagorda County ranked fifth in Texas with over 11 percent.²⁰

Over the previous decade, the regional planter elite had pulled together to build infrastructure and control politics to preserve and serve their economic interests. Planters from counties along the Colorado River, including Matagorda led by John Rugeley and Wharton led by Heard, John W. Gordon, and former Lieutenant Governor Albert Clinton Horton, the latter two the county's largest slaveholders, pooled their money and used their pull in the state legislature to form the Colorado Navigation Company to examine possible ways to improve navigation around a log raft jammed near the mouth so cotton could get through cheaper. Planters along the Brazos River, including Austin descendant

²⁰ *United States Federal Census Data, 1860*, HCB-UV (accessed 11 November 2015); Boles, 75-76; *United States Census: 1860 Slave Schedule*, Wharton County, Texas, 14, NARA.

Guy M. Bryan and John Brooks, also worked together to improve navigation for their commercial interests. They lobbied for railway charters to connect the ports in Galveston and Harris Counties to their sugar and cotton plantations. By 1860, Wharton County had the state's largest plantation and sugar mill and accessed to the Buffalo Bayou, Brazos and Colorado Railway.²¹

As Texas and the nation moved toward the Civil War, Wharton County and the surrounding plantation region dug in its heels and doubled down on preserving the slave institution on which they based their wealth and social status. After Abraham Lincoln's election to the U.S. Presidency, Brooks and others in Brazoria called a pro-secession mass meeting. In 1861, John Rugeley and Brooks's kin Benjamin Terry represented Fort Bend, Wharton, and Matagorda Counties in the Texas secession convention. Furthermore, Wharton County voted 99 percent in favor of leaving the union, as did

²¹ *Texas Democrat* (Austin, Texas), March 31, 1849, 2; *Texas State Gazette* (Austin, Texas), February 12, 1853, 7; *Democratic Telegraph and Texas Register* (hereafter *DTTR*), Houston, Texas, August 24, 1848, 2; *DTTR*, February 8, 1849, 2; *Weekly Journal*, Galveston, Texas, June 10, 1853, 3; Merle R. Hudgins, "Wharton County," *HOTO*, accessed, May 5, 2015, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hcw06>; Foote, *Farewell*, 35-37, 128; George C. Werner, "Railroads," *HOTO*, accessed, May 5, 2015, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/eqr01>; Matthew Ellenberger, "Albert Clinton Horton," *HOTO*, accessed November 22, 2015, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fho62>. Albert Clinton Horton served as the first lieutenant governor of Texas, elected in 1846, and served briefly as governor when Governor James Pinckney Henderson took command of Texas military volunteers for border defense in 1846. By 1850, A. C. Horton had 150 slaves, the most in the county. From census records, 28.5 percent of the out-of-state white migration came from folks born in Alabama and Georgia an increase from 19.4 percent in 1850. Horton Foote, A.C. Horton's great-great grandson, wrote about his meeting a former slave, who had been owned by A. C. Horton. This meeting confronted Foote with the physical reality of slavery that conflicted with the abstract, positive stories of slavery told by local whites, as well as Foote's image of A. C. Horton as a devout Baptist.

Brazoria, each with two dissenting votes. Matagorda County had eight votes against secession for a 97 percent in favor and Fort Bend recorded zero votes against secession. They identified as planters and voted with those interests. Considering the small number of white men in the county, most of those not in battle served on home guard patrols which searched for deserters and policed slaves to prevent “uprisings” and runaways. Officer positions on all three home guard companies were held by planters. Because of its position inland, the county did not see any battles but sent many to eastern fronts with Terry’s Texas Rangers and other companies fight for “maintaining and protecting the institution known as negro slavery—the servitude of the African to the white race within” Texas “and her sister states.”²²

The Confederate States of America’s defeat in 1865 and the subsequent emancipation of thousands of black Texans severely altered the social, economic, and political realities in Wharton and surrounding counties. Histories of the area note the hardship and destitution suffered by notable families brought on by economic loss of emancipation and Reconstruction policies. Real estate prices fell. Money used to purchase slaves, thought of as an investment before 1865, disappeared with the Thirteenth Amendment. Prospective cash from cotton crop disappeared with the loss of labor controls that slavery allowed but the Fourteenth and the Fifteenth Amendments restricted and the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (BRFA)

²² *State Gazette* (Austin, Texas), January 12, 1861, 3; *Weekly Telegraph*, Houston, Texas, November 20, 1860, 4; Williams, 64-66; Walter L. Buenger, *Secession and the Union in Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984), 8-10, 164; *Texas Almanac* (Houston, Texas, 1862), 18-20.

worked to enforced. Some white Wharton farmers, even a few planters, turned to ranching, which was less labor intensive than that of cash crops. Some entered the war in debt and saw their land sold at auction. Despite whites' shifting fortune and power, they still had more of both than former slaves. Having worked hard all their lives, African Americans entered freedom with little more than internal strength, maybe a few personal items, and a kinship group. Although some stayed on the land they had worked for years, others left for a new start in a new place or in search of parents, spouses, and children separated from them by their owners. Focused on their future, they prioritized education, self-determination, and protecting their families. Freedom meant control over their own bodies, their own choices, their own labor, and their own families.²³

To whites, black freedom meant the loss of white supremacy. One white Brazorian recalled Reconstruction's purpose was "to place the Anglo Saxon people in the South under the rule of their former slaves. The result was only harmful to the negro as well as whites, as everybody knows." In actuality, whites ensured that the *path* to equality, not the result, was harmful to blacks. Whites responded to displays of black

²³ Hudgins, *Virginia to Texas*, 99-101. For more on Reconstruction in Texas, see: Barry Crouch, *The Dance of Freedom: Texas African Americans During Reconstruction* (Austin: University of Texas, 2007); Randolph B. Campbell, *Grass-Roots Reconstruction in Texas 1865-1880* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1997); Carl H. Moneyhon, *Texas After the Civil War: The Struggle of Reconstruction* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2007); Stephen Chicoine, *The Confederates of Chappell Hill, Texas: Prosperity, Civil War, and Decline* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2005); James M. Smallwood, *Time of Hope, Time of Despair: Black Texans During Reconstruction* (New York: Kennikat Press, 1981); William L Richter, *Overreached on All Sides: The Freedmen's Bureau Administrators in Texas, 1865-1868* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2001); Charles W. Ramsdell, *Reconstruction in Texas* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1910; reprint edition, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1970).

agency with refusal of wages, beatings, whippings, sexual humiliation, rape, and murder. In many ways, white violence toward former slaves mirrored slave days, including beatings for talking back and hunting individuals with dogs for not getting permission to leave a farm.²⁴

The culture, environment, and local self-interest described by historian Walter Buenger as influential in shaping the region's commitment to secession, remained intact after the war. Many large landowners initially rejected breaking up their holdings for sharecroppers. They continued to grow cotton on a large scale and remained dependent on having large numbers of laborers. Texas BRFA assistant commissioner, Major General Joseph Barr Kiddoo wrote letters to his Georgia and Alabama counterparts to request they assist "extensive planter" Richard H. D. Sorrel in his need to "procure freedmen to migrate to the state as laborers." Sorrel's travels to Alabama, where his cousins lived, and to Georgia, where his Haiti-born father Francis Sorrel had

²⁴ Abner J. Strobel, *The Old Plantations and Their Owners of Brazoria County, Texas* (Houston, 1926; revised edition, Houston: Bowman and Ross, 1930; reprint, Austin: Shelby, 1980), 60. For more on racial and anti-Republican violence during Reconstruction, see: Jim Downs, *Sick From Freedom: African-American Illness and Suffering During the Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Rebecca A. Kosary, "To Degrade and Control: White Violence and the Maintenance of Racial and Gender Boundaries in Reconstruction Texas, 1865-1868" (Ph.D. dissertation, Texas A&M University, 2006); Barry A. Crouch, *The Freedmen's Bureau and Black Texans* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992); Kenneth W. Howell, ed., *Still the Arena of Civil War: Violence and Turmoil in Reconstruction Texas, 1865-1874* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2012). The author thanks Rebecca Kosary Czuchry for sharing her transcribed and county-organized copy of the "Records of Criminal Offenses Committed in the State of Texas," R-32, *Records of the Assistant Commissioner (AC), Texas, Vols. 11-13*, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (BRFA), RG 105, NARA, before these records could be found online, at <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C9TD-N9NF-G?owc=waypoints&wc=STTJ-K68%3A1513612102%2C1513630701%3Fcc%3D2427901&cc=2427901>.

considerable power, indicated he accessed kinship for economic support. His search for African Americans, specifically from the Deep South, to work his fields in Texas showed his desire to reinstate the antebellum plantation structure as best he could when he could have sought white labor, switched to the tenant system, or looked elsewhere. Furthermore, his call on the government to help him “procure” and physically move black labor illustrated both a planter culture that tapped structural power for personal need without hesitation and a political structure which reinforced that planter culture. In this situation, Sorrel’s request and the BRFA’s compliance, without mention of enticements or benefits for these black families, underscored the normative white supremacy of the period in their disregard for African Americans’ needs or wants, or control of their person or space.²⁵

Historians have found less Reconstruction violence in plantation counties of Mississippi and Alabama and argue that large landowners discouraged Ku Klux Klan activities in their area for fear of losing labor. The same can be said for Texas. Wharton and other counties with black populations over 70 percent saw less acts of violence and less extreme violence than counties with more equitable racial percentages. Further up the Brazos River, McLennan County had forty acts of mob violence and nearly as many events by single actors. Brazos County had forty-three reported violent events with

²⁵ Buenger, *Secession*, 8-10; Maj. Gen. J. B. Kiddoo, Galveston, to Maj. Gen. Wagner, 28 August 28, 1866, LS67, R-1, BRFA, RG 105, NARA; Maj. Gen. J. B. Kiddoo, Galveston, to Asst. Com. State of Georgia, August 28, 1866, *Letters Sent September 1865-March 1867-Vol. 1* (LS67), R-1, BRFA, RG 105, NARA; “Records of Criminal Offenses Committed in the State of Texas,” R-32, AC, Texas, Vols. 11-13, BRFA, RG 105, NARA.

nineteen murders. In both counties, men took on the Ku Klux persona and terrorized, raped, and murdered African Americans. From BRFA records, violence specifically attributed to an organized KKK in Wharton County is unclear as, in all but two cases, records identified the assailants and reports. Furthermore, organized Ku Klux activity in nearby Colorado and Washington counties may have even benefitted Wharton planters by discouraging migration out and encouraging migration in. In the 1870 census, Wharton County's black population increased by 176 individuals.²⁶

Yet, it is imperative to recognize that Wharton still had racial violence and terror came regardless of method or mask. The difference was the type of violence which corresponded to the economic self-interest of the dominant planter class. Of the forty-four violent acts reported to the BRFA in Wharton County, most were described as assault and battery, particularly whippings and beatings by white men on black men. Whipping and other assaults had restorative meaning, specifically that the slave-master relationship remained in spite of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments. One BRFA agent stationed in Wharton described whites' "disposition" as "vicious and

²⁶ Michael Fitzgerald, "Extralegal Violence and the Planter Class: The Ku Klux Klan in the Alabama Black Belt During Reconstruction," in *Local Matters: Race, Crime, and Justice in the Nineteenth-Century South*, eds. Christopher Waldrip and Donald G. Nieman (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001), 155-171; George C. Rable, *But There Was No Peace: The Role of Violence in the Politics of Reconstruction* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984, reprint edition, 2007), 71; Records of Criminal Offenses Committed in the State of Texas," R-32, AC, Texas, Vols. 11-13, BRFA, RG 105, NARA (transcribed copy, in author's possession). The number of outrages in neighboring plantation counties supports this finding as well. Brazoria County had twenty-two incidents with six murders. Matagorda County had fifteen outrages listed with four murders. Of Wharton Counties' seven homicides, two were at hands unknown and found near the county border. Perhaps because a BRFA agents were locally stationed, county officials pursued and arrested the identified murders in the other five cases but those cases stayed on the docket long after the BRFA agent left. All, but one, were dismissed after ten years.

vindictive,” and added, “their apparently good acts are prompted by selfish motives.” Their selfish motives meant keeping labor in place and subservient so they stay in the cash crop business. From the reports, many planters used violence as their privilege in cases where a laborer did not work fast enough or argued about wages. Local BRFA agents either fined them or handed assault complaints over to local officials, such as Joel Hudgins, who remained a county commissioner until 1867, and Mayor Isaac N. Dennis, a planter, a lawyer, and Lt. Governor Horton’s son-in-law. BRFA fines ranged from \$5 to \$25 dollars, which, in effect, made assault a privilege for those who could afford it. Not all planters resorted to violence. Some simply refused to recognize freedmen’s new status and denied wages. The BRFA seized the corn crop claimed by Joel Hudgins because he refused to pay those who actually had done the work. They also seized cotton held by John W. Brook’s merchant company, Underwood and Brooks.²⁷

After federal troops and BRFA agents left and white Democrats “redeemed” Texas with the gubernatorial election of Richard Coke in 1873, the former planter class lost influence in the state legislature. With passage of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth

²⁷ John Gorman, “Reconstruction Violence in the Lower Brazos River Valley,” in *Still the Arena of Civil War*, ed. Howell (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2012), 417; DeWitt C. Brown, Wharton, to J. T. Kirkman, May 31, 1867, *AC*, Reports of Operations, December 1866-May 1867, reel 20, quoted in Christopher B. Bean, “A Stranger Amongst Strangers: An Analysis of the Freedmen’s Bureau Sub-Assistant Commissioners in Texas, 1865-1868,” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Texas, 2008), 324; Criminal Docket, District Court, Twentieth District, 1870-1876, Wharton County, WCHM; Criminal Docket, District Court, Eighteenth District, 1876-1883, Wharton County, WCHM; Chauncy C. Moore, Galveston, to J. W. McConaughey, February 15, 1866, LS67, R-1, *AC*, Texas, Vols. 11-13, BRFA, RG 105, NARA; William Sinclair, Galveston, to M. Koppel, January 24, 1867, LS67, R-1, *AC*, Texas, Vols. 11-13, BRFA, RG 105, NARA. Reason for seizure in the case of Underwood and Brooks was not stated.

Amendments, whites on the plantation-dependent counties found themselves in a trap of their own making. They had forced thousands of African Americans to move to the region and work as slaves. They created the overwhelming black voting majorities after the war. African Americans made up 84 percent of Wharton County's population in 1870, created by an increase of 146 individuals and a decrease of 130 whites. Brazoria, Fort Bend, and Matagorda Counties all saw a decrease in white population, as did the former heavily-slave populated Harrison County in Northeast Texas, at a time when many Texas counties' populations spiked. Newly-enfranchised black men typically voted Republican because national Republicans offered citizenship and Democrats identified themselves as the party of white supremacy. Since black men held the majority in Wharton and surrounding counties, white planters in the area lost their stranglehold on local and state-level political offices. Just as significant, the state Democratic leadership wrote off these counties as automatic losses and redistricted them together in 1870 to isolate the Republican vote, which made the district less significant to gubernatorial and Congressional Democratic candidates.²⁸

The loss of political and economic power proved too much for many whites in Wharton. As the census record showed, many left, including Joel Hudgins and Mentor Northington, both of whom moved and took their families to Chappell Hill in Washington County, Texas, in early 1871. One of Joel Hudgins' sons, William stayed to

²⁸ *United States Federal Census Data, 1870*, Texas County Data, HCB-UV, accessed November 11, 2015; Patrick G. Williams, *Beyond Redemption, Texas Democrats After Reconstruction* (College Station, Texas A&M University Press, 2007), 24-25, 56.

manage the family land and raise livestock, as did many white landowners. But many white elites refused let to go of race-based labor system and found alternatives. Wharton County's 1870 census listed nearly all black men as farm laborers. Only three African Americans, blacksmith Thomas Gooden, Prudence Eddins, and Martha Glass, owned property in the county, with all three concentrated in the town of Wharton. With the exception of seven, large land holders referred to themselves as farmers instead of planters, a marked difference from Brazoria and Matagorda. The continued use of the title planter after slavery's end indicated the continuity of a planter culture, an elitism with an antebellum race structure as its foundation. Use of the name illustrated a desire for the past and a view for the future. Six of the seven self-titled planters, specifically Burr A. Harrison, John T. Bolton, former Mayer I. N. Dennis, Will Toliver Taylor, and his brother Solomon Tyre Taylor, had close kin in the 1920s Klan No. 6.²⁹

Large landholders in the Brazos and Colorado River valley, including Wharton, found another alternative to slavery in convict-lease labor, a system which began in Texas in 1867, before the end of Reconstruction. In this state-implemented system, individuals or companies leased convicts from the state. They paid the state for the labor on the condition of providing food and shelter for the convicts, but with little state oversight, convicts faced abuses similar to slavery, including whipping. During Reconstruction, when Republicans controlled the state, the number of white convicts and

²⁹ *United States Federal Census, 1870*, Wharton County, Texas, R-M593_1609, Beats 1-4, RG29, RBC, NARA; Washington, Hudgins, *Virginia to Texas*; *United States Federal Census, 1870*, Chappell Hill, Washington, Texas, R-M593_1608, 49B, RG29, RBC, NARA.

black convicts had parity. By 1880, the number of blacks imprisoned in Texas increased by 500 percent; whereas whites imprisoned had increased by 60 percent. By then, several former Fort Bend County and Brazoria County plantations had converted to black convict labor and continued to do so into the early 1900s, the most notable being B. F. Terry's former Sugar Land which was eventually incorporated into Imperial Sugar Company's convict-worked property. In Wharton, Will Toliver and Solomon Tyre Taylor made the switch from slavery to convict lease on their Don Tol plantation. This system removed any hint of paternalism from antebellum slavery, a useful element in a planter class ideology that elite white men used to reify dependency of slaves on their owners when, in fact, the reverse was true. With less economic investment in leased labor compared to slaves, white lessees had little incentive to provide humane treatment. Although use of convict labor was not as wide-spread in Wharton, the growth of nearby convict farms provided sons of former planters, especially those who lost their land to debt after the war, employment and a powerful position reminiscent of white overseer.³⁰

³⁰ Robert Perkinson, *Texas Tough: The Rise of America's Prison Empire* (New York: Metropolitan Books, a division of Henry Hold and Company, 2010), 89-97; Susan J. Tracy, *In the Master's Eye: Representations of Women, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Antebellum Southern Literature* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), 74; David M. Oshinsky, "Convict Labor in the Post-Civil War South: Involuntary Servitude After the Thirteenth Amendment," in *The Promises of Liberty: The History and Contemporary Elegance of the Thirteenth Amendment*, Alexander Tsesis, ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 110; R. M. Armstrong, *Sugar Land, Texas and the Imperial Sugar Company* (Houston: D. Armstrong Co., 1991) 22, 25; Paul N. Spellman, *Wharton: Images of America* (San Francisco: Arcadia Publishing, 2010) 23; Don Blevins, *Texas Towns: From Abner to Zipperlandville* (Lanham, T.X.: Republic of Texas Press, 2003), 124; Diana J. Kleiner, "Don Tol," *HOTO*, accessed August 19, 2016, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hrdjl>. For more on Texas' convict lease system, see Donald Roy Walker, *Penology for Profit: A History of the Texas Prison System, 1867-1912* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1988); Gary Brown, *Texas Gulag: The Chain Gang Years: 1875-1925* (Plano, TX: Republic of Texas Press, 2002). For more on convict lease in the South, see Douglas A. Blackmon, *Slavery By Another*

During this period, as white elites retrenched racism into the regional economic structure, they made slow gains in its political structure until they “redeemed” their county by forcing out the remaining Republican county office-holders. Having been left behind by most state “redemptive” measures after Reconstruction, local Democrats chipped away Republican power by any means necessary throughout the 1870s. They used several methods of election fraud, contesting election results, legal pressure, and continued extra-legal violence. With little federal oversight, white violence against African Americans, including breaking up black religious services and aggravated assault, continued with little recourse in the local justice system. Yet, Republicans still sent a black county delegate, Bird B. Davis, to the Constitutional Convention of 1875 and maintained some strength on the county commissioners court through African-American farmers Robert H. Tidsale and Anthony H. Speaker, who were elected numerous times in the 1880s. White Democrats took back the sheriff’s office by criminally charging him for the escape of a convict and taking a bribe, a charge the court later dismissed. In 1874, they regained the tax assessor office with charges of receiving stolen property and the tax collector office with charges of “false entry on record,” the

Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans From the Civil War to World War II (New York: Doubleday, division of Random House, 2008); David M. Oshinsky, *“Worse Than Slavery”: Parchman Farm and the Ordeal of Jim Crow Justice* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996); Mary Ellen Curtin, *Black Prisoners and Their World, Alabama, 1865-1900* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2000). Don Tol, the Taylor plantation in Wharton County, gained that name later, after Toliver Taylor switched from convict labor to hiring Mexican immigrant farm hands. According to locals, the name came from the courtesy title Mexican laborers gave to Toliver Taylor, whose nickname was Tol. *Don* was a Spanish title of status, authority, or honor. See, Jesús de la Teja, *Faces of Bexár: Early San Antonio and Texas* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2016), 14-15. Located twelve miles southeast of Wharton, the plantation became a town by the same name in the early 1900s, but slowly lost population after the 1940s. The 1980s, little of the town remains but a few homes.

latter later dismissed as “not a criminal charge.” The justice of the peace and county judge faced criminal charges of “malfeasance in office” in 1876. Throughout the period, in-migration of whites from other Southern states and nearby Texas counties helped by increasing the white Democrat numbers. The Northingtons and Hudgins moved back. John W. Brooks’s sons Peter Gautier (P.G.) and Tom moved to the county from Brazoria after their father died in 1873. With violence in nearby counties, African Americans migrated into the county as well and settled in the county’s largest town Wharton or in Freedmen towns of Boone’s Bend and Kendleton, on the Fort Bend-Wharton County border. By 1880, the county’s white population had increased by nearly 78 percent over the previous decade but the black population growth slowed, with an increase of nearly 25 percent over 1870. Yet, African Americans maintained an 80 percent majority through the 1890 census.³¹

In 1889, a group of white men formed the White Man’s Union Association (WMUA) to nullify white factionalism, reduce white support of Republican candidates, and control future elections. Later histories claim that the WMUA had anti-corruption goals for county government, the first sentence of its preamble revealed that the WMUA leadership blamed division among their white minority on blacks having and using their

³¹Criminal Docket, Eighteenth District Court Records, Wharton County, 1870-1883, WCHM; William F. S. Alexander, Journal Entry 17 May 1872, William F. S. Alexander Journal, Fleetwood Plantation, Wharton County, Texas, WCHM; *United States Federal Census, 1850*, Wharton County, Texas, R-M593_1609, 330B-331A, Beat 2, NARA; *United States Federal Census, 1880*, Wharton County, Texas, R-1332, 391C and 386B, Precinct 1, ED 153, RG29, RBC, NARA, online database, Ancestry.com, accessed October 9, 2015; *United States Federal Census: 1880, Agriculture*, Wharton County, Texas, R-43, 24, RG29, RBC, NARA, online database, Ancestry.com, accessed October 9, 2015; “Wharton County,” *HOTO*; Williams, 112, 156. See Chapter 5 for more on the Speaker family.

votes. It stated, “the negro population have had the [selection] of . . . county officials for the last quarter of a century, which . . . has brought about much dissension among the people of this county.” Although not stated in the preamble, “dissension among [*white*] people” should be assumed as black voters were “people of this county” as well—the majority of people, in fact. The preamble claimed “the mutual protection of the citizens of this county, and the maintenance of an honest and economical county administration” as the association’s purpose. Again it assumed whiteness was synonymous with citizenship and negated black citizenship by denying its legitimacy. Furthermore, it implied government officials chosen by whites was naturally better, or “honest and economical,” over something corrupt chosen by black voters. This sort of coded language reified racist characteristics whites used to undergird their claims to power by portraying African Americans as corrupt, dishonest, or easily fooled by the corrupt. Even at the time, white claims of black corruption seemed like a facade. Judge E. H. Hawes, the first WMUA president, had been county judge for a decade and faced charges of “malfeasance in office.” Republican Frederick W. Ahldag served as county treasurer beginning in 1882. In early 1889, he and most of the Republican leadership faced charges of “pursuing occupation without a license,” yet became the WMUA’s first secretary, and remained county treasurer until 1892, after which he was elected county commissioner.³²

³² White Man’s Union Association (WMUA) Minutes, Secretary’s Book, WMUA of Wharton County records, WCHM, 1-20; Criminal Docket, Eighteenth District Court, 205; Clerk’s Criminal Court File Docket Ledger, Case No. 2958, Twenty-Third District Criminal Court, Wharton County, 37. For more on the Ahldag family, see Chapter 4 and 5.

The WMUA functioned much like the Texas Democratic party after the 1905 Terrell Election laws established primary elections. They held private local primary elections to handle white factionalism *within* the association. This kept white voters unified behind the WMUA candidate in the general election, which was their best chance of winning against a Republican candidate. This organization, much like Southern Democrats, held whiteness as the most important political priority—the unifying factor in the face of division caused by issues of bimetallism, prohibition, woman suffrage, or even simply school bonds. They held private primary elections for members only and the association’s officers decided membership qualifications, election judges, voting locations, and election dates. The association even controlled the wording and printing of all general election ballots. This power allowed them to manipulate opposition votes, a power they reserved for local races and issue elections, such as bonds, prohibition, and state amendments, to nullify African American votes and preserve the WMUA’s private primary vote. Similar organizations, some by the same name, emerged in Brazoria, Matagorda, Fort Bend, and Washington Counties around the same time. From 1889 to 1953, WMUA controlled county government in Wharton County.³³

Yet, with African American men still holding the majority at the ballot box in

³³ WMUA Minutes, WMUA, WCHM, 1-20; Constitution and By-Laws, Jay Bird Democratic Association of Fort Bend County Folder, Constitutions of White Men’s Unions in Southeast Texas, Box 2H428, Jaybird Association Papers, 1887-1922, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin; Foote, *Farewell*, 37; K6MB, K6R, WCHM.

general elections, the WMUA needed more than a politically united white front to win political office. Wharton's WMUA has not garnered much attention from historians and has been overshadowed by events in adjacent Fort Bend County during the same period. There, in 1888, white men unified through the Young Men's Democratic Club, often referring to themselves as Jaybirds, to push out the black and white Republicans, which they dubbed Woodpeckers. Most commonly called the Jaybird-Woodpecker War, white Democrats used threats, assault, and murder to force black office holders to flee their homes and seek shelter in other counties throughout 1888 and 1889. Black and white Republicans resigned their political offices, including white District Judge William Burkhardt, and the Jaybirds kept control over local offices with a Jaybird primary until the United States Supreme Court found it unconstitutional in the 1953 *Terry v. Adams* decision. Although local newspapers have not been saved for this period, nearby newspaper coverage failed to mention similar racial violence related to the WMUA take over in Wharton, but it likely occurred there as well. The WMUA success at the polls against an eighty percent majority doubtfully happened without a combination of electoral fraud, intimidation, coercion, and violence. Within a month of the WMUA's formation, the few remaining Republican officeholders in Wharton had resigned and the last remaining vestiges of local Republican control ended, marking the end of the county's Reconstruction period.³⁴

³⁴ Williams, 133-138; WMUA Minutes, WMUA, WCHM, 13. For more on the Jaybirds and *Terry v. Adams*, see Leslie Anne Lovett, "The Jaybird-Woodpecker War: Reconstruction and Redemption in Fort Bend County, Texas 1869-1889," (Master's Thesis, Rice University, 1994); Pauline Yelderman, *The Jay Bird Democratic Association of Fort Bend County* (Waco: Texan Press, 1979). For more on Texas's use of the white primary to disfranchise African

Many of the founding members either joined 1920 Klan No. 6 or had children who joined. Wharton's WMUA founders included lawyers, judges, merchants, newspaper editors, and plantation owners: Peter Gautier Brooks, and his brother Tom Brooks, former mayor Issac N. Dennis, Judge Wiley J. Croom, Shaderick Manley Rowe, Will Tol Taylor and his brother Tyre Taylor, Marcial Sorrel and his brother Richard H. D. Sorrel II, Robert J. Horton, Albert Harrison Foote (Horton Foote's paternal grandfather), Joel Hudgins' son Alex R. Hudgins, Joel Hudgins' grandsons James P. and Joel Taylor, Mentor Northington's son Green Heard Northington, Sr., Green C. Duncan, Frederich W. Ahldag, Robert E. Vineyard, and Hamilton B. Dickson, as well as several others. Judge Robert A. Armstrong, a former Reconstruction Klansman in Alabama, chaired the By-Laws Committee, which wrote the association's founding constitution. In 1921, he joined Klan No. 6 as an honorary member because of his previous affiliation. All of his sons and sons-in-law, who lived in the county, joined. His nephew, William O. Victor, Jr., was a charter member of the Uvalde Klan chapter. Vineyard, Northington, R. H. D. Sorrel, Hudgins' grandsons, and the Brooks brothers were all members, as were

Americans, see Darlene Clark Hine, *Black Victory: The Rise and Fall of the White Primary in Texas* (Millwood, N.Y.: KTO Press, 1979); Mark V. Tushnet, *Making Civil Rights Law: Thurgood Marshall and the Supreme Court, 1936-1961* (Oxford University Press, 1994); Will Guzmán, *Civil Rights in the Texas Borderlands: Dr. Lawrence A. Nixon and Black Activism* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2012); Conrey Bryson, *Dr. Lawrence A. Nixon and the White Primary* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1974). Spelling of Jaybird or Jay Bird varies on both primary and secondary sources. The author chose to use the one-word spelling of Jaybird which is consistent with the Courthouse Square Historical Marker and the stone obelisk memorial, marked "Our Heroes," located on the courthouse grounds in Richmond, Fort Bend County. In 1953, the United States Supreme Court established private primaries unconstitutional in its decision in *John Terry, et al., v. A. J. Adams, et al.*, 345 U.S. 461 (1953), a Fort Bend County case. Racial violence in Wharton County during this period has been largely overlooked by historians possibly due to the scarcity of sources.

their sons. Except Tol and Tyre Taylor, the rest had moved or died, but Klan No. 6 counted as members' kin Henry Ahldag, Big Horton Foote, Wiley Croom Hodge, John H. H. Dennis, Shaderick Pinckney Rowe, T. Glenn Taylor, Donald and Frank Bowie Duncan.³⁵

The “redemption” and restoration of white supremacy to Wharton County government was a pivotal point in county history that marked the beginning of some sweeping changes. Yet, kinship remained a central element in how local white elites obtained and kept power after the formation of the WMUA, just as it had for preceding generations which used kinship to build and protect wealth, access capital, negotiate the legal system, and tap political power for themselves to the exclusion of others. White elite families in Wharton County had learned the benefit of these cultural lessons as they exploited slave labor and headright systems in their movement west to Texas, where they fostered the same plantation system and planter expectation of entitled power. When the federal government sought to equalize political power with amendments to the United States Constitution after the Civil War, many local planter families maintained

³⁵ Klonklave Minutes, February 3, 1921, K6MB, K6R, WCHM; KMBD, K6R, WCHM; WMUA Minutes, WMUA, WCHM, 11-12; “Wiley J. Croom” Folder, Individual and Family Vertical Files, WCHM; Membership Rolls, Ku Klux Klan No. 279 Records, 1921-1936, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, the University of Texas in Austin, Texas. “A. R. Hudgins,” Death Certificate, Houston, Harris County, March 6, 1918, *Texas, Death Certificates, 1903-1982* database, Ancestry.com, accessed April 28, 2015. Judge Hawes and Dennis were uncles of Albert Harrison Foote’s wife, Corolla Horton, Lt. Governor A. C. Horton’s granddaughter, and Robert J. Horton’s daughter. Albert H. Foote and Corolla Horton Foote (later Cleveland) were the parents of Albert Horton Foote, who joined Klan No. 6 in 1921, and paternal grandparents of Horton Foote, whose memoir and plays provided insight into Wharton’s white society. R. H. Vineyard married the daughter of planter Burr A. Harriston. Tol Taylor did not have children. Tyre Taylor’s sons had died. His grandson John Brooks Gary joined. T. Glenn Taylor was their nephew. W. C. Hodge was Judge Croom’s grandson. The rest were sons of the WMUA charter members.

their monopolistic hold on land and personal capital. This allowed them to adapt to the resulting economic and social disruption and retrench repressive racial controls through Texas's convict lease system over labor and controlled credit to sharecroppers and tenant farmers. Still, the county's eighty percent African-American majority population, unchanged since the antebellum period, meant black voters decided elections for both county and, together with the freedmen in their sister counties, district offices.

Accustomed to using the legal system for their own ends, white planters needed to regain the jury box, the sheriff's office, and the judge's bench. To do this, they used criminal charges to discredit political opponents, voter fraud and violence during elections, and unified white voters in the private political WMUA, which ruled county politics for the next sixty years. With a twenty percent white minority, however, elections would remain precarious until the WMUA whitened the county.

CHAPTER IV

MODERN ILLUSIONS:

SCIENTIFIC RACISM, AMERICAN IDENTITY, AND WHARTON

On April 16, 1921, a bugle call rang out through a cloudy, cold downtown Wharton Saturday evening. Answering the call, locals in nearby homes and businesses looked out to find four robed and hooded horsemen, bearing the American flag, standing in front of the county courthouse on the public square, not far from the WMUA's Hamilton B. Dickson memorial. Moments later, as the horsemen circled the courthouse, the town's fire alarm sounded and more people rushed on to the streets in search of the calamity. Instead, they found hundreds of Klansmen, led by a "fiery" cross, marching to the courthouse, where they joined two torch-bearing columns filling in from side streets. From the courthouse, the procession silently moved through Freedmantown, Wharton's oldest black neighborhood, and carried signs with race-specific messages that proclaimed "White Supremacy—100 Per Cent Americanism," and "We Stand for Law and Order." Other placards warned "The Association of White Men with Negro Women Must Cease—We Want No Mixed Blood," and "Short Changing and Short Weighing, Especially to Negroes, and the Calling of Negroes Mr. and Mrs. are Practices that Must Cease." As the procession returned to the square, the downtown street lights went out and darkness filled the square. Moments later, when the lights came back on, "not a

Klansman was in sight.”¹

From the crowded sidewalk, Frank Shannon, the editor of the weekly *Wharton Spectator* newspaper, witnessed the event. Under the front-page headline “Knights of Invisible Empire at Wharton,” he conveyed the mystery and drama surrounding the “half-thousand strong” parade which silently moved around the public square and disappeared as if by magic. About others in the audience, Shannon observed, “A peculiar thing about this parade . . . so far as the *Spectator* man could observe none of the men whom one would suppose members of the Ku Klux appeared in the parade, but were interested spectators on the sidelines.” To this, he added, “No one knows who composes the Ku Klux Klans, when they meet, how they operate, nor where punishment is likely to be meted out next, are some of the things that cause it to inspire awe and respect for the laws of the country and of decency.” But Shannon knew. Like others standing on the

¹ *Wharton Spectator* (hereafter *WhSp*), April 22, 1921, 1, 8; *Waco News Tribune* (hereafter *WNT*), October 3, 1921, 1; *Houston Post* (hereafter *HPost*), April 17, 1921, 2; *Bryan Daily Eagle* (hereafter *Eagle*), April 18, 1921, 1; Patricia Bernstein in *Ten Dollars to Hate: The Texas Man Who Fought the Klan* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2017), 60-61; Horton Foote, *Farewell: A Memoir of a Texas Childhood* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999), 28; Annie Lee Williams, *The History of Wharton County, 1846-1961* (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Company, 1964), 127-129. The *Houston Post* reported a different series of events in which Wharton’s downtown lights were extinguished before the march and Klansmen carried torches, a story repeated by *Bryan Daily Eagle* and Patricia Bernstein in *Ten Dollars to Hate: The Texas Man Who Fought the Klan*. Horton Foote remembered torches but did not see the actual parade downtown. His grandfather, soon to be a member, had Horton, who had turned five years old the month prior, watch from his porch. He remembers seeing Klansmen carrying torches as they walked Richmond Avenue, which does not cross downtown but serves as a main road from the Gulf, Colorado, and Santa Fe Railroad train station north of town. Annie Lee Williams, who wrote the first published history of the county, did not mention torches and followed the *Spectator*’s version. According to her sparse footnotes, she interviewed several local men whose names appeared on Klan roles but nothing indicates she knew they belonged or asked them about the order. Considering the sources’ relationship to the events and frequent assumptions made about the Klan, this author has used the local paper’s description of events over those printed elsewhere.

sidewalk, he had joined the order two months before the parade. The article was an illusion, a façade to hide his own hood.²

Both the article and the parade it reported served as advertisements to recruit members and expand the organization. Prescribed by Klan founder William J. Simmons, the parades were staged performances, replicated in town after town. Likewise, white newspaper coverage of the four previous Texas parades, witnessed in nearby Houston, Bay City, Alvin, and Angleton, used the same theatrical brushstrokes to paint the Klan as a modern reincarnation of the night-riding Ku Klux of old. For ten dollars they received a hood, a robe, secret hand signs and code words, inclusion into an exclusive group, and a legacy of violence, all protected by anonymity and the brotherhood. Since Simmons had laid out the KKK's platform repeatedly in national newspapers over the previous year, those wanting to join knew what they were buying—membership into a fraternity founded on white supremacy, Protestantism, and American nationalism that had already committed violence in Alabama, Florida, North Carolina, and after February 5, 1921, Texas. Frank Shannon joined February 17, 1921. Hood hidden, Shannon's parade article ended with his endorsement, writing, "The activities of this society or organization have met with the hearty approval of all self-respecting people . . . many of the substantial

² *WhSp*, April 22, 1921, 1, 8; *HPost*, November 28, 1920, 1; *WhSp*, March 7, 1921, 1; *HPost*, March 6, 1921, 1; *HPost*, March 27, 1921, 2; F. W. Shannon, Klan Member Dues Binder (hereafter KMDB), Hamilton B. Dickson Klan No. 6 Records (hereafter K6R), Wharton County Historical Museum (hereafter WCHM); *Galveston Daily News* (hereafter *GDN*), April 25, 1921, 2; *Eagle*, August 27, 1921, 1; *WhSp*, May 23, 1919, 1. As editor of Wharton's oldest and most successful newspaper, Shannon had written about nearly every man who joined before the parade. Many advertised in the paper's business and want ads, and those from the business section, including Jewish merchants, elected him head of the local Chamber of Commerce.

men of Wharton would be glad to become members of it.” He never mentioned the reactions of “self-respecting” Jewish, African-American, or immigrant residents who witnessed the event. Perhaps he had not thought or cared to ask. Intimidation was part of the Klan package.³

Newspaper coverage of these performative parades in 1920 and 1921 advertised this new commercial, exclusive product and resulted in order’s rapid growth in the state. Twenty-two new members joined the day after the parade, and increased enrollment by 17.6 percent.⁴ But what drew new members to join? Were they drawn to the dramatic displays and mystery? Or, were they motivated by shared principals and fear for the nation’s future? Had some sought to embody the imagined and play the white-knight hero projected on-screen in a nationally popular movie? Or, had they desired to feel the power that came from anonymous intimidation and physical violence? And what role did local economic or political conditions, or demographic changes play?

Based on local Klan membership and activity of the chapter and individual members, found in meeting minutes and local sources, this chapter argues that the

³*HPost*, November 28, 1920, 1; *WhSp*, March 7, 1921, 1; *HPost*, March 6, 1921, 1; *HPost*, March 27, 1921, 2; *New York Herald*, January 16, 1921, 75; *New York Age*, January 22, 1921, 2; Carol M. Taylor, “W.E.B. DuBois’s Challenge to Scientific Racism,” *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol 11, No. 4 (June 1981): 451. Simmons held an open meeting Thanksgiving day at First Christian Church in Houston to explain his organization. He also told the Houston Post a brief description of a future parade. See, *HPost*, November 22, 1920, 15. Klan parades quickly evolved into more modern spectacles, which often included caravans of automobiles and airplanes that displayed larger electric cross in red light bulbs. For an example, see *Eagle*, October 6, 1921, 3; Victoria Buenger and Walter L. Buenger, *Texas Merchant Marvin Leonard and Fort Worth* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press 2008), 64.

⁴ Klonklave Minutes, February 21, 1921, Klan No. 6 Minutes Binder (hereafter K6MB), K6R, WCHM. Estimated enrollment before the parade totaled 125 members.

Wharton's old landed elite and new business class, which made up most of Klan No. 6's membership, prioritized white supremacy over the other tenets of the Klan agenda pertaining to religion, immigration, and radicalism. Members, however, varied in how they viewed white supremacy and what they regarded as their individual responsibility to it.

To explore questions of motivations and to learn where a rural Texas Klan chapter fits in a historiography largely dominated by urban studies, this chapter will first look at the local conditions surrounding the chapter's establishment. Since the second Klan's popularity has been cited as a reactionary response to changes attributed to modernization and urbanization, this chapter pays particular attention to demographic and developmental changes seen in the county. Under the direction of the Wharton County's White Man's Union Association (WMUA), the county's exponential growth changed the county from the small southern, native-born white-dominant, black-majority population of its plantation past into a more foreign, more town-centered white majority that had easy access to the urban, modern world in Houston. Then, to assess the significance of nativism, racism, and Protestantism in the local Klan, this chapter examines those who joined the local chapter and their actions in and out of their hoods. Represented on the rolls included an array of different backgrounds, ideologies, and economic positions that represented the old and new Wharton. Men from old planter class families, Midwestern and immigrant families, and even some from families who actively campaigned for Socialism, bought into the illusion of white supremacy and marched together in a national identity parade. No matter their background, from the

sidewalk, they all looked the same with their hoods on.

Shannon's estimate of five hundred Klansmen meant the parade equated to more than one-fifth of the town's population of 2,346, but the local chapter only had 125 members by parade time. According to the Klonklave minutes, Klan No. 6, through their Invitation Committee, made up of traveling salesmen Ellis Bentley, Harold Davis, and Ed Giles, extended invitations to nearby Klans to "assist" in the parade, which was originally planned for April 9, 1921. Despite a postponement due to weather, the Klansmen from "several different towns" joined the parade. With an increased number of hooded figures marching through Wharton's streets, they created the illusion that nearly everyone who could belong to the Klan, probably did, except those visible on the sidewalk. This sent a message that spectators had so far been left out from the large, yet exclusive group. The illusion of so many local members served as intimidation, which heightened the psychological violence, toward groups targeted by the Klan.⁵

⁵ Klonklave Minutes, March 31, 1921, and April 7, 1921, K6MB, K6R, WCHM; *WhSp*, April 8 1921, 1; *WhSp*, April 22, 1921, 1. For more on Klan chapters coordination in regard to acts of violence, see chapter four. Charter member, Ellis Burr Bentley was a thirty-nine-year old, married traveling salesman, local game warden, and Mason, who moved from Dallas county to Wharton (town) between 1910 and 1920. Born in Waller County, Texas, Harold Richard Davis, age thirty-five, also married, was a traveling produce salesman from Houston, Texas, where he had lived since before 1910. Edward "Ed" William Giles, age thirty-three and married, moved to Wharton from Eagle Lake, his residence in 1918, according to his war draft registration. He was born in Comfort, Texas, a German-American community, to a Confederate soldier from Tennessee and a German-immigrant mother. He too was a wholesale manager for the meat-packing company, Swift and Company. Although not specified in the minutes, the KKK likely postponed the parade because of this storm. According to the April 8 issue of the *Wharton Spectator*, a tornado briefly touched down in the town of Wharton on April 5, and did damage to several area homes and businesses. Several nearby tenant homes in Freedmantown were "demolished." Of the businesses, the Peoples Cotton Oil Company sustained the worst damage and the Southern Pacific train depot lost its roof. The homes of Joseph A. Hamilton, and his uncle Henry Schultz, see chapter four, lost their chimneys. The new white high school, completed the previous August and not yet insured for tornados, lost its windows, skylights, and

Coordination with nearby Klans indicated that local chapters established early communication and inner-organization cooperation of their activities. Since two of the processions marched to downtown from the two local train stations, the out-of-town participants likely drove their cars in or took a train and used the two local train depots, the Southern Pacific (S&P) and the Cane Belt, as a meeting place. Wharton's Klansmen also joined parades for other Klan chapters. According to the Klavern minutes, Wharton residents Albert H. Armstrong, Charles A. Davis, Spencer M. Clements, and Clements' brother-in-law Will Northington transferred their membership from the Bay City Stephen F. Austin Klan No. 5 to Klan No. 6 at the first meeting following the parade, although they had participated in the Wharton chapter from the beginning. They probably participated in Bay City's Klan parade on March 7, 1921. Northington may have also paraded with Eagle Lake's John King Davidson Klan No. 18. He, along with his brothers and parents, still lived on the Egypt Plantation, the same land his family had owned since the 1830s. It was just across the county line from Eagle Lake, where his brother-in-law was mayor. His cousin Walter Hudgins, also a member of Klan No. 6, walked the parade as his wife Ella and two children watched from his Model T.⁶

In Shannon's dramatic parade description, he displayed some of the changes seen

its auditorium was flooded. In general, the area suffered downed trees and powerlines, debris and wind damage, and possible crop damage.

⁶ Klavern Minutes, April 21, 1921, K6MB, K6R, WCHM; *WhSp*, April 22, 1921, 2; Edgar H. Hudgins, *Hudgins: Virginia to Texas* (Houston: Larksdale Publishing, 1983), 297, 298; Ray Spitzenberger, "Wharton," *Handbook of Texas Online* (hereafter *HOTO*), accessed August 19, 2017, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hfw01>; *WhSp*, March 7, 1921, 1; Charter Member List, K6MB, K6R, WCHM.

in Wharton's county seat as it struggled to become more contemporary. Used for the parade effect, modern conveniences of street lights and a new fire alarm, mounted on a nearby water storage tower, elevated the event's dramatic effect. Newspapers from outside the county that picked up the Klan story may not have known the electrical plant's recent fire that necessitated the new alarm. While less theatrical, the paved downtown roads and improved sidewalks made shopping in the town square more convenient for shoppers and auto drivers, but area rains on Wharton's flat terrain made drainage a constant problem. Although they often struggled to pay for them, the county seat offered white residents services of a water works, two nearby train depots, a library, and a brand new school, with up to date science and domestic science facilities. Its downtown also boasted of having a women's rest room, a Progressive-era convenience for rural white county women to relax when in town. Since the end of World War I, locals could purchase a Nash automobile from George H. Northington, Jr.'s Caney Valley Motor Company, or a Ford Roadster or Fordson tractor from Robert H. Vineyard Motor Company, located just off the square.⁷

⁷*WhSp*, June 25, 1920, 1; *WhSp*, January 4 1921, 1; *WhSp*, October 15, 1920, 1, 4, 10; *WhSp*, January 19, 24, 1919, 1; *WhSp*, February 27, 1920, 10; *HPost*, September 20, 1917, 6; Allison Weaver Faber, "Gendered Spaces: Reforming Courthouses in Twentieth Century Texas," conference paper, East Texas State Historical Association, Nacogdoches, Texas, October 10, 2015, in author's possession. The author thanks Faber for generously sharing her research. A rest room served as a segregated place for rest. Local merchants donated money for maintaining the space. For more on rest rooms in rural Texas, see Rebecca Sharpless, *Fertile Ground, Narrow Choices: Women on Texas cotton Farms, 1900-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1999), 225. Robert Harrison Vineyard joined Klan No. 6 on May 5, 1921 at the age of 36. He grew up on the Fleetwood Plantation, once owned by his maternal grandfather. His father Robert E. Vineyard, who joined the KKK on April 21, 1921, came to Texas from Missouri as a child in the late 1850s, settled in San Patricio County, and married Mattie R. Harrison, the oldest daughter of and administer of the estate of planter Burr Albert Harrison. She also inherited thousands of acres from her father's cousin William F. S. Alexander. R. H. Vineyard was also

As the county seat, Wharton benefited most from the White Man's Union Association's thirty-year rule of county government. Since its reestablished white political supremacy in local affairs, Wharton's WMUA focused their energy on making the county whiter and modernizing the county's economic and transportation infrastructure. Railroad construction offered an opportunity to do both. By 1904, new rail lines, the Cane Belt and the S&P Sunset Route, crisscrossed the county at the town of Wharton, and tied the local economy to coastal ports and larger markets, such as Houston, Corpus Christi, and Brownsville. Enticement literature published and distributed by S&P, with local growers' association cooperation, promoted the area as a farmer's bounty of sun, soil, and rain in the American Midwest and Europe, and emphasized get-rich-quick profits of Texas rice made easy by the region's modern irrigation canals, wells, and equipment. This allowed the area to capitalize on the already booming in-migration coming to Texas from other parts of the United States and Europe. As newcomers came looking for their growers' paradise, they settled near rail stations and new towns on land purchased or rented from the old plantation families, who benefitted from land prices made high by rail access and demand.⁸

the nephew of Klansmen and planters William M. Stafford and Richard H. D. Sorrel. The town of Boling, Texas, in Wharton County, was platted in 1900 by father Robert E. Vineyard and named for sister. The community of Burr, Texas, also in the county, was officially established in 1915 and grew out of one of Burr Harrison's plantations. George H. Northington, Jr. joined Klan No. 6 as a charter member with his brothers and Hudgins cousins. His father joined on May 5, 1921. He also owned the Norton Opera House which he rented to the Klan in February 1921.

⁸ "Wharton," *HTO; WhSp*, July 18, 1924, 1; *HPost*, December 19, 1909, 38; *Brownsville Daily Herald*, February 5, 1906, 2; *Special Laws of the State of Texas*, Twenty-ninth Legislature, Regular and First Called Sessions (Austin: State Printing Company, 1905), 502; Thomas Ulvan Taylor, *Rice Irrigation in Texas* (Von Boeckmann, Schutze & Company, 1902) 27-38; Barbara J. Rozek, *Come to Texas: Attracting Immigrants, 1865-1915* (College Station: Texas A&M

In addition to new infrastructure, Wharton's WMUA, and the white political organizations in its sister counties, wanted to attract white farmers to help solidify their political control with a white voting majority. Increasing whiteness also fit their racialized view of progress. One 1896 article stated the county belonged to "the forward movement," with progress marked by new construction of homes, previously unimproved acres in cultivation, and new towns incorporated. Other Texas newspapers

University Press, 2003), 160-163; Richard J. Orsi, *Sunset Limited: The Southern Pacific Railroad and the Development of the American West, 1850-1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 314-315, 338-341, 566 fn. 74. S&P, in coordination the U.S. Department of Agriculture extensions and local growers' associations, published its *Texas Rice Book* in 1900. When this and other promotional materials on rice production were published, most of the promised modern irrigation equipment and canals had yet to be built. According to Orsi, Southern Pacific subsidized the USDA's extension program by running demonstration trains and moving scientists, agents, and consultants to rural areas. Orsi also argued that the company worked in cooperation with Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College, now Texas A&M University, and helped it maintain its state funding by preventing a legislative attempt to cut its federally supported programs, such as in 1913. For more information about rice culture in Texas, see Pete Daniels, *Breaking the Land: The Transformation of Cotton, Tobacco, and Rice Cultures Since 1880* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986). Daniels described the irrigation systems, including canals, water wells, pumps, used in Wharton and Colorado Counties. Daniels argued that, compared to other crops, cotton culture remained dependent on race-based cheap labor and antiquated credit structures; hence, it discouraged modern mechanization. He also argued that rice culture was the least southern because southern farmers seemed least open to its use of modern mechanization. More work needs to be done on regional rice production as a modernizing mechanism in this very southern region of Texas. Cane Belt was an extension of the Galveston, Harrisburg, and San Antonio Railway. William J. Reading, "Cane Belt Railroad," *HOTO*, accessed August 19, 2017, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/eqc02>; Because of its antebellum economic importance in cotton and sugar production, the county had been included in plans for the included the Houston Tap and Brazoria Railway (H.T. & B), part of the earliest railway in Texas, the Buffalo Bayou, Brazos, and Colorado Railway. Sugar planters and bankers made up most of the H.T. & B. investors, a list that included John W. Brooks, W. J. Hutchins, John Duncan, Benjamin Terry, and Thomas W. House, father of Edward M. House, an advisor to President Woodrow Wilson. *Texas Almanac, for 1860, With Statistics, Historical and Biographical Sketches, Relating to Texas* (Galveston: Galveston News, 1860), 216-220. The war interrupted construction, the company was sold, and the line renamed to Galveston, Harrisburg, and San Antonio Railway, which eventually ran along the northeast corner of the county through East Bernard.

specifically promoted immigration as the solution to the “Negro Problem,” more stable elections, and decreased racial violence, which white editors blamed on the mere presence of blacks and not the white lynch mobs who committed the violence.⁹

According to historian James Loewen, regional efforts to shift racial demographics fit a national trend of establishing sundown towns, which he defined as “any organized jurisdiction that for decades kept African Americans or other groups from living in it and was thus “all-white” on purpose. Loewen cites examples from across the United States of towns which either violently pushed out or kept African Americans, Jews, Catholics, and Asian Americans from residing inside their boundaries. Then, city leaders promoted its all-white citizenship as part of the town’s other amenities, such as a rail station, ice plant, and public library to bring in more white residents and businesses. In the thirty years between the WMUA and the second Klan, the overwhelming shift of Wharton County’s demographics reflect the same sundown mentality, even if African Americans remained county residents. As the county’s total population increased by 220 percent, the number of white residents, according to the

⁹*Fort Worth Daily Democrat*, January 31, 1883, 3; *Fort Worth Daily Gazette*, December 18, 1888, 1; *GDN*, April 7, 1889, 1; *GDN*, January 8, 1889, 1; *Fort Worth Daily Gazette*, January 7, 1889, 2; *GDN*, April 1, 1891, 1; *Brenham Daily Banner*, December 29, 1892, 2; *Velasco Times*, December 2, 1892, 2; *GDN*, December 5, 1896, 5; *GDN*, August 12, 1894, 4; *GDN*, August 1, 1896, 1. The 1896 article referred to Wharton specifically, and overstated the county’s demographic shift when it wrote, “A few years ago the negro population largely predominated in this county, but the steady influx of white immigration has changed these conditions and today the white population almost if not quite equals the colored population.” The article followed this to claim the county had the “largest cotton crop in prospect that has been harvested here in ten years,” an assurance that WMUA’s efforts had not hampered the county’s plantation-centered economy by pushing out black laborers. For more on state efforts to increase white immigration to Texas, see Rozek, *Come to Texas: Attracting Immigrants, 1865-1915*.

decennial census, swelled 1020 percent, outpacing the state and its neighboring counties. For comparison, the white population in Harris County, which contained the city of Houston, grew by 505 percent, as its total population outpaced Wharton's, growing 401 percent. More telling, the once eighty percent black county majority diminished to thirty-two percent by 1920 as many local African Americans moved to Houston, Waco, or cities further north, for better employment and educational opportunities for their families. Its sister plantation counties of Fort Bend, Brazoria, and Matagorda, all of which had black majorities in 1890 and white men's political associations, also flipped by 1920.¹⁰

¹⁰ James W. Loewen, *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* (New York City: New Press, 2005), 16-20, 61-63, 17 (quote); Bernadette Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration: The Movement of Rural African Americans to Houston, 1900-1941* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2013), 31-32, 246, 249, 254; Gregg Andrews, *Thyra J. Edwards: Black Activist in the Global Freedom Struggle* (Columbia, University of Missouri Press, 2011), 1, 7-8, 12. According to Andrews' biography of black labor organizer Thyra Edwards, she was born in Wharton, where her parents worked as teachers. They lived and taught in Glen Flora and Hungerford, both in the county, before moving to Houston before 1920. In Pruitt's exhaustively researched *The Other Great Migration*, she covers rural-to-urban black migration to Houston from rural counties in Texas and Louisiana, the significance in-migration had on African-American community building and economic autonomy. Of the numerous individuals she follows, she noted two families having moved from Wharton County. Physician Dr. Benjamin Jesse lived, with his wife Mrs. Jennie Covington, and practiced medicine there sometime between completing Meharry Medical School in Tennessee in 1901 and moving to Houston in 1903. Insurance salesman Hobart Taylor, Sr., described by Pruitt as "perhaps the most successful African American businessperson in the city," had been born and raised on the Wharton County-side of the Freedmantown of Kendleton. A few years before his birth, his father Jack Taylor served in the Fort Bend County elected office when the Jaybirds violently overthrew Taylor and the other Republicans in 1888 and 1889. Hobart, Jr., served special counsel to President Lynden Baines Johnson. The 1890 county populations and percentages for area African Americans: Brazoria, 8523, 74 percent; Fort Bend, 8981, 85 percent; Matagorda 8621, 66 percent. In 1890 Harris County had a black population of 36 percent. The 1920 populations and percentages for African Americans in the region: Brazoria, 6574, 32 percent; Fort Bend, 9996, 44 percent; and Matagorda, 3974, 24 percent. For comparison, African Americans comprised 23 percent of Harris County and 16 percent of Texas.

Founding members of the WMUA and future Klansmen directly profited from this development as bankers or land developers, and through kinship, inherited land wealth, and the WMUA, their net of power expanded to include like-minded newcomers. Although plantations remained economically important, land speculation to develop new towns became an economic avenue for white landowners. As an example, Robert A. Armstrong, an Alabama transplant in the 1880s, co-wrote the WMUA constitution with Sheriff Hamilton Dickson, Green C. Duncan, Judge Wiley Croom, Tol Taylor of Don Tol, and Isaac V. Dennis, all of whom owned plantations. Later, he, along with Dickson, future Sheriff Clarence D. Kemp, and Robert E. Vineyard, bought up land as infrastructure projects developed in what became the new townships of Iago and Boling. The land he purchased for \$4 to \$12 per acre, he sold within a few years, to Mid-west newcomers George C. Mick and his sons for \$25. Both Kemp and Armstrong's son Albert help establish Klan No. 6 as charter members. Robert, his other three sons, his sons-in-law, and his grandson joined the H.B. Dickson Klan before the parade in April, but Robert came in as an honorary member since he had belonged to the 1860s KKK in Alabama. His daughter, Mary Belle Armstrong Ahldag, wife of Henry Ahldag, served as secretary and treasurer of the local Grand League of Protestant Women No. 61, an organization with strong ties to the KKK.¹¹

¹¹ Klonklave Minutes, February 3, 1921, K6MB, K6R, WCHM; *WhSp*, August 13, 1920, 10; "Constitution of the White Man's Union Association of Wharton County," WMUA Secretary's Book 1889-1914, pages 1-12, WMUA of Wharton County Records (hereafter WMUA), WCHM ; Daniel, xi; *HPost*, May 22, 1901, 21; *WhSp*, February 29, 1924, 6; Kathleen M. Blee, *Women of the Klan: Racism and Gender in the 1920s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 25. Born in 1848, Robert A. Armstrong moved from Alabama, with his wife, children, and extended kin, to Wharton County in the 1880s. They quickly integrated into

Midwest farmers brought with them agricultural practices new to plantation area, but shared local views on race, so gained easy acceptance in Wharton County's white political and social structure, including the KKK. Almus and George, sons of George C. Mick, worked on Klan No. 6's Parade Arrangement Committee, with Albert H. Armstrong, county treasurer John Norris, deputy sheriff Taylor Kemp, Walter Hudgins, Donald and Bowie Duncan, and several others.¹² Originally from Ohio, the Mick family moved to Kansas, then to Missouri, before settling in Wharton County in 1905. Once there, they tried rice cultivation but soon turned to truck farming, which grew a variety of produce for nearby markets. G. C. Mick also bought the first tractor in the county. Both truck farms and mechanized farm equipment diverged from traditional southern agriculture that depended heavily on cash crops, particularly cotton, and was slow to accept mechanization. But, the Mick family, including son Fred, found their place in the local power structure and essentially controlled their part of Wharton County. In Iago,

local elite society, and married into the area's long-established planter-class families. In a newspaper series, published in mid-1920, Armstrong reminisced on county history since his arrival in 1883. In this series, he remembered how much he made on the Iago land deal of over 900 acres. He continued to speculate on land prices as a real estate agent. According to a *Houston Post* advertisement, he listed an "Old Caney plantation" of 646 acres with timber, "good tenant houses," and a rail line running through it for \$17 an acre.

¹² Klomklave Minutes, March 31, 1921, K6MB, K6R, WCHM. According to the minutes, Almus and George Mick joined the Klan the same day they were named to the parade arrangements committee. The Parade Arrangements Committee also included Walter B. Grizzard, Shaderick Pinckney Rowe, John H. Herring, Jim Forgason, James A. Clements, Oliver J. Hodge. The Donald and Bowie Duncan's father Green C. Duncan co-wrote Wharton County's WMUA Constitution with Robert Armstrong, father of Albert H. Armstrong. Along with the Mick family, Taylor Kemp's father Clarence controlled a significant portion of Iago. Albert Armstrong, C. D. Kemp, and Rowe also made up the Klokann, the investigatory arm of the chapter. Taylor Kemp was Klarogo. Grizzard served as the Klavern Night-hawk and his only daughter was the fiancé of the Exalted Cyclops James R. Cox's son.

the family also owned the cotton gin, blacksmith shop, livery, and local general store, and installed the first electrical plant in the county's southeast quadrant. Almus platted the town and designed the company buildings, the local school, and the town's only church, that all the local Protestant congregations shared. The oldest son George married Loudie Taylor, niece of Don Tol plantation owners Tyre and Tol Taylor. Not only did all three Mick brothers join Klan No. 6, but so did their sons-in-law, who lived in the area, and Loudie's brothers.¹³

Immigrants, a significant concern of the national KKK, made up a noticeable portion of Wharton County's population boom. As stated earlier, the WMUA actively encouraged immigrants to move to Wharton County to shift the racial ratio to their favor, which increased the county's foreign-born residents from two percent to eleven percent of the total population. Swedes, Germans, Austrians, Norwegians, and Danes, all largely Protestant, rented farms, or built homes and businesses in the new towns, along the S&P, on the west side of the Colorado River. The most notable example, El Campo quickly became the county's second largest town. On the east side of the river, in the far northwest corner of the county, Czechs concentrated in East Bernard, where they built Wharton County's first Catholic church. Russian, Polish, and German Jews resided in

¹³ Ibid.; Obituary for G. C. Mick, *WhSp*, August 16, 1918, 1; Merle R. Hudgins, "Iago, TX," *HOTO*, accessed November 3, 2016, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hni01>. George G. Mick married Loudie Lee Taylor, daughter of Marcos D. Taylor (1852-1915), and the niece of S. Tyre and W. Toliver Taylor, the same man who helped write the WMUA constitution in 1889, listed above. Loudie and her siblings divided Tol's share of Don Tol estate, after his death in 1926. He never married.

the county seat and El Campo.¹⁴

Both the local Klan and the WMUA viewed immigrants through a racial lens, and their acceptance of immigrants depended greatly on their converged interests, both political and economic. As these groups arrived, the WMUA added them to its primary voter rolls, and allowed them a political voice as part of their white privilege, including Jewish men of voting age. Their inclusion in the local white primary, controlled by this private political organization, essentially bestowed whiteness by the old guard and signified a symbolic acceptance of these communities despite any perceived foreignness. Eventually, as new voting precincts were created, these new immigrant communities gained policing powers when they elected their own as constables and justices of the peace, while the county's concentration of power remained in the county seat.¹⁵

¹⁴ *United States Federal Census Data, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930*, Digitally transcribed by Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research. Edited, verified by Michael Haines. Compiled, edited and verified by Social Explorer, online database, accessed July 23, 2016, <https://www.socialexplorer.com>; "St. Phillip the Apostle Catholic," "Holy Cross Catholic, East Bernard," "Shearith Israel Synagogue" and "First Lutheran, El Campo" folders, Churches Vertical Files, WCHM; John L. Davis, "Danevang, TX," *HOTO*, accessed January 2, 2015, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hnd04>; Spitzenberger, "East Bernard, TX," *HOTO*, accessed January 2, 2015, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hje03>. The county seat had a smaller immigrant population compared to El Campo. As a result, Lutherans built three churches in El Campo, divided by ethnicity, beginning in the 1890s. At the same time, Wharton saw its single Lutheran church built by assimilated Germans, most of whom had lived in Texas since before the Civil War. In contrast to East Bernard, the Catholic congregants in Wharton met in the local movie theater in the 1920s.

¹⁵ WMUA Minutes, 1913-1935, WMUA of Wharton County, WCHM. For the WMUA, political inclusion dangled voting privilege as a carrot to join the white power structure. It also allowed the organization to keep political dissent and factionalism within the organization and prevent outside coalitions with black Republicans so whites remained in local office. According to the minutes, any white man who ran against the WMUA chosen candidate in county elections was to be ostracized. Although more research needs to be done on the WMUA, some evidence suggests the WMUA favored violence over social exclusion. See, *Cameron Herald* (Cameron, Texas), October 27, 1898, 4.

Polish, Russian, and German Jews lived as socially insulated but became an integrated part of the business community in both El Campo and Wharton. They participated in World War I war work, worked on civic committees, and donated to local improvements such as the downtown rest room. They built the Shearith Israel Synagogue, completed in 1921, one block off the town square. Newspaper editor Shannon approvingly followed construction in the *Spectator* and frequently included articles which explained Jewish holidays. Illustrating their acceptance in Wharton, albeit with some limitations, Jewish men belonged to the local Masons and held the highest local position of Worshipful Master. Despite the cultural difference of these immigrant groups, the WMUA defined these men as white, allowed them to join the organization, to vote in their private primaries, and approved their requests to run for office. Meyer Denn, a descendent of Joe Schwartz, a local influential merchant, recalled stories shared by family members about the local Klan, including Schwartz recognizing the shoes of the Klansmen as they proceeded through town. Memories passed down to him failed to indicate any hostilities between the order and Jewish community. In the only story he could recall, a Jewish father received a note from the KKK that uncharacteristically tried to pressure him to consent to the marriage of his daughter to a Gentile. Whether or not, the latter story actually happened is unclear; however, it seems indicative of the general relationship found in the sources. For example, the county elected Joe Schwartz to the school board in the 1920s. In addition, Jewish merchants held offices in the Chamber of Commerce, school board, city council, and local merchant organization with

Klansmen.¹⁶

In one of the first acts of Klan No. 6, William A. McCown, a thirty-two-year old traveling salesman for a wholesale house, suggested the first major action of Klan No. 6. He suggested the chapter write to ask their state representative and state senator to support the “Jap-Bill” pending in the legislature. He also suggested the Kligrapp write to Kleagle George Kimbro so he could get other chapters to do the same. The Anti-Japanese Land Ownership bill, signed into law by Governor Pat Neff, barred Japanese “aliens” from buying or leasing land in Texas from that point on, but did not take away land they already owned. The Texas American Legion had publicly endorsed the bill as well. Many local Legionnaires had joined Klan No. 6 either as charter members or in its earlier months, before the parade. Of the original charter members, nearly ten percent, including four of the thirteen officers, belonged to the American Legion, established in the county the year before. The overlap between the two groups seemed a logical fit, at least before the national American Legion officially adopted an Anti-Klan resolution in

¹⁶ *WhSp*, March 13, 1925, 8; Barry Halvorson, “Foundations of Faith,” *WhSp*, May 7 2008, accessed August 19, 2015, http://www.journal-spectator.com/front_page/article_a540ba68-abac-503f-8e06-398ce26633cc.html; “Shearith Israel Synagogue,” folder, Churches Vertical Files, WCHM; Meyer Denn, phone interview, March 10, 2016. Shearith Israel Synagogue was located on the corner of Burleson and Rusk streets, page 5, of Wharton (town) 1929 Sanborn maps, WCHM. Neither story could be verified as neither were reported to any printed source; however, evidence has not been found to suggest that either are untrue. Denn also suggested that the local Jewish men, who were in direct competition with Gentile white and black businessmen, may have been shielded from threats because they were Masons. Sometime after the 1920s, Joe Schwartz also hired the first black sales woman for a non-black store in Wharton. See, Fred Zeidman, “‘Boxes’ for Israel: The Personal Journey of a Jewish Republican,” *American Politics and the Jewish Community: The Jewish Role in American Life*, eds. Bruce Zuckerman, Dan Schnur, Lisa Answell (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2003): 126.

1923. Before then, the local Legion encouraged “all veterans” to join, but restricted membership to whites only. They actively promoted patriotic nationalism, and even used the same phrase of “100 percent Americanism,” as the Klan, although they officially did not have restrictions against religion and nativity. By the end of 1920, the American Legion had even gained a reputation for violence against African-Americans, unions, and political radicals in some parts of the country. At the time of the parade, 21 of 125 Klansmen belonged to the American Legion. Unsurprisingly, the Klavern voted unanimously to support McCown’s suggestion.¹⁷

In contrast, the WMUA excluded Russian laborers, Japanese rice farmers, Chinese laborers, Tejanos, and Mexican immigrants from whiteness by barring access to WMUA membership. For all but those of Mexican descent, their stay in the county was short, in-between the decennial census, and their communities remained limited in size. Russian and Chinese laborers were brought in to work for A. P. Borden on a USDA experimental camphor farm on the Pierce estate in 1907 and 1908. Working through the Southern Pacific’s colonization agent, Japanese investors established rice farms in

¹⁷ Klonklave Minutes, March 3, 1921, K6MB, K6R, WCHM; *HPost*, March 12, 1921, 1; *HPost*, April 2, 1921, 1; *GDN*, February 4, 1921, 4; *Dallas Express*, August 2, 1919, 1; *Dallas Express*, October 18, 1919, 10; *GDN*, June 30, 1920, 1; *Marshall News Messenger*, January 9, 1920, 4; *San Antonio Evening News*, February 2, 1920, 7; *Brownwood Bulletin*, October 19, 1923, 1. The American Civil Liberties Union equated the American Legion to the New Klan in 1927. See, *Greenville News*, (Greenville, South Carolina), May 16b, 1927, 1. Most of the pre-parade members also belonged to the Masons or had family in the fraternal lodge, and shared membership in the local Woodmen of the World, Knights of Pythias, or Lions Club. A complete list of local Masons, the American Legion, and other organizations have not been located to assess how much these groups overlapped with the Klan. Membership has been largely gleaned from newspaper articles on degrees and social functions, and from the Masons file at the WCHM.

Harris, Brazoria, and Wharton Counties around 1903, after the Japanese Consul General published, at the request of Texas city leaders, about the area's rice-growing capabilities. Rihei Onishi, a Japanese journalist and entrepreneur, leased land from Borden near Pierce, and brought in Japanese laborers before the U.S. State department prohibited it in the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907. Onishi came with his extended family, much like the Southern planters of the antebellum period, and they filed their first papers for naturalization in the United States. This and a poll tax payment, according to the Texas Constitution, allowed them the right to vote in general elections. Evidence indicated that an Onishi man, whose first was illegible, paid his poll taxes, however, if he voted in the WMUA primaries, which were considered private, is unclear. The WMUA records fail to mention it and the Japanese laborers were not listed on the tax rolls. No Japanese names appeared on the rolls by 1920, and the family moved to Harris County. In June of 1921, at the height of area Klan violence, his brother Iwajiro Onishi answered a knock on the door of his home and was shot to death in front of his twelve-year-old son. The police never made any arrests.¹⁸

¹⁸ Merle R. Hudgins, "Mackay, TX," *HOTO*, accessed November 3, 2016, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/htm02>; U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Annual Report For the Year Ended June 30, 1907," in *House Documents, 1st Session, Vol 44, U. S. Congress* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1908), 303-304; *HPost*, February 13, 1904, 5; *Brownsville Herald*, July 22, 1905, 1; *WhSp*, August 31, 1917, 6; *HPost*, December 19, 1918, 8; Thomas K. Walls, *Japanese Texans* (San Antonio: University of Texas Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio, 1987, second edition 1996), 61-74; Marilyn Dell Brady, *The Asian Texans* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), 39-59; Sut Oishi, "History of the Onishi Family," *Family Stories*, sponsored by Japanese American Citizens League, Houston Chapter, found online at http://hirasaki.net/Family_Stories/Onishi/Onishi.htm; Kiyohsi K. Kawakami, "Japanese on American Farms," *The Independent*, 59 (October 26, 1905): 961-967; *Eagle*, June 11, 1921, 1; *Galveston News Tribune*, June 11, 1921, 1. In regards to the camphor farm, claims that Chinese laborers were brought in come from numerous local sources, including the author of the Mackay Handbook entry. These secondary sources do not cite a

By 1920, Mexican immigrants comprised the county's largest foreign-born population. Although the United States census did not specifically record Mexican ethnicity until 1920, combing the enumerated censuses from 1850 to 1920 for Spanish surnames and individuals either born in Mexico or to parents from Mexico showed few in Wharton between 1850 and 1880, with only one person in the former and seven in the latter census. By 1900, however, Wharton County's Mexican and Tejano population had risen to over four hundred or 2.44 percent of the county's total population. Most worked as farm hands and lived in isolated communities on large landholders' properties, such as the Shanghai Pierce ranch or the Don Tol Plantation, owned by brothers Tyre and Tolliver Taylor, who had converted from convict labor. From stories told by the Taylor family, the plantation's name came from Mexican farm hands' use of the word Don as a title of status for Tol Taylor.¹⁹

primary source, nor do they explain how A. P. Borden or the USDA skirted laws that barred Chinese immigrants from entering the country, or if these Chinese immigrants moved from a domestic location. Rihei Onishi, as a journalist, covered of the 1905 Portsmouth Conference that ended the Russo-Japanese War and the Paris Peace Conference in 1918. He, his brother, and a cousin grew short-grain rice, when most local farmers grew long-grain rice adapted from Honduras, in several counties, but settled their families in Webster, Texas, in Harris County. Members of the Onishi family remain in the Houston area. As members of the Japanese elite, including a former member of the Japanese government, they did not work on the farms, but imported labor from Japan. Onishi brought "picture" wives who exchanged photos with the workers and married in absentia grooms in Japan, after the 1907 agreement. The U.S. government used an immigrant family provision, according to some historians, because they favored Japanese over Chinese laborers but wanted to prevent Japanese men from taking non-Japanese wives in the U.S. The Asiatic Barred Zone Act of 1917 and the U.S. Immigration Act of 1924 blocked this provision. For more on U.S. Immigration policy, see Catherine Lee, *Fictive Kinship: Family Reunification and the Meaning of Race and Nation in American Immigration* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2013).

¹⁹ Neil Foley, *White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 34-37; "Temporary Admission of Illiterate Mexican Laborers," *Hearings Before the Committee on immigration and Naturalization*, U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, 1920, 21, 66-72; W. A. Flachmeier,

Many Anglo landowners and railroad companies wanted Mexican laborers to come to the area, but clearly felt individuals from Mexico were more akin to African Americans and not white. During World War I, rice and cotton farmers along the Colorado River asked Congress for liberal regulations to “save” their crops as poor whites and African Americans left for the war, oil fields, or for better jobs in the cities. U.S. congressmen from Texas argued not to place limits on Mexican immigration because their constituents needed to “use” these workers for heavy labor of clearing land and picking cotton. In his 1920 testimony to Congress about immigration restrictions, Ninth District’s U.S. Representative Joseph J. Mansfield, from Eagle Lake, insisted Mexican farm workers were migratory and “naturally” went home after payment, as if he were discussing flocks of birds. Between 1905 and 1920, Wharton’s William B. Barbee, the son of a local Judge and a future Klansman, worked as a labor agent in Brownsville. For ten dollars “per capita,” he recruited Mexican workers, who were promised \$1.50 a day, and sent them by railcar to work as farm labor or laying track for railroads in the Brazoria, Matagorda, and Wharton area. The area’s quick population growth showed in how local decennial census workers mangled Spanish names, such as “Verial” for Villarreal. Census takers often marked out racial designations of “M,” meaning mulatto or mixed race, or “Mex” and replaced it with “W” for white to comply with official decennial racial categories. Furthermore, the WMUA unofficially barred

"Mansfield, Joseph Jefferson," *HOTO*, accessed November 24, 2017, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fma37>. Mansfield wanted cheap labor for his district, to be “used there” but drew the line at allowing in Chinese labor, claiming “that would be the time to ‘holler,’ of course.”

Mexican men of voting age, regardless of nativity, from voting in their private primary. When they made the decision official in 1930, they made a distinction between Mexican and “pure” Spanish, which allowed a Spanish-born physician to continue to exercise his privilege.²⁰

As the 1920 Klan began, over two thousand Mexican and Mexican Americans lived in the Wharton, comprising 8.44 percent of the county’s total population. Officially the Texas Constitution recognized only two races, white and black, but Anglos across Texas typically disagreed and applied the rules and rhetoric of white supremacy. In a speech to encourage cooperation of Anglo and German Texans for war efforts, Brigadier General Jacob F. Wolters, and brother of local Klansman Edmund T. Wolters of Lane City, delineated the country’s enemies by race, underscoring Germans’ whiteness and

²⁰ *HPost*, October 10, 1905, 8; *GDN*, September 2, 1905, 6; *Brownsville Daily Herald* (hereafter *BvH*) September 18, 1905, 1 (quote); WMUA Minutes, 1913-1935, WCHM. Dr. Bartelome Valls, who did not join the Klan, had been born in the Spanish consulate in New Orleans. His father was the Consul. The Brownsville article essentialized Mexican workers to a commodified part of production, to be “secured” and “delivered,” and never referred to these workers as anything but labor, laborers, or “per capita” without mentioned of even gender or age. Born in 1876 in Crocket, Texas, he and his family moved to Wharton before the WMUA takeover, of which his father was a part. His father, an attorney, county judge and Confederate veteran, served as a state inspector of the prison system, during which he was investigated for not reporting prisoner abuse, including starvation and beatings, after two prisoners died. His sister, Fannie Barbee Hughes was a journalist and suffragist, and ran for U.S. Congress in 1922, losing in the Democratic primary. William moved to Brownsville in 1903, at the age of 27, and at different times, speculated in livestock, ran a livery, and ran a hotel. In 1905, he married Junia Taliaferro Roseborough and had a daughter. By 1910, he had divorced, lived in Wharton as a farmer and stockman, and faced assault charges in Victoria, of which he was acquitted. In 1913 he built a \$5000 home in Wharton. Three years later, at the age of 40, he remarried. In 1920, after his father died in 1917, he inherited his father’s estate. He and his wife Lucie Knight Neff, of the sugar planter Knight family in Terrebonne Parish, Louisiana, had six children. *BvH*, December 12, 1903, 4; *BvH*, July 12, 1904, 4; *BvH*, September 18, 1905, 1; *BvH*, June 23, 1923, 3; *BvH*, October 3, 1905, 2, 4; *BvH* February 5, 1906, 2; *HPost*, June 9, 1910, 9; *HPost*, July 14, 1913, 10. Debbie Mauldin Cottrell, "Hughes, Fannie May Barbee," *HOTO*, accessed May 3, 2014, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fhu71>.

betrayal of their government for collusion with non-whites. He emphasized the American fight was not against the German people, but “the imperialist government, which was willing to enter into an alliance with Japan and Mexico, both non-Caucasian races, and deprive us in Texas of our homes and surrender them into the keeping of the Mexicans and Japanese.” Wharton County Anglos, particularly those living in towns and away from ranches, seemed unsure how to racially define Mexican immigrants or Tejanos, but clearly excluded them from whiteness. Anglos applied the same segregation rules and coercion methods on area Mexican communities as they applied to African Americans, including residential restrictions, occupational limitations, and heavy policing by law enforcement officers, often led by Sheriff Kemp. In addition, Spectator articles regarding the community focused solely on criminal activity, including gambling, fighting, burglary, and bootlegging, which illustrated the same criminalization in the press of Mexicans that Shannon used to portray African Americans.²¹

²¹ One notable difference between how Shannon wrote about or reprinted stories concerning Mexicans and blacks was the inclusion of community events for African Americans, such as school news, church events, or Juneteenth celebrations. Mexican and Mexican-American population numbers and percentages presented here are estimates based on hand counts of enumerated census records of Wharton County. Census enumerators frequently under counted rural areas, poor communities, and populations not considered white by enumerators. Without an enumerated census for 1890, as nearly all were destroyed by a fire, a hand count of Texas born individuals with Spanish surnames was not possible so the 25 listed counted only individuals born in Mexico. Of the 2050 Latinos in Wharton in 1920, Tejanos with Texas-born parents made up 13 percent, nearly 30 percent were Tejanos born to immigrant parents, and nearly 58 percent were immigrants. Horton Foote wrote about a childhood friend, Ernesto Trevino, who attended his school. This indicated that the town of Wharton did not have a segregated school for Mexican and Mexican American children. One reason may be that the Mexican and Tejano population was small inside town of Wharton. Foote remembered asking his mother if he could invite Trevino to his birthday party, to which his mother affirmatively replied, but cautioned Foote that Trevino may not come. He did attend but moved away soon after. *WhSp*, April 13, 1917, 7 (quote); *WhSp*, February 11, 1921, 1; *WhSp*, October 12, 1923, 1; *WhSp*, March 13, 1925, 1; *HPost*, July 30, 1917, 5. Brigadier Jacob F. Wolters, born 1871 in New Ulm, Texas,

Eugenicists and second Imperial Wizard Hiram W. Evans viewed Mexicans, regardless of nativity, as the inevitable adverse result of races mixing in the metaphorical “melting pot.” Madison Grant claimed the Mexican Revolution illustrated the “incapacity of self-government” which resulted from “the racial mixture” of Spanish and Indian “blood.” He added that the children of parents of two different races “reverted to the more ancient, generalized, and lower type.” This illogical foundation for anti-miscegenation laws also stirred fears of national supremacy faltering with white supremacy. Evans grouped Mexicans with southern and eastern Europeans, and railed that the United States “must close the door to the diseased minds and bodies and souls of the people of foreign lands [To] the South of us thousands of Mexicans . . . are waiting a chance to cross the Rio Grande.”²²

Although local reports have not yet surfaced, the hooded order did target Latino individuals and Mexican communities elsewhere. The Colorado KKK burned crosses at the edges of sugar beet towns’ “adobe colonies” as visual reminders of racial boundaries.

joined the Texas National Guard in 1897, patrolled the Mexican border with the 1st Texas Cavalry during the Spanish-American War, was appointed Brigadier General 1 April 1918. Leading the 56th Cavalry Brigade after World War I, he established martial law at the request of several Texas governors, most notably during the Longview race riot of 1919, the Galveston longshoreman strike of 1920, and oil fields of Mexia, Borger, and east Texas. Fort Wolters near Mineral Wells was named after him. He was an avid anti-prohibitionist, and ran as that party’s candidate for the U.S. Senate in 1912, but worked with the Anti-Saloon League for Governor William P. Hobby’s gubernatorial race. He also partnered with Jonathan Lane, namesake of Lane City and uncle of Buckshot Lane, in a Houston law practice. *HPost*, September 22, 1915, 26; David S. Walkup, "Wolters, Jacob Franklin," *HOTO*, accessed November 24, 2017, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fwo05>.

²² Madison Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race: Or the Racial Basis of European History* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1916), 17-18; Evans quoted in Rubén Donato, *Mexicans and Hispanos in Colorado Schools and Communities, 1920-1960* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), 51-53.

Similarly, in Texas, the San Antonio Klan tacked up signs to explicitly warn Mexicans not to come into certain parts of town. Upon rumors of planned bank heists, the Waco Klan conducted an elaborate spy system on the community. Other acts may not have been specifically attributed to the Klan but employed the same method of violence used on Klan victims, as well as on farm labor. In the most common acts of 1920s Klan violence in Texas, a group of masked men kidnapped a victim, took them outside of town, then whipped them. They returned the victim to town, often undressed and with a coat of tar and feathers. In one such case, in Bryan, Texas, seven Anglo men confessed to flogging Manuel Moon, a Mexican soldier who served in the world war for an alleged insult of a white woman. Outside of Goliad, masked men kidnapped merchant and Mexican national Juan G. Sanchez and whipped him. When Lisandro Pena, the Mexican consul to Corpus Christi, went there to investigate, a dozen or more men, presumably Anglo, made racially disparaging remarks and told him to leave. Since most acts of Klan violence have been recorded by Anglo newspapers, victims marginalized within the pages probably would not have reported threats or whippings.²³

²³ Cynthia Orozco, *No Mexicans, Women, or Dogs Allowed: The Rise of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), 79; Martin Guevara Urbina, Joel E. Vela, and Juan O. Sánchez, eds., *Ethnic Realities of Mexican American: From Colonialism to 21st Century Globalization* (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas Publisher, 2014), 79-140; Katherine Kuehler Walters, "The Great War in Waco, Texas: African Americans, Race Relations, and the White Primary, 1916-1922" (Master's thesis, Southwest Texas State University, 2000), ; *Waco New Tribune*, August 23, 1923, 1; *HPost*, August 30, 1923, 1; Carlos M. Larralde and Richard Griswold del Castillo, "San Diego's Ku Klux Klan, 1920-1980," *San Diego Historical Society Quarterly* 46 (Spring/Summer 2000), accessed November 5, 2015, <http://www.sandiegohistory.org/journal/2000/april/klan/>; *El Paso Herald*, August 24, 1922, 2. White violence against Mexican nationals and Mexican Americans was commonplace during the period all along the border, so differentiating between Klan violence and other vigilantes has been particularly difficult for historians.

The term Anglo, an umbrella label for non-Latino, native born whites of English ancestry, was indicative of how demographic changes in Wharton County had complicated traditional racial boundaries and society at large had complicated racial definitions beyond the black-white binary which had described Wharton County and the South for so long. As American society grew more complex and included larger numbers of immigrants of various nationalities in more places, the Anglo Americans' socially constructed concept of race evolved to explain society in a way that would explain their concentrated power as righteous and argue as necessity for their continued control. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, American and English social scientists argued that the world contained dozens to hundreds of races and concentrated their efforts on creating a sort of cultural taxonomy to classify cultures according to how they defined modern progress or "civilization." Their definitions of progress, civilization, culture, and race were self-reflecting, meaning they defined these terms to reflect their own culture as the superior standard. This essentially reified their white supremacy and labeled it Anglo-Saxon culture, made up of the English language, Protestantism, parliamentary government, capitalism, and scientific, historical, and military achievements. To clarify, the new ideas reinforced the old. They did not question their perceptions of their own white supremacy or the societal methods used for centuries to enforce their economic and political control, whether local or global. Instead they used pseudo-science to explain their long-held beliefs and justify their power as biological and inherent. This scientific racism went beyond individual appearance, such as skin color or hair texture, to include nationality, ethnicity, class, language, religion,

and contributions to Anglo-based cultural definitions of science, music, art, government, and technology to complicate white supremacy and declare it Anglo-Saxon supremacy.²⁴

By 1920, this modern construction of race had become mainstream in the homes of American-born Protestant middle- and upper-class families. This concept undergirded support for Jim Crow segregation and voting restrictions, and IQ tests. It also spurred the Eugenics movement. Combining scientific racism and Social Darwinism's survival of the fittest, eugenicists promoted physical, mental, moral, and marital fitness, and culling out the "unfit" through sterilization and careful marital choices, as a way to improving the white race and, they argued, society overall. Popular literature of the period, considered scientific and scholarly, further stoked fears of the great Anglo nations,

²⁴ Although historians have acknowledged the influence of scientific racism in American society in Klan historiography, they tend to define and label the 1920s Klan organization with terms and definitions from the late twentieth century, instead of in context of their own time. Frequent descriptions of the KKK as having a "laundry list" of core principles and related targets, or in terms of nativism, Anti-Semitism, or Anti-Catholicism without addressing scientific racism has diluted general perceptions of this Klan generation as a white supremacist organization. By doing so, historians have disconnected the 1920s Klan from its predecessor and successor, and have unintentionally missed the underlying racism inherent in their claims of Americanism and efforts to define American identity in terms of Anglo-Saxon religion, language, ethnicity, and race. Charles C. Alexander, "Prophet of American Racism: Madison Grant and the Nordic Myth," *Phylon* 23 (Spring 1962): 73-90; Carol M. Taylor, "W.E.B. Dubois's Challenge to Scientific Racism," *Journal of Black Studies*, 11 (June, 1981): 449-460; John Clark Ridpath, *Great Races of Mankind: An Account of the Ethnic Origin, Primitive Estate, Early Migrations, Social Evolution, and Present Conditions and Promise of the Principal Families of Men*, Vol. 1 (Cincinnati: Jones Brothers Publishing Company, 1892), v-viii. Ridpath's work included tree chart, called Race Chart No. 1, between pages 410 and 411, that illustrated the concept of scientific race. For more on whiteness and immigration, see John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1955; renewed edition, 1983); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998). James M. Pitsula discussed a similar "preferred" and "non-preferred" immigrant policy of Canada, in Pitsula, *Keeping Canada British, The Ku Klux Klan in 1920s Saskatchewan* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013).

which achieved greatness through white supremacy, were losing their greatness through too much contact with other races and not continually testing their physical strengths in ways that explorers and frontiersmen had done a century earlier. Individual Anglo-Saxon manliness and national survival were tied together in works by Madison Grant, a graduate of Yale and Columbia Law School, who wrote *The Passing of the Great Race* in 1916, and Lothrop Stoddard, who wrote *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World-Supremacy and The Revolt Against Civilization: The Menace of the Under Man*. Stoddard was also the Exalted Cyclops of the Provisional Klan No. 1 of Massachusetts.²⁵

In context of contemporary race constructions and local conditions, the placard carried in Klan parades throughout the country and in Wharton County, “White Supremacy—100 Percent Americanism,” expressed the KKK’s definition of who was American. Locally, the Klavern and its members racialized foreignness that allowed inclusion of Jewish businessmen from Russia but not a farm hand from Mexico. In other parts of the country, Klansmen rallied around anti-Catholicism and anti-Semitism, anti-immigration, and pushing out politically radical elements of socialism, communism, and

²⁵ Stoddard argued that the Versailles Treaty that ended World War I gave too much to Japan who supported “racial equality” for the global “colored races,” and argued against U.S. participation in the League of Nations, a Klan stance. He claimed he did not belong to the KKK. Instead of Anglo-Saxon, Madison Grant used the term Nordic, which was a broader term for northern and western Europeans. A. B. S., “Review of The Passing of the Great Race: Or the Racial Basis of European History,” Madison Grant, *American Historical Review* 22 (July, 1917): 842-844; Lothrop Stoddard, *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World-Supremacy* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1921); Lothrop Stoddard, *The Revolt Against Civilization: The Menace of the Under Man* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1922); David Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism: The History of the Ku Klux Klan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987), 270-271. For more on Madison Grant, see Jonathan P. Spiro, *Defending Master Race, Conservation Eugenics, and the Legacy of Madison Grant* (Burlington, VT: University of Vermont Press, 2009).

anarchism. In context of contemporary scientific racism, all of these tied to their vision of American identity as Anglo-Saxon-white supremacy.²⁶

The number of Wharton Klansmen who had immigrants in their immediate families provides further evidence of how they racialized American identity and accepted certain ethnicities as more white than others. Over ten percent of Klan No 6's members had immigrant parents or had married into an immigrant family, and to other locals, their race was unambiguously white. Twenty-six members of Klan No. 6 had at least one foreign-born parent. Nine of those were true first-generation Americans, with both parents having moved to the United States. The nationalities of many of these parents allowed for an easy assimilation since they moved from other Anglicized nations, including Canada, England, Scotland, Protestant Ireland, and New Zealand. When the subject of Canadian immigrants entered a Federal Congressional hearing debate to contrast admitting Mexican immigrant laborers, U.S. Congressman William Vaile of Colorado, stated, "They are the same kind of people we are, exactly." Wharton's Klan agreed.²⁷

²⁶ Popenoe and Johnson covered the current thought on eugenics of 1920, including marriage, race, class, war, urban competition, the effects of heredity and environment, need for social barriers, and democracy, socialism, education, feminism, pensions, minimum wage, sex hygiene and morality, trade unions, and religion. The ideology's foundational elitism and racism is coldly displayed. See, Paul Popenoe and Roswell Hill Johnson, *Applied Eugenics* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1920); Jeanne D. Petit, *The Men and Women We Want: Gender, Race, and the Progressive Era Literacy Test Debate* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2010), 36-40, 128-138; Christine Rosen, *Preaching Eugenics: Religious Leaders and the American Eugenics Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 5-8, 97-120.

²⁷ "Temporary Admission of Illiterate Mexican Laborers," *Hearings Before the Committee on immigration and Naturalization*, U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, 1920, 69.

Daniel A. Payne, the manager of a local lumberyard, a Klansman living in the town of Wharton provides a useful example. His parents had moved to Minnesota from Nova Scotia shortly before his birth. After moving to Wharton County around 1907, he quickly married, and joined the local businessmen baseball team, the Knights of Pythias, and the American Legion, having served in the Spanish-American War. After his death, a suicide from intentional drinking of carbolic acid, in 1922, the Methodist minister, Klansman John B. Bell conducted the church service and the Klan conducted the graveside service. In the *Spectator*, Shannon described the service in detail, including the fiery cross floral arrangement of red roses and a lengthy but revealing prayer that stated, “God save our nation and help us to be a nation worthy of existence on earth.” After his death, his wife requested she be allowed to keep Payne’s white robe and hood, still hanging in the Inner Den lockers. According to the minutes, they complied.²⁸

In addition, another eighteen Klansmen married into an immigrant family. Of those, eight members married a woman born outside the country, with seven from Anglicized nations. The one exception, Shannon’s wife was Danish. Although not as easy an assimilation, Danes, Swedes, Swiss, and Norwegian immigrants faced less stigma than eastern or southern European arrivals. Of the first-generation American KKK members, most were of German ancestry, an immigrant group which faced scrutiny and occasionally violence during World War I. Many Germans, who lived in the “cultural pockets” of predominantly German-American towns in adjacent Colorado

²⁸*WhSp*, September 14, 1922; 1; *WhSp*, September 22, 1922, 1; Klonsklave Minutes, December 21, 1922, K6MB, K6R, WCHM.

County retained their language and culture well into the twentieth century. During the war, non-Germans questioned their loyalty, and in one case, the Eagle Lake Home Guard forced a German-American businessman to buy \$2000 worth of war bonds. When his son came to town to make a complaint about the incident, the guard whipped, tarred, and feathered him in front of a hundred spectators in the center of town. During the 1920s, Klansmen from Bell County, Texas, posted warnings against speaking the German. Wharton did not see this sort of violence.²⁹

Those who moved to Wharton County, however, did not find a reinforcing “pocket” to live in and assimilated faster. Henry E. Ahldag was one of many first-generation German Americans who joined the KKK in 1921. Born in Wharton, Henry E. Ahldag’s father, Frederich, had immigrated from Westphalia, Germany, with his parents and sisters when he was fourteen, seven years before the Civil War began. Frederich enlisted in the Confederate Army, served in Green’s Brigade, and eventually became a farmer, merchant, and business partners with his uncle Joseph A. Hamilton, a former Union officer who moved to the county in the 1870s and married Sophia Ahldag. Both served in county elected offices before and after the WMUA take-over, switching political party affiliations when necessary, and both were active in the WMUA. By the

²⁹ *WhSp*, May 10, 1918, 1; Walter D. Kamphoefner, “The Handwriting on the Wall: The Klan, Language Issues, and Prohibition in the German Settlements of Eastern Texas,” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 112 (July 2008): 52-66. The term “cultural pockets” has been borrowed from Walter L. Buenger, “Across Many Borders: Persistence and Transformation in the Texas Economy and Culture, 1830-1850,” *Single Star of the West: The Republic of Texas, 1836-1845*, eds. Kenneth W. Howell and Charles Swanlund (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2017), 305-365.

age of twenty-three, “prosperous young planter” Henry Ahldag managed his parents’ landholdings of 302 acres. When he joined the hooded order, he owned 560.98 acres, worth \$9900, and provided a comfortable life for his wife, a daughter of Robert Armstrong, whom he married in 1913 at the age of 38. He had converted from Lutheran to Baptist by his marriage. Along with all the Armstrongs in the Klan, Ahldag shared secret membership and a planter-class culture with his second cousin, Joseph A. Hamilton, Jr.³⁰

Although not part of the planter culture, Klansmen with Czech ancestry, like those of German descent, had fully integrated themselves into Wharton society, including Frank Kral, who served as county clerk from 1918 until his death in 1957. Born in Austin County, Texas, to Bohemian-Moravian-Czech parents, his family, including a sister born in Europe, moved to Wharton County in 1904. In 1908, he worked for A. P. Borden as a prison guard overseeing convict laborers on the Pierce estate. Both he and his brother-in-law Frank E. Ustynik belonged to the Czech Slovanska Podporujici Jednota Statu Texas (SPJST) fraternal lodge in Pierce and joined the Klan in 1921. Like Kral, Ustynik’s Moravian parents had moved to Austin County, Texas, before settling near Pierce. Kral and Ustynik both lived in the county seat, whereas

³⁰ “H. E. Ahldag,” and “J. A. Hamilton, Jr.,” KMBD, K6R, WCHM; *WhSp*, 6 February 1920, 1; *HPost*, 11 September 1901, 11; *HPost*, April 14, 1900, 7; Mrs. Josephine Ahldag, Application No. 10, no date, UDC Chapter 230, United Daughters of the Confederacy 230 Records, WCHM; Wharton County Tax Records, 1911, Wharton County, Texas State Library and Archives (hereafter TSLA), Austin, Texas; Frederick W. Ahldag, and Henry E. Ahldag, *1900 United States Federal Census*, Wharton County, Texas, ED 0159, R-T624_1600, 10B, HH 217, RG29, RBC, NARA, online database, Ancestry.com, accessed February 26, 2015; Wharton County Tax Records, 1921, Wharton County, TSLA; *A Twentieth Century History of Southwest Texas, Vol. II* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1907), 429-431.

Ustynik's six brothers lived in Pierce. If they joined the order is unclear; their names do not appear in Klan No. 6's records. Men with strong immigrant ties joined the Klan either to illustrate their true Americanism to avoid being a target, or they fully assimilated, believed in white supremacy and one hundred percent American message of the order. For those in Klan No. 6, the latter seems more accurate.³¹

The best example of the local Klan not prioritizing nativist concerns was Joe L. Santos, Wharton's Italian Klansman. Born to Cavaleri and Rosa Santo in 1889, he and his family lived in the Agrigento province of Sicily until he was seven years old. During the 1890s, the family moved to Lake Charles, Louisiana, where his father opened a shoe shop, where they likely faced discrimination and hostility. In many parts of the country, white Protestant Americans saw Italians as not-white, and were labeled unclean, diseased, criminal, prone to drink, and unable to assimilate to justify their marginalization. According to historian Clive Webb, white Southerners saw Italians as "white Negroes," a perception illustrated by twenty-nine lynchings in the South between 1886 and 1910. In New Orleans, not far from Lake Charles, a lynch mob murdered eleven Italian immigrants, all from Sicily, in 1891. During early 1921, coinciding with

³¹ Frank Kral, *1910 United States Federal Census*, Wharton County, Texas, JP 5, ED 0168, R-T624_1600, 15B, HH 278, RG29, RBC, NARA, online database, Ancestry.com, accessed December 18, 2015; Frank Kral, Payroll Voucher 105, A. P. Borden Payroll, February 15, 1908, Texas Employee ledgers, 1893-1939, Texas Department of Criminal Justice, TSLA, *Texas Prison Employee Ledgers, 1861-1908* database, found online at Ancestry.com; Frank Kral, *1920 United States Federal Census*, Wharton County, Texas, JP 1, ED 0161, R-T625_1865, 7A, HH 168, RG29, RBC, NARA, online database, Ancestry.com, accessed December 18, 2015; *WhSp*, January 2, 1925, 1; *Věstník*, (West, Texas), July 17, 1957, 6; Frank Kral, *1930 United States Federal Census*, Wharton, Wharton County, Texas, ED 0001, R-2408, 12B, HH 262, RG29, RBC, NARA, online database, Ancestry.com, accessed December 18, 2015.

the national rise of the Klan, the sensationalized capital trial of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, Italian immigrants with anarchist ties, added to the prevailing perception that Italians as dangerous to the nation, and helped push through anti-immigrant legislation.³²

In Wharton County, Joe Santos's experience defied these perceptions and came to be viewed by his peers in Wharton's business community as a white American who achieved economic independence, despite his Italian ancestry. Having learned a skilled trade from his father, by 1910, twenty-year-old Santos had moved away from his family and opened a shoe shop in Port Arthur, Texas. In 1914, he ran a movie theater in

³² During the 1890s, Santos's region of Sicily faced peasant rebellions and an agricultural depression. Many areas of Texas viewed Italians as not white as well. In Waco, Italian laborers rented apartments from African-American businessman Louis M. Sublett. In 1904, local white Democrats in Burleson County specifically excluded Mexicans and Italians from white primary elections on account of race. According to their associational papers, the WMUA never mentioned Italians indicating the association's lack of concern. The *Wharton Spectator* did not print any information regarding the Sacco and Vanzetti trial, that started on May 21, 1921, a month after the Wharton Klan parade, and ended in July. Joseph Santo, *1900 United States Federal Census*, Lake Charles, Calcasieu Parish, Louisiana, Ward 3, ED 0016, R-560, 12, HH 212, RG29, RBC, NARA, online database, Ancestry.com, accessed September 11, 2016. Moshik Temkin, *The Sacco-Vanzetti Affair: America on Trial* (New Haven: Yale University, 2009), 1-8; Linda Reeder, *Widows in White: Migration and the Transformation of Rural Italian Women, Sicily, 1880-1920* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 31, 113-114; Jean Scarpaci, "A Tale of Selective Accommodation: Sicilians and Native Whites in Louisiana," *Journal of Ethnic Studies* 5 (1977): 37-50; Cynthia Skove Nevels, *Lynching to Belong: Claiming Whiteness Through Racial Violence* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2007), 78-87; Christopher Waldrep, "'Raw, Quivering Flesh': John G. Chasman's 'Pornographic' Constitutionalism Designed to Produce an 'Aversion and Detestation', 1883-1904," in *Lynching Reconsidered: New Perspectives in the Study of Mob Violence*, ed. William D. Carrigan (New York: Routledge, 2004, paperback 2014), 78; Clive Webb, "The Lynching of Sicilian Immigrants in the American South, 1886-1910," *American Nineteenth Century History* 3 (Spring 2002): 45-76. For more on Italians in the New South, see Jean Scarpaci, *Italian Immigration in Louisiana's Sugar Parishes, 1880-1910* (New York: Arno Press, 1980). To see a photo of his father in front of his Lake Charles shoe shop, see Janet Allured, Jessica Hutchings, and Debbie Johnson, eds., *Image America: Lake Charles* (Houston, TX: Arcadia Publishing, 2012), 55.

downtown Wharton. Converted from Catholicism, he married Mary Bailey, a nurse, daughter of a small farmer in Gonzales County, in a local Baptist church. Both civically active, his wife served as local chairwoman of the American Red Cross while he provided theater space for war-support and held “picture show benefits” for the United Daughters of the Confederacy, the Red Cross, and church missionary efforts. His wife appeared in the society pages, with stories of baby showers, weddings, and bridge games. After joining the Klan, fellow Klansman R. E. Vineyard hired Santos to run his auto dealership and he was elected as vice president of the local Retail Merchants Association. From 1910 and 1920, he told census takers that he was born in Louisiana to native-born parents, and he maintained his domestic birthplace with Italian parents in 1930. His relationship with local organizations and businessmen, as well as frequency in the *Spectator*’s society pages, suggested Wharton whites had accepted Santos as one of them. Or, as many Anglo-Saxon Americans, he may have joined to improve his business opportunities. He remained in Wharton until his death, and on his death certificate, his wife provided his birthplace--Italy.³³

³³ Joe L. Santos, *1920 United States Federal Census*, Wharton County, Texas, JP1, ED 161, R-T625_16856, 12B, HH 310, RG29, RBC, NARA, online database, Ancestry.com, accessed January 2, 2017; *WhSp* 1 Feb 1918, 4; *WhSp*, 4 May 1917, 2; *WhSp*, 10 May 1918 p5; *WhSp*, 24 January 1919, 5; *WhSp*, 3 June 1919, 6; Joseph L. Santos, *1910 United States Federal Census*, Port Arthur Jefferson County, Texas, JP2, ED 0084, R-T624_1568, 24B, HH 332, RG29, RBC, NARA, online database, Ancestry.com, accessed February 26, 2016; Marriage Record, Mary M. Bailey to J. L. Santos, March 22, 1914, Wharton, Texas, TSLA, *Texas, County Marriage Records, 1817-1965* database, Ancestry.com, accessed September 11, 2016; *WhSp*, March 27, 1914, 4; Joseph L. Santos, *1930 United States Federal Census*, Wharton, Wharton County, Texas, JP1, ED 0001, R-2408, 22B, HH 537, RG29, RBC, NARA, online database, Ancestry.com, accessed February 26, 2016; Joe L. Santos, Death Certificate, January 29, 1972, Wharton, Wharton County, Texas, No. 06998, Texas Department of State Health Services, Austin, Texas, *Texas Death Certificates 1903-1982* database, Ancestry.com, September 11,

Similar to some immigrants, members of the Klan with Socialist ties may have felt the need to prove themselves. Throughout World War I and the Red Summer of 1919, Socialists faced federal investigation, deportation, mob violence, job termination, suspicion, and other discriminatory practices. During the 1920s, the Klan shared a general view that Socialists were un-American and a threat to democracy, capitalism, and white supremacy, the basic tenets of what many Klansmen saw as truly American. In Oklahoma they went after Governor Jack Walton who had agricultural socialist backing. In contrast, the opposition of a gubernatorial candidate in Oregon claimed he had support of both the KKK and socialist Non-Partisan League, and the Wisconsin Socialist Party expelled a Milwaukee Klansman for belonging to the Invisible Empire.³⁴

Although socialism had a limited presence in the county, two members of Klan No. 6 had family in the Texas Socialist Party. Names of Klansman Walter B. Aschenbeck's father, John C., and uncle, Gerard C., appeared frequently in *The Rebel*, a socialist newspaper printed in Hallestville, by Thomas A. "Tom" Hickey and Edward Otto (E. O.) Meitzen. John Aschenbeck, a soda bottler, ran for Railroad Commissioner on the Socialist ticket in 1910 and 1912, and served on the state executive committee after. At the time, the state party advocated for a number of political issues which would

2016. In 1930, Santos owned a home valued at \$7,500 and a radio. On his death certificate, his occupation was listed as city secretary of Wharton.

³⁴ James R. Green, *Grass-Roots Socialism: Radical Movements in the Southwest, 1895-1943* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1978), 376-394; Alexander, 130-139; *Oregon Daily Journal* (Portland, OR), November 6, 1922, 12; *Capital Times* (Madison, Wis.), January 2, 1924, 1. Little work has been done on alternative political movements as a challenge to Texas White Man's Unions, including in Wharton County after 1889. Populists, socialists, and prohibitionists all had vocal members in Wharton's WMUA.

challenge Wharton's local power structure: woman suffrage, an end to the poll tax, devices to end land speculation, state ownership of cotton gins, cotton seed oil mills, cotton compresses, warehouses, and utilities, and many others. He also was active in the WMUA in 1912, when the private political group restated its commitment to white supremacy. If Walter shared his father's political view is unclear, but he must have been influential. The decennial censuses shows Walter worked and lived with his parents through 1940, even after he married in 1927. Evidence of the local KKK targeting the Aschenbeck family has yet to be found. In addition, J. C. Aschenbeck's adherence to white supremacy and the political control of the WMUA made him less of a threat.³⁵

KKK member George Preston Smith's brothers and father belonged to the state Socialist Party, and had a personal relationship with *Rebel* editors Hickey and Meitzen. Like Aschenbeck, brother James C. Smith ran for Texas Agriculture Commissioner on the state Socialist Party ticket and frequently wrote to *The Rebel* between 1911 and 1917, when the federal government forced Hickey to shut it down for allegedly violating the Espionage and Sedition Acts during World War I. In the spring of 1918, the El Campo Council of Defense (ECCD), whose purpose was to coordinate and enforce local war efforts, investigated Preston Smith's brother, his father Charles "Red" Smith, and

³⁵ *The Rebel* (Hallettsville, Tex.), 3 March 1917, 3; *Rebel*, 1 July 1911, 3; *Rebel*, 27 June 1914, 5; *Rebel*, 15 November 1913, 3; WMUA Minutes, 16 May 1912, pg 145, WMUA Secretary's Book, WMUA of Wharton County, WCHM; Ernest William Winkler, Platform of Political Parties in Texas," *Bulletin of the University of Texas* (20 September 1916): 527-530; John C. Aschenbeck and Walter Aschenbeck, , *1920 United States Federal Census*, Wharton County, Texas, JP1, ED 161, R-T625_1856, 24A, HH 650, RG29, RBC, NARA, online database, Ancestry.com, accessed January 2, 2017.

Tom Hickey, who apparently had been living in the El Campo area with or near the Smiths. According to the El Campo Citizen, the ECCD had had reports suspecting the Smiths and Hickey of disloyalty to the federal government and noted their long-standing support of the Texas Socialist Party and were members of the Non-Partisan League (NPL), which advocated for generally the same ideas as the Socialists. According to historian James Green, Hickey spent the spring recruiting new members for the NPL, although Green did not state where. After a hearing, the ECCD judged the men loyal and the matter dropped. The local paper also reported visits by Meitzen who came to the area to recruit for the NPL and printed a defense of the League written by J. C. Smith. Before Preston joined the Klan, his father received a threatening note accusing his family of being slackers and “opposed to the government.” The El Campo Citizen defended “Red” Smith and his sons as “men of families,” and noted their support of war bonds and the two sons, one of whom was Preston Smith, who served in the military.³⁶

³⁶ Winkler, *Platform of Political Parties in Texas*, 551-552; Green, 148-150, 373-384; George P. Smith, Charles R. Smith, *1910 United States Federal Census*, Wharton County, Texas, JP5, ED 169, R-T624_1600, 12A, HH 234, RG29, RBC, NARA, online database, Ancestry.com, accessed January 2, 2017; George P. Smith, Charles R. Smith, James C. Smith, *1900 United States Federal Census*, Matagorda County, Texas, JP5, ED 161, R-1657, 18, HH 318, RG29, RBC, NARA, online database, Ancestry.com, accessed January 2, 2017; George Preston Smith, Registration Card 330, El Campo, Wharton County, Texas, R-1983776, *World War I Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918*, NARA, online database, Ancestry.com, accessed January 2, 2017; *Rebel*, August 15, 1913, 1; *Rebel*, June 27, 1914, 5; *ECC*, April 29, 1918, 6; *ECC*, June 14, 1918, 2; *ECC*, January 28, 1921, 4; *ECC*, August 8, 1919, 1; *ECC*, February 18, 1921, 4; *ECC*, January 28, 1921, 1; *Rebel*, August 23, 1913, 3; William R. Hunt, "Hickey, Thomas Aloysius," *HOTO*, accessed May 1, 2016, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fhi55>; *Rebel*, November 16, 1912, 1;. For more on tenant farmers and Socialism in Texas, see Kyle Grant Wilkison, *Yeoman, Sharecroppers, and Socialists: Plain Folk Protest in Texas, 1870-1914* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008). For on white Texas Socialists' racism, see Foley, *White Scourge*, 93-113. In 1921, Preston's brother James C. Smith championed the Non-Partisan League in the El Campo newspaper. The El Campo *Citizen* erroneously and continuously referred to Tom

Preston Smith may have joined the Klan to declare his Americanism to its powerful members, and to join his fellow American Legionaries in the Klan. Fifteen percent of the local order's membership were veterans of World War I and Spanish-American War and most had joined the Legion. The youngest son in a large family, Preston Smith's path took him away from the farms of his parents and brothers to the east side of the county. Before the war, he and another brother worked for the U.S. Postal Service in Wharton County. After the war, he attended Texas State Teachers College, now Texas State University, in San Marcos, for his undergraduate studies. He represented the ideal Anglo-Saxon man, complete with the physical and mental fitness promoted by eugenicists. When Smith joined the Klan in 1923, he taught school in Iago, played on a basketball team, and coordinated the county's Inter-Scholastic League, which he started. The Inter-Scholastic League provided both college-age young adults and younger children a chance to compete, a required step to remaining fit and, in the words of Smith, bring out the "genius." As league director, he organized competitions for area white schools in league scholastic categories, as well as in non-league categories of basketball and tennis for both boys and girls before he returned to San Marcos for

Hickey as T. E. Hickey, not T. A. Hickey but noted his involvement with the NPL during the ECCD hearing article and, in a separate article, identified T. E. Hickey as the editor of *The Rebel*. The *Citizen* also misprinted E. O Meitzen's name as E. R. Meitzen but, again, noted his work with the NPL and he had moved to North Dakota. The timing, organization, and place correspond to events in Green's *Grass-Roots Socialism*. By 1919, Hickey had become an "oil man" at Desdemona oil field, a field that, according to one paper, excluded large drillers and oil companies. Wharton Klansman Henry A. Cline also had wells in Desdemona but, as an attorney and large landowner in Wharton County, did not have Socialist leanings. See, *Dublin Progress and Telephone*, August 15, 1919, 12.

graduate work in 1926.³⁷

Based on induction dates shown or deduced from these records, local interest in the Klan spiked in 1921 then began to decline, not unlike the enthusiasm of Kligrapp Leland Brooks. Of those 356 members whose induction rates could be learned, sixty-four percent joined within the chapter's first 12 months, with the highest consistent enrollment during the first six months of 1921. Even more telling, the largest group of new members during the life of the Wharton Klan, from December of 1920 through the fall of 1924, joined as charter members with forty-five men, at least twenty-two percent more than the next highest one-month total in November 1921. New enrollment for 1922 declined significantly, so much so that new membership for the entire year equaled the chapter's charter membership. Membership continued to decline throughout 1923, which saw a sporadic trickle of new membership in six months out of the year. In 1924, the final year of the records, the Hamilton B. Dickson chapter saw new Klansmen in only three months, April, June, and October, with nearly all joining in the spring and fall months. Membership spikes in 1924, as well as July of 1922, resulted from the local

³⁷ *WhSp*, July 28, 1923, 1; *WhSp*, April 4, 1927, 4; *WhSp*, January 4, 1924, 1; *WhSp*, February 22, 1924, 2; *WhSp*, May 29, 1925, 7; *WhSp*, April 10, 1925, 10; *WhSp*, January 25, 1924, 3; *The College Star* (student paper, San Marcos, TX), March 23, 1927, 2; Robert Dalleck, *Lone Star Rising: Lyndon Johnson and his times, 1908-1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 74-74, 622 fn 27; *Archer County News*, May 23, 1963, 3; *San Antonio Express*, September 30, 1967, 20. Smith was working on a graduate degree while at university in San Marcos and edited the student newspaper there, which for which LBJ contributed articles. They both belonged to the debate team as well. G. Preston Smith donated a debate team sweater to the LBJ museum, which can be seen online at <http://www.lbjlibrary.org/exhibits/artifact-of-the-week/southwest-texas-state-teachers-college>, and gave an oral interview to historian Robert Dalleck about LBJ's college years. In 1926, Smith taught at Sul Ross University and served on the Council on Graduate Work as an education professor and director of demonstration work.

chapter funneling all new membership to a few large outdoor naturalization ceremonies to give an impression of popular growth. Based on Klan records in other areas, the overall decline, even with occasional spikes in enrollment, came as other chapters experienced growth and the national organization shifted their focus to corralling Klan votes behind order-favored candidates in primary and general elections.³⁸

When compared to induction numbers of other chapters reported in Texas newspapers, the 365 members found in the Wharton Klan No. 6 records may seem rather insignificant. In contrast, in nearby Houston, the KKK reportedly inducted more in one ceremony than joined the Wharton County chapter over four years. Nonetheless, for this relatively small, rural county, the Ku Klux Klan pulled a statistically significant slice of the local eligible populous into this chapter. Of the 24,288 people counted on the 1920 census, only 3,022, or 11 percent of the county's population, fit the Klan's sex, age, race, and native-birth eligibility requirements. This figure, however, includes groups made ineligible by their racialized ethnicity. Although Klan No. 6 accepted first-generation white men whose parents immigrated from Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Canada, England, and Scotland, they drew the line at including any of the 128 Tejanos counted as county residents in the 1920 census, which left 2894 men or 11.9 percent of the total county population as potentially eligible for membership. This eligibility number, however, still does not account for religious divisions within this subset. Since isolating religious congregants by age and nativity has

³⁸ KMBD, K6R, WCHM.

proved difficult, this eligibility number remains artificially high as it includes Catholic and Jewish men within the white-native-born subset.³⁹ Even without controlling for religious disqualification, the Hamilton B. Dickson chapter recruited 12.6 percent of those eligible to join. To reiterate the point, these figures show that a large number of locals who *could* join chose to belong to the order. Furthermore, Wharton County's relatively small population eligible for membership supported not one, but two Klan chapters. El Campo, a town in the northwestern quadrant of the county, established Klan No. 28 in 1921. If they had only half the membership of Klan No. 6, conservative estimates find the order consumed over 17 percent of all eligible locals. To further underscore the Invisible Empire's local dominance, the county also had a Women's Ku Klux Klan chapter.⁴⁰

³⁹ *Eagle*, October 6, 1921, 3; *United States Federal Census Data, 1920*, Social Explorer; enumerated census, ancestry.com; KMBD, K6R, WCHM. The 1920 U.S. Census did include religion but conducted a census of religious bodies in 1890, 1906, 1916, and 1926. See appendix for two author-compiled charts on Wharton County religion, one covering congregant numbers by religious body for 1906, 1916, and 1926 and another comparing the state's congregant increases over time. Between 1916 and 1926, Roman Catholics living in the county increased 143.4 percent from 1696 to 4128. The total number for both years, however, cover all baptized individuals, including infants, and includes a large number of immigrant families from Czechoslovakia, Germany, and Mexico.

⁴⁰ Klansmen of Czech ancestry had parents listed as Bohemian in the pre-1920 censuses, since Czechoslovakia did not exist until 1918, after World War I. For the sake of simplicity, this country has been included in the list to more accurately reflect ethnicity over nationality. To ascertain an approximate Tejano population, the author hand counted all individuals, as well as all heads of household and all adult males, born in Mexico, native born with Mexican-born parents, and Tejanos with native-born parents. A chart has been included in the appendix. In 1920, Wharton County's Mexican population, regardless of age, gender, or nativity, equaled 2172. Of this, adult native-born men, regardless of parent's nativity, equaled 128. Furthermore, marginalized populations tended to be undercounted in decennial census throughout the twentieth century. For more information, see Elijah Anderson and Douglas Massey, *Problem of the Century: Racial Stratification in the United States* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2001). Membership numbers have not been found for either the El Campo Klan nor Wharton's chapter of Klanswomen.

The national organization's rhetoric failed to crystallize into Klan action in Wharton County because race remained the primary lens through which whites in power saw their world. For thirty years, the WMUA controlled political power by including groups who were foreign only by birth but American by their readily assimilation into Wharton's culture. Actions by the local Klan and Klansmen reflected this ideological point of view. They admitted some first-generation Americans who either shared Anglo-Saxon ancestry, or who they classified as white because they had successfully displayed the necessary shared qualities in business, political ideology, or kinship, and were not seen as racially exotic as Mexicans and Asians. Furthermore, while Catholics and Jews, regardless of nativity, faced targeted violence and legislation by the Klan in other parts of the country, these groups gained a limited political and economic inclusion in Wharton's White Man's Union Association, and with it, some cultural acceptance in community. As fellow businessmen, school board members, Masons, and white voters, Klansmen prioritized a mix of the old and more modern constructions of white supremacy.

CHAPTER V

**LOOKING BEYOND THE ILLUSION:
STRUCTURAL WHITE SUPREMACY, MORAL BANKRUPTCY,
AND THE REAL WHARTON KU KLUX KLAN**

At the corner of Richmond Road and Milam Street, masked men pulled Henry E. Schultz from his horse and forced him at gunpoint into a car, which drove out of town. The abduction occurred on June 20, 1921, a Monday afternoon, outside the Norton Opera House, two blocks from the town square, but law officers found only two bystanders who witnessed the event. When the car returned to town later that afternoon, the masked men pushed Schultz—whipped, tarred, feathered, hair “shingled off”—out of the car in between Joe Santos’ movie theatre and F. I. Moore’s men’s clothier store, “the most prominent corner of the city.” Wearing only a breechcloth and holding his clothes in a flour sack, Schultz walked home. The sixty-year old white Wharton resident gave his statement to Constable Albert H. Armstrong, the first law officer to arrive after the attack, Sheriff C. D. Kemp, county tax assessor Joel Hudgins, J. Vann Leeds, and Frank Shannon. He told them he did not to know his kidnappers and claimed his innocence in regard to the masked men’s charges, described by the *Spectator* as only “reprehensible conduct.” Schultz’s abduction was one of four Klan attacks widely reported in Texas in three days, and one of fifteen men, mostly white, tarred and feathered in three months. By mid-summer 1921, Klan attacks had become so frequent that most newspapers stopped reporting their details, including the victim’s alleged misconduct, and instead,

published summarized lists of parades and assaults.¹

Vigilante violence against white targets might seem counterintuitive for a white supremacy organization, but it fit with the scientific racism prevalent for the period. Although the order did not always claim responsibility, the public saw tar-and-feathering as the Klan's signature coercion device to humiliate moral transgressors, such as bootleggers, prostitutes, adulterers, and other actors who threatened racial health, even when the "reprehensible conduct" remained publicly ambiguous. Some historians have viewed the considerable number of tarred-and-feathered whites as evidence to assert that Protestant morality, more than white supremacy, was the Klan's central focus. Noted historian Charles C. Alexander argued that the order's "infrequency of assaults" on black individuals compared to whites indicated "the Klan was, more than anything else, an instrument for restoring law and order and Victorian morality to the communities, towns, and cities of the region." In general, historiography covering the national organization and regions outside the South has found that civic activism and concern for effective law enforcement against vice to be the most consistent motivation behind membership and local organized action nationwide. One collection of local studies argued that "the spirit of civic activism . . . guided most of the membership," and "with a few exceptions,

¹ *Wharton Spectator* (hereafter *WhSp*), June 24, 1921, 1; *Port Arthur News*, June 22, 1921, 3. Because of his surname, some newspapers assumed he was either an immigrant or had exhibited disloyalty to the United States, and reported the Klan attacked him as an "alleged German." William G. Shepherd, "A Nightgown Tyranny," *Leslie's Illustrated Weekly* (September 10, 1921), 346; *Bryan Daily Eagle*, September 20, 1921, 3. Some newspaper did not include Schultz's attack on lists of Klan activity compiled mid-summer 1921. *Winfield Daily Free Press* (Winfield, Kansas), July 20 1921, 1.

members of the hooded order avoided violent vigilantism.” This seems to echo the Klan’s own rhetoric, which often dismissed violence as unsanctioned, and committed by nonmembers to misrepresent the organization. According to an official Klan statement, “the best citizens of every community” made up its membership and they stood “for law and order, for moral uprightness, for protection of women, and for white supremacy.”²

This approach is problematic for several reasons. First, it reifies the Klan’s characterization of itself by removing the white supremacist cloud that permeated the organization’s image and overall message. Intimidation and vigilante attacks, regardless

² Charles C. Alexander, *The Ku Klux Klan in the Southwest* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1965; second edition, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), xvii (first quote), 58 (second quote), 59; Shawn Lay, “Conclusion,” *The Invisible Empire in the West: Toward a New Historical Appraisal of the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s*, ed. Shawn Lay (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 221, 220 (third and fourth quote); *Liberty Vindicator*, June 3, 1921, 3 (last quote). Official Klan statements about their tenets can be found in newspapers across the nation. For another example of civic-interest Klan rhetoric, see the *Courier-Gazette* (McKinney, Texas), March 13, 1922, 7. In it, the Klan denied vigilantism and claimed to be “a force for good which should have the unqualified support of every citizen who has the interest of his community at heart.” Alexander focused on the Klan in the Southwest, which he defined as Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, and Oklahoma. In another study on the Arkansas KKK, Kenneth C. Barnes called it “more of a nativist organization.” See Barnes, *Anti-Catholicism in Arkansas: How Politicians, the Press, the Klan and Religious Leaders Imagined the Enemy, 1910-1960* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2016), 92. Shawn Lay has researched the Klan in El Paso, Texas, and Buffalo, New York. See, Lay, *War, Revolution, and the Ku Klux Klan* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1985); Lay, *Hooded Knights on the Niagara: The Ku Klux Klan in Buffalo, New York* (New York: New York University Press, 1995). In his synthesis on the second KKK, Thomas Pegram underscored American identity as basis of the Klan agenda and found the order’s Anti-Catholicism and prohibition enforcement were the most consistent tenet acted upon by the Klan nationally. See, Pegram, *One Hundred Percent American: The Rebirth and Decline of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2011). In contrast, findings by Nancy MacLean and Glenn Feldman diverged from those of Alexander and Lay. Both focused on the order in the South and found significant evidence that Klan targeted African-Americans. MacLean dismissed the idea put forth by some that because African-American communities were either small or non-existent in some areas where the Klan was popular, race was of little concern to those chapters. See, Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 163-164, xvi.

of stated purpose, nullified any claim they had to moral authority, and repeating as historical fact their purpose was moral law and order implies a benign justifiability to what was an exclusive claim to socially control others. Second, it recognizes only certain acts of violence as Klan-related and assumes that all Klan activities have been reported, and have been reported honestly. This dismisses the psychological impact of parades or threats, much of which went unreported, felt by African Americans, Jews, Catholics, Mexican Americans, and immigrants. Not dissimilar, lynching studies have long recognized the broader intent and effect that individual acts of mob violence had on specific communities who understood the implied psychological threat to their families, property, and personal safety. Third, it ignores available evidence that the Klan, in Texas at least, parasitically imbedded itself in law enforcement and the judicial system, at the local, state, and federal level, to use structural power for its own ends while hidden behind legal legitimacy. Although this may not have happened elsewhere to the same extent as in Texas, the Klan needed only a few strategically placed members to listen, watch, initiate or alter investigations, and shape news stories. Fourth, it fails to be critical of members' willingness, and in some cases, eagerness, to belong to an organization that they knew had a long and recent history of vigilante racial violence, even if that violence occurred in other regions of the country or another century. In short, the Klan was the Klan, not the Lions Club.

Using newspapers, government records, and legal documents, this chapter argues that behind the illusion of moral enforcement, the Texas KKK was a white supremacist vigilante and parasitic organization that provided a means for its members to exert power

over others for reasons of either personal gain or to exert social control over whites and blacks to protect whites' supremacy. To explain this argument, this chapter is divided into two sections.

The first section of the chapter addresses how the Klan controlled the legal and public narrative by examining well-known Klan attacks against white victims and comparing elements to the Schultz case. Since numerous lists of 1920s Texas Klan warnings and assaults note only one event, the Schultz attack, having occurred in Wharton County, and since he was white, the case served as prima facie evidence for old assertions that Texas Klansmen prioritized their civic-minded concerns about white moral deterioration over white supremacy. To understand how the order created its illusion for the public, this section will begin by comparing the Schultz attack with the Benjamin I. Hobbs³ attack in Houston, the first reported in Texas. The Hobbs case happened in the same Klan Province as Wharton, garnered more media attention, and had coverage in a U.S. Senate hearing in 1924 so more details are known. Comparing

³ Every primary and secondary source located by the author about this attack referred to Hobbs by his last name with first and middle initials only. Using information found newspaper articles about the attack, which mentioned his address, his profession, his sister's name, and his previous profession, the author found corroborative evidence in Houston city directories, decennial census, and other newspapers to identify B. I. Hobbs as Benjamin I. Hobbs, the son of Jesse E. and Carrie Hobbs, born in Webster, Georgia, in approximately 1869. His family, which included six siblings, moved to Texas in 1874, first to Denton County, then to Parker County. According to the 1900 census, he lived and worked as a barber in Alvin, Brazoria County, where his sister Catherine Jane Hobbs Chambers and her family also resided. According to Houston city directories from 1902 through 1914, he then moved to Houston and continued to work as a barber until 1915, at which time the city directory showed his occupation as an attorney. According to the newspaper account, the Hotel Illinois was located at 311 La Branch, in Houston. City directories for Houston, Texas, for most years between 1877 to 1959, can be found in the *U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995* database, found online at Ancestry.com.

these two events will highlight how the organization parasitically used its members in law enforcement and the local communication infrastructure to commit acts of targeted violence, all while controlling the public narrative. In addition, testimony given to the U.S. Senate illuminates how the group extended its parasitic hold into the judicial process to undermine the system and provide legal protections for its members. Essentially, the Klan hid its illegitimate practices that fed its members exclusive privileges, by hiding itself within legitimate structural power using its members' positions in the community. This allowed it to claim moral authority, appear legitimate itself, and continue to grow. Overall, this evidence suggests prima facie information from legitimate sources used by the public and by historians may have been manipulated.

The second section of the chapter examines questions of the suggested racial disparity of Klan victims and the motivations, whether moral or otherwise, for the Schultz attack and other acts of Klan violence in and around Wharton County. Evidence presented here illustrates that many acts of violence committed by the order failed to garner much attention, if any, by the outside press. Although many reasons may explain this, patterns based on area incidents show that underreported Klan threats and violence resulted from the Klan's ability to certain events secret, often failed attempts or homicide because of their parasitic controls, or in cases reported locally, newspapers in larger markets focused on more sensational attacks with white victims while ignoring numerous cases that targeted African Americans. Based on those underreported attacks found in the region, the chapter digs into the lives of Henry Schultz, and the other

targets, as well as area Klansmen, to show that motivations behind individual acts of violence and for joining the order fell into three categories: personal profit, social control over African Americans, and social control over white behavior seen as threatening to white supremacy. While previous chapters showed whites unified over the first two, evidence in this chapter illustrates how planter class Klansmen's individual white privilege conflicted with more progressive Klansmen's desire to collectively improve the white race after failing within their own families.

Schultz, Hobbs, and Parasitic Power

Based on press reports, the Klan's attack on Henry Schultz appeared to be a ritualized replication of what B. I. Hobbs, a white divorce attorney, experienced five months earlier in Houston.⁴ Early Sunday morning on February 6, 1921, reporters gathered in the Hotel Illinois to hear Hobbs, Texas's Klan's first known victim, tell his story. As he reluctantly answered their questions, he stood on humiliating display, wearing only towels and a bathrobe. The night before, four men kidnapped him from the front porch of the hotel where he lived, pushed him into a car, put a hood over his head, then drove him to a wooded area. There, they removed his hood, "forced" him to

⁴ Historians have frequently used the word "ritual" to describe lynchings of black victims by white mobs in the South between 1880 and 1940 because of repeated patterns of behavior and symbolic meaning attributed to those patterns by scholars. Although noted historian William Fitzhugh Brundage takes issue with applying the word to lynchings because, in part, it simplifies events that varied greatly and collectively repeated for such a long time across a wide geographic area, the term seems applicable to the KKK's use of repeated violent patterns throughout the first six months of 1921 in Texas. See, Brundage, *Lynching in the New South: Georgia and Virginia, 1880-1930* (Urbana: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 17-19.

undress, then covered him with tar and feathers. After driving him to a busy intersection of Houston, blocks from his hotel, they handed him a bag that held his clothes and a Klan note, and warned him to get out of town or they would kill him. Then, they pushed him out of the car where plenty of spectators passed by to publicly shame him. Hobbs hid until a passerby agreed to call the police, who then took him to the police station. As he described to reporters the details of his abduction and humiliation from the previous night, his physical appearance corroborated his testimony. His shorn head showed where nineteen undisguised Klansmen used sheep shears to “slash” his “long” black hair that, according to the newspapers, had once been a source of pride. Reporters also noted the black and white striped “Plymouth Rock” chicken feathers still visible on his chest and neck.⁵

After the attack, both Hobbs and Schultz gave similar statements to the press while under the watchful eye of law enforcement. Before facing the press, Hobbs sat at the police station “in close conference” with Detective Gordon Murphy, who told the press the attorney maintained he could not recall the faces of his unmasked assailants. During his press conference, Hobbs gave specific details of the attack: the “bumpy” gravel road, the “steep embankment” the car traveled, and the “crackling of twigs” underfoot as the group walked from the car. He saw the car, the men’s faces, and even

⁵ *Houston Post* (hereafter *HPost*), February 7, 1921, 1, 7; *WhSp*, February 11, 1921, 1; Alexander, 41; Patricia Bernstein, *Ten Dollars to Hate: The Texas Man Who Fought the Klan* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2017), 60-61; *WhSp*, 11 Feb 1921, 1; *Logansport Pharos-Tribune* (Logansport, Indiana), 21 Feb. 1921, 3. From the only photo the author found of him, Hobbs wore his hair slightly longer than other white professional men whose photos appeared in local papers.

remembered hearing two of the Klansmen's names. Still, the Houston Night Police Chief J. E. Dunman, first on scene, claimed Hobbs' inability to describe his kidnapers prevented an investigation. The incongruence of Hobbs' public statement and the police response was not lost on some newspapers, but none openly speculated on the cause. Both targeted men initially claimed they did not know why the Klan came after them.⁶ The most notable difference between the cases, Schultz was not told to leave town as was Hobbs, who heeded the KKK warning and left behind his established law practice. Within days, he had moved to his sister's home in Alvin, in Brazoria County, where the Klan attacked again. The county sheriff failed to give chase, despite personally witnessing the incident. By the end of the year, Hobbs had left Texas and opened a law practice in Indianapolis, Indiana.⁷

⁶ Ibid; *HPost*, February 9, 1921, 10; *Temple Daily Telegram*, 13 Feb 1921, 1; *Courier-Gazette* (McKinney, Tex.), 14 Feb 1921, 4; *Cameron Herald*, 17 Feb. 1921, 11; *Muncie Evening Press* (Muncie, Indiana), 12 Feb 1921, 6; *Indianapolis Star*, 31 Dec 1921, 22; *Cameron Herald*, 10 Feb 1921, 11. Hobbs told the press he heard the names Ed and Zack. The *Houston Post* story included the detailed account presented above, but it also contained some minor contradictions within its description of that morning's events. For example, it stated Hobbs told his story in his room but later mentioned he "stood in the hotel lobby" in a bathrobe and towels. The author found the *Post* story had a somewhat delighted tone throughout that nearly reveled in every detail of Hobbs' discomfort.

⁷ Ibid; *HPost*, February 7, 1921, 1 (quotes), 7. According to his deposition, Kleagle George B. Kimbro admitted he attacked Hobbs with his brother J. S. Kimbro, Houston's Exalted Cyclops H. C. McCall, Louisiana Kleagle W. V. Eaton, Oklahoma Kleagle George McCarron, Dallas Klan organizer Bertram Christie, Dr. W. E. Suttin, and W. C. Sanders, See, *Senator from Texas Hearings Before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Privileges and Elections, United States Senate Sixty-eight Congress, First Session Pursuant to S. Res. 97 Authorizing the Investigation of Alleged Unlawful Practices in the Election of a Senator from Texas*, U.S. Congress (Washington D.C: Government Printing Office, 1924) (hereafter *Senator from Texas*), 682. Contemporary newspaper articles, often cited in historical works, indicated he headed for "West Texas" after he left the Houston area, but evidence suggests he moved to Indianapolis. The last Houston city directory in which his name appeared was for the year 1920-1921, which corresponds with the attack. From 1922 to 1942, *the Indianapolis City Directory* listed a B. I. Hobbs as a local attorney, and the *Indianapolis Star* indicated he specialized in divorce from

Like its sister county of Brazoria, Wharton Klansmen had a history with Hobbs and saw him as a threat to white supremacy. Hobbs specialized in divorce cases and had several black clients in Wharton County, whom he met at a local black restaurant. Although some contemporary newspapers insinuated Hobbs had sexual “associations” with clients, *Spectator* editor Shannon railed against Hobbs’s practice of going to a black public space to meet his clients, instead of making them come to him, as a symbolic act of deference and social equality. He also alleged that Hobbs caused social strife, namely for white landowners and employers, by encouraging divorce among black tenant farmers and laborers. Eight months before the attack, Hobbs stood accused of soliciting legal business and faced a criminal charge of barratry in county court. After the second attack, he editorialized that the attorney “outrages decency and sets at naught the proud heritage of white supremacy” because he “prostituted” himself to black clients.⁸

December 31, 1921, until September 1943. City directories for Indianapolis, Indiana, from 1861 to 1960, can be found in the *U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995* database, found online at Ancestry.com. *Houston City Directory, 1920-1921* (Houston: R. L. Polk and Company, 1920), 744, 1712; *Indianapolis City Directory, 1922* (Indianapolis: R. L. Polk and Company, 1922), 2140.

⁸ *WhSp*, February 25, 1921, 5; Criminal Court File Docket book, Case No. 2958, Twenty-Third District Criminal Court, Wharton County, 74. According to a 1925 issue of the *American Bar Association Journal (ABAJ)*, barratry, a criminal offense, meant to “stir up strife and litigation by volunteering advice to bring law suits or by soliciting employment to assert claims.” For a contemporary legal explanation, see Henry Upson Sims, “The Third Problem: Lawyer’s Duty to the Bar,” *ABAJ* 11 (June 1925): 396-398 (quote 397). For a legal history in Texas, see Gerald S. Reamey, “The Crime of Barratry: Criminal Responsibility for a Branch of Professional Responsibility,” *Texas Bar Journal* 53 (October 1990): 1011-1017. Although Reamey notes that “no one seems to know of a case in which a lawyer has been convicted of the offense,” Texas has a history of using the charge to intimidate civil rights lawyers or political opponents, including NAACP attorneys in school integration cases. See, Robyn Duff Ladino, *Desegregating Texas Schools: Eisenhower, Shivers, and the Crisis at Mansfield, Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 133-136; “The South’s Amended Barratry Laws: An Attempt to End Group Pressure Through the Courts,” *Yale Law Journal* 72 (July 1963): 1613-1645. Reviewing issues of the *Wharton Spectator* between April and July of 1920, Shannon’s

The Klansman's concern, however, was not for the sanctity of marriage. As a white attorney from outside the county, Hobbs posed a threat to white supremacy. He brought independent legal expertise to the black community that was outside the established local whites political and social controls, such as the White Man's Union Association. This dynamic had the potential of undermining whites' upper hand in labor disputes, land and mineral rights, and even civil rights. Shannon described Hobbs as "one who had fallen so low, . . . lost to self-respect, that the sacredness of Anglo-Saxon purity is flagrantly flaunted in the face of honor, of decency, and of virtue." About the Klan, he added, "God be praised that there exists an order of [this] nature, for certainly society is purified by the removal of this type of white man." Perhaps his editorial revealed what Shannon found appealing in the order. He joined a week after the Klan attack on Hobbs in Alvin and a week before publishing the editorial.⁹

The Wharton chapter's assault on Schultz was one of many that replicated the first attack on Hobbs, so much so that the press had come to associate tar and feathering, often called the "treatment," with Texas Klan. Between 1921 and 1924, Klansmen and Klanswomen across the state followed the same process of accosting, abducting,

newspaper never reported Hobbs' barratry charge, which, according to the criminal court file docket book, the district criminal court transferred the case to county court. The author was unable to view local criminal court records for the period since they were only accessible on microfiche at the local clerk's annex, which did not have a working microfiche reader.

⁹ *WhSp*, February 25, 1921, 5; F.W. Shannon, Klan Member Dues Binder (hereafter KMDB), Hamilton B. Dickson Klan No. 6 records (hereafter K6R), Wharton County Historical Museum (hereafter WCHM). Shannon wrote about Hobbs in a response to an editorial in his competitor's newspaper, the *Wharton Advertiser*, which chastised the Houston police for their lack of action. The *Advertiser*, a white publication, went out of business not long after. A copy of this newspaper has not been located; Shannon reprinted the editorial.

stripping, tarring, feathering, then returning a target to a public space. Whipping, although not used in these two cases, also became part of the ritualized punishment. Despite the severity of the violence, some newspapers trivialized it playfully, as if causing pain was a game to compete in. For example, the *Port Arthur News* summarized the Texas attacks of early 1921 as if chapters were competing baseball teams. It gave league “Standings in W. T. and F-Whippings, Tarring and Feathering-League, including yesterday’s games follow: Houston 7; Goose Creek 4; Dallas 3; . . .” Some media reports voyeuristically sensationalized each incident which ensured continued public humiliation as knowledge of it spread to national audiences. In one case, from June, 1921, after another Texas chapter tarred-and-feathered a white physician, papers across the country reprinted the same full-page eyewitness account, from a Klansman’s perspective, which detailed nearly every moment and included banner-size drawn illustrations. It noted the “shouting, laughing theatre crowd” who witnessed his “crippled bird” appearance, and gave their audience the same communal Klan experience, to laugh at the victim. It also provided a guide to repeat the ritual.¹⁰

Not included in the newspaper accounts was how the order used its parasitic relationship with law enforcement to control the proceeding investigation and public

¹⁰ Brundage, 17-20; *Evening Public Ledger* (Philadelphia, PA), September 19, 1921, 1, 18; *Fort Wayne Sentinel* (Fort Wayne, Indiana), September 20, 1921, 6; *Detroit Free Press*, September 27, 1921, 3; *Des Moines Tribune*, September 19, 1921, 20; *Port Arthur News*, 20 July 1921, 1; *Oregon Daily Journal* (Portland, OR), June 19, 1921, 59; *Times* (Shreveport, La), June 12, 1921, 37; *Ogden Standard-Examiner* (Ogden, Utah), June 12 1921, 18; *St. Louis Star and Times*, July 3, 1921, 58. The full-page story, which ran in June and July, 1921, detailed the Beaumont Klan’s attack on Dr. J. S. Paul from May, 1921. It included drawn images of him getting into a fancy car, him being pulled out of a car by robed, hooded Klansmen, him covered in feathers, and a large image of nine robed, hooded men applying the tar and feathers.

narrative. In both the Houston and Wharton cases, the first law officers to arrive and to interview the victims were Klansmen, namely Dunman in Houston and Armstrong in Wharton. Both men made official statements to the press about the victims' inability to recognize their attackers and that no investigation would follow. In addition, Houston police chief Murphy and Wharton County Sheriff Kemp, the senior law officers, who presumably would lead each investigation after their arrival, also belonged to the Klan. Likewise, every man who arrived at Schultz's home after the attack to bear witness were also members.¹¹

¹¹ F.W. Shannon, J. P. Taylor, A. H. Armstrong, and C. D. Kemp, KMDB, K6R, WCHM; *El Campo Citizen*, September 9, 1921, 9; Klonslave Minutes, May 18, 1922, Klan No. 6 Minutes Binder (hereafter K6MB), K6R, WCHM; *Galveston Daily News* (hereafter *GDN*) 14 June 1921, 2; Mitchel P. Roth and Tom Kennedy, *Houston Blue: The Story of the Houston Police Department* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2012), 80-82; Casey Greene, "Guardians Against Change: The Ku Klux Klan in Houston and Harris County, 1920-1925," *Houston Review* 10 (No. 1, 1988): 2-5; *Corsicana Semi-Weekly Light*, 28 Oct 1930 p11; *HPost*, January 4, 1918, 14. Chief Murphy has been written about by Casey Greene. Dunman lived on La Branch, same street, albeit a long one, where Hobbs lived. He divorced in 1918. He lived in Temple, Texas, in 1930, when he died from a gunshot in the face while investigating a burglary as a Santa Fe railroad special agent. Significant evidence indicates Houston Night Police Chief Dunman belonged to the Klan. Houston mayor Oscar Holcombe, a Klansman himself for a short time, tried to remove the Klan from the police force in May and June of 1921. After he faced backlash for firing several hooded officers, he publicly claimed the city council had eliminated those particular positions, including night chief, as unnecessary, so the city no longer needed the services of Dunman, Senior Captain George Iiams, and Night Sergeant D. E. Drennan. J. Vann Leeds' membership dues form was not in the binder. The first time he appeared in the Klavern minutes as the Klexter officer on May 18, 1922. His name was not listed with other new inductees on the back of the Klavern minutes before that, which indicates he joined before Kligrapp Leland Brooks began the practice, which was before March 31, 1921. Leeds co-owned with possible Klansman E. L. Moore, a soda bottling plant called Crystal Bottling Works, located in the town of Wharton. He and Moore served in the military during World War I and both belonged to the American Legion. Leeds resigned from the Klan on September 7 1922, same day as an "L. E. Moore," whose identity could not be confirmed with certainty. James P. Taylor, an accountant, served as the WMUA secretary, as county auditor, on the Wharton Salvation Army board, and was a Mason and a Knight of Pythias. In 1923, he became the Klokard. He was the grandson of Rachel Northington Hudgins, from her first marriage, and raised with cousins in the Hudgins family. Both of his sons-in-law join the Klan. His older brother Joel M. Taylor, divorced, was a founding member of the WMUA, and although living in

Armstrong and Kemp, both charter members of Klan No. 6, served on the Klokann committee, which officially served as the membership gatekeepers by checking if new members were worthy of inclusion. According to testimony of several former Klansmen, the Klokann also utilized their police resources and other members in the telegraph, telephone, railroad, and postal offices to conduct investigations on prospective targets like Schultz and Hobbs. They oversaw investigations and planned the attack, then coordinated the attacks with other chapters, especially when they were concerned their target might recognize their voices so “if anything happens, they [would] be strangers.” Regardless of who committed the actual crime against Schultz, Klansmen on the Klokann committee, who likely orchestrated it, controlled the investigation and ensured the order’s protection.¹²

From former Klansmen’s testimony, the Klan did not discuss targets, the spy

Wharton at the time, did not join the Klan. One of his seven children joined. The rest lived with their mother in Houston. Joel died in 1928 of Tuberculosis. His younger brother Mentor F. Taylor, who served as Kligrapp after Leland Brooks, was divorced and owned in the confectionary store.

¹² A. H. Armstrong, and C. D. Kemp, KMDB, K6R, WCHM; Klonklave Minutes, May 5, 1921, K6MB, K6R, WCHM; *Senator from Texas*, 682-689; Armstrong was chief Klokann from December 1920 until May 5, 1921, when he became Kladd. At that time the committee grew from three members to seven. From the records and later court testimony, he was a particularly active member who met with Klansmen in other towns. C. D. Kemp served on the committee until April 26, 1922. Banker Boone C. Roberts followed as Klokann chief, who was proceeded by physician Dr. Green L. Davidson, Sr. Other members of the committee included banker P. G. Brooks, Iago merchant Almus Mick, attorney John H. H. Dennis, farm owner Shaderick P. Rowe, traveling drug salesman Albert F. Moreland, and school board member John H. Herring, Sr. The committee condensed to three on April 26, 1922. In October, 1924, Dr. Davidson became the Exalted Cyclops and John Norris, county judge, became chief. Dennis, Rowe, Brooks, and Davidson came from old planter families who played pivotal roles in the founding of the WMUA. All the Klokanns except Moreland, had considerable land holdings. All were Masons.

system, or attacks in open Klonklave. Supporting this contention, the Hamilton B. Dickson Klan minutes never addressed area attacks or acts of intimidation, even to condemn or investigate specific incidents, much less to order them. Open Klonklaves tended to focus on the more mundane business of the chapter, such as how to store the equipment, rent for the hall, and preparations for social events.¹³ For the meetings immediately before and after Schultz's attack, the Klavern minutes actually showed little activity at all. Few probably attended, as it was not unusual for white middle-class and landed families to take extended trips during the summer, an old practice in rice plantation areas to avoid malaria season. Still, the minutes for June 16, four days before Schultz's attack, were notably irregular, which suggests that officers knew and possibly helped orchestrate the attack. That particular Klonklave started a half hour early and Kligrapp Brooks left the entire section blank, which he had never done prior to that day. Furthermore, in another first, *all* of the officers attended. Prior to this, at least two officers had been marked absent at every meeting, including the first one. With few in

¹³ *Senator from Texas*, 124-129, 683, 686; MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry*, 167-171; Pegram, 165-173; Klonklave Minutes, June 2, June 16, July 21, August 4, K6MB, K6R, WCHM. Initially they met in the Woodmen of the World Hall. By mid-February, the chapter had outgrown the space and moved to the Norton Opera House, on the corner of Milam and Richmond—where Schultz would be kidnapped a few months later. Opera house owner and charter member, George Northington Jr allowed the chapter “complete control . . . at all times” of the hall. Armstrong and Leland Brooks directed the move and “arrange[d] the hall,” probably to fit the Kloran diagram. Armstrong also had hooks installed in the locker for robes, where they were kept when not in use, and coat-and-hat racks brought in. John R. Crawford, an electrician in the chapter, mounted drop lights and added another door. With secrecy as a primary concern, Brooks set up a post office box so membership forms could be mailed to new members and returned anonymously. After the summer, members decided to remove names from inside the robes and use numbers instead. J.P. Taylor was elected custodian, which did not have a Klan pseudonym. Later minutes stated only that the EC ordered the hall cleaned. Considering the time and place, circumstances beg the question as to who actually cleaned the hall and laundered the robes.

attendance and no record of what was said, an attack could have been planned easily in the Klavern.¹⁴

In fact, only one act of violence, a murder committed in Wallis, Texas, by a Wallis Klansman in late 1921, appeared in the entire set of minutes. Its peripheral mention came connected to a request for money to nearby Klans. As recorded by the Kligrapp, county treasurer and Kludd (chaplain) John Norris received a letter “regarding a brother Klansman having to kill a man on account of “some trouble” in which

¹⁴ Klonklave Minutes, June 2, June 16, July 21, August 4, K6MB, K6R, WCHM; Donald Lee Grant, *The Way It was in the South: The Black Experience in Georgia* (University of Georgia Press, 1993), 33. Also unusual, the handwriting of the officers’ names on the June 16, 1921, minutes differs from previous minutes, indicating someone else may have written it. Also, Brooks typically used block print to mark attendance, but that night’s attendance was in cursive. The Kligrapp also left the August 4, 1921 Klonklave minutes blank. That meeting started thirty minutes later than regular time, but only four officers attended. The Exalted Cyclops was absent. On June 2, the only officers present were Kladd Armstrong Kludd John Norris, and Klokanns Shederick Pinckney Rowe and John H. H. Dennis. Dennis and Rowe, both attorneys drew up Schultz’s mother’s final will that left her entire estate to Schultz. They also represented Schultz when his sisters contested the mother’s will, a case that was heard by then county judge John Norris. Those inducted June 16: James L. Neal, farm owner and brother to two charter members; Episcopal minister George Ossman; stockman and S&P engineer Charles Morrison of Damon Mound, Brazoria County; Tom E. Morrison, engineer for oil companies and son of Charles; brothers Louis and Dick Obenhouse, farmers in Egypt; Claude D. Otto, nephew of A. R. Hudgins and S. D. Purivance, and salesman in Hungerford; and Samuel D. Purivance, county commissioner for precinct 1, farmed on brother-in-law A. R. Hudgin’s land. June 2, 1921, included William H. Taylor and John B. Bell. Taylor worked as a railway express agent, who handled packages and mail shipped by train. He moved to Wharton (town) after 1918. Methodist Minister John B. Bell came to Wharton in late 1920, then in 1923, moved to Troup, Texas. Exalted Cyclops James R. Cox also moved to Troup. Not dissuaded by the violence, those inducted after the attack on July 21, 1921, included J. L. Dickson, sales clerk; Tilly Hudgins, deputy sheriff, and Reverend Robert E. Early, a Baptist minister. Hudgins, age forty-seven, was the last of the local Hudgins cousins to join, having only recently moved back to town. In 1920, according to the census, he lived in Matagorda County and worked as a rice farm laborer. He never married and died of colon cancer in 1930. Reverend Early *joined after the Klan attacked Schultz*, a known Klan attack, which indicates KKK violence was not a deterrent to membership for him. later testified on behalf of Schultz in the legal contest over his mother’s will. For railway occupation descriptions, see H. Roger Grant, *Railroads and the American People* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012).

Klansman had to protect his life in the moment . . .” It requested “financial assistance” for a legal defense estimated at \$1,300. Acting Exalted Cyclops (EC) John B. Bell, a Methodist minister, ordered the Klokan committee to investigate the matter with the Wallis EC and report at the next meeting on January 7, 1922, “to determine just how much can be sent in.” This last rather telling phrase showed an assumption of financial support for a “brother Klansman,” regardless of the investigation’s result. Their monetary support did not seem to be predicated on circumstances surrounding the incident or who was killed, but solely on Klan membership. This assumption was not new. It echoed an older similar practice seen in Wharton County court records, where local white businessmen and planter families collectively paid the bond for their indicted brethren in the criminal court. As with that older tradition, the Klan membership allowed access to a network of financial support to use for legal protection. Legal funds were a privilege of the white brotherhood.¹⁵

Organizational protection for Klan violence went deeper than controlled investigations, controlled press, and legal funds. It also included legal representation and a behind-the-scene Klan representative. In Kleagle George Kimbro’s testimony to the U.S. Senate Committee on Elections in 1924, he explained his effort to control an

¹⁵ Klonklave Minutes, December 1, 1921, K6MB, K6R, WCHM. William Felix Needham substituted as Kligrapp for Brooks, who was absent. The murder happened in Wallis, located at the southern end of Austin County, about 25 miles northeast of Wharton and 17 miles east of Eagle Lake. William A. McCown, misspelled as McCowan in the minutes, presented a motion, and J. P. Taylor seconded, to send this to the Klokan committee to investigate and contact the Wallis Exalted Cyclops. The minutes made no further mention of the event. The page for January 7, 1922, was not found in the binder. The author has not been able to identify any specific information about the murder from newspapers.

investigation of a July 1921 tar-and-feathering in Waco, Texas. There, Saxet Klan No. 33 gave the “treatment” to Kennedy Cummings, a twenty-two-year old white baker, before they even publically announced their chapter with a parade. The reasons given for the attack wavered from bothering white women to selling drugs to Baylor University students. The local chapter had followed the ritual published in newspapers; however, it failed to set up the behind-the scene protocols that controlled the investigation used in the Hobbs and Schultz attacks.¹⁶

When the local police arrested two prominent businessmen, a foreman, and city detective George Jackson, the Klan secretly protected them against felony charges of whitecapping. Texas Grand Dragon, and soon to be Imperial Wizard, Hiram W. Evans sent Kimbro to Waco to “smooth matters.” To do this, Kimbro testified that he recruited several police officers and a district judge into the white brotherhood “to stop any further investigation in the case.” By joining and taking the Klan oath, these men bound themselves to protect the order and fellow members. The newly-recruited officers’ testimony called the evidence and timeline into question and undermined the

¹⁶ *Senator from Texas*, 116, 682-683; Katherine Kuehler Walters, “The Great War in Waco, Texas: African Americans, Race Relations, and the White Primary, 1916-1922,” (Master’s Thesis, Southwest Texas State University, 2000), 63-64; *Waco News-Tribune* (hereafter *WNT*), July 1, 1921, 1. Klansmen attempted to kidnap Cummings in June 1921, but abandoned the plan when Cummings’s wife shot at them. After a successful second try, the men forced Cummings, tarred and feathered, out of their car in front of Waco’s city hall, with a sign that read “This is a sample—evil doers and pro-Germans beware—100 percent Americans. Ku Klux Klan.” No evidence has been found that suggests Cummings had pro-German sentiments. He was a first-generation American, born in Tennessee to parents born in Scotland and Ireland, and had lived in Waco since 1904. He left town after the attack. He has not been found in the 1930 census, but died in 1936 in San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas, the city where his brother lived.

prosecution's case to the grand jury. Kimbro's recruited judge was likely former district judge Erwin J. Clark, who served as the Klansmen's legal co-counsel. Evans later hired Clark as the Klan attorney for the entire Realm of Texas and made him the Great Titan over the Waco Province. He and his co-counsel did not offer a defense. The court dismissed charges against Jackson and released the others on bond. Much like the Wharton Klansmen's support for their Wallis brethren, over a hundred white men, including two Confederate veterans, the president of Baylor University, and Clark, lined up to "request the privilege" to put up the Waco Klansmen's bond. Several who signed their bond never joined the order. By joining that list, however, they publically gave their support to the Klan, making them complicit in the violence. The charges were eventually dismissed. Jackson received a standing ovation.¹⁷

¹⁷ *Senator from Texas*, 683 (quote); *WNT*, July 13, 1921, 1; *WNT*, August 6 1921, 10; Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, "Race, Reform, and Retrenchment: Transformation and Legitimation in Antidiscrimination Law," *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement*, eds. Kimberlé Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, and Kendall Thomas (New York: New Press, 1995), 117. Judge James R. Jenkins over saw the bond hearing. William L. Edmond, Bowden W. Hays, Jr., and Oscar D. Reed were arrested with Jackson and released on bond. The court initially dropped the charges against Jackson, and soon followed on the other three. Instead of facing the grand jury, Edmond was chosen to serve on it for the fall term. Attorney Charles S. Farmer, also a Klansman, served as lead counsel, and Walton Taylor as co-counsel. Farmer defeated Tirey in the 1922 election for county attorney. Clark, son of 1892 Texas Democratic gubernatorial candidate and attorney George W. Clark, legally represented several area Klan or pro-Klan clients before being named chief counsel for the realm in May 1922. Richard H. Fair, "'The Good Angel of Practical Fraternity': The Ku Klux Klan in McLennan County, 1915-1924," (Master's Thesis: Baylor University, 2009), 44, 59-60, 79. Unlike his thorough coverage over the Lorena Klan parade violence, Fair's version of Clark's initiation in the KKK and the Cummings case has several errors and differs from the author's account used here. Fair gave Cummings' first name as Kenneth, and stated that an Edwin J. Clark started Saxet Klan No. 33 and "declared himself Grand Titan." The account given here is based on Kimbro's and Clark's testimony in front of the 1924 U.S. Senate Committee on Elections and, where Clark's memory regarding dates and order of events seemed unreliable, Waco newspapers. For a different interpretation on the founding of Saxet No. 33, see Walters, "The Great War in Waco, Texas," 62. Baylor's president Samuel P. Brooks, no relation to those in Wharton, stated he stayed out of the 1922 U.S. Senatorial race in Texas because he did not

Not only did the order provide financial and legal aid to its members, the Texas KKK used the court system to further discredit their victims to juxtapose their attacks as legitimate retribution in the eyes of the public. It did this by accessing the power held by its members to bring criminal charges, and sway juries with weak or perjured testimony to convict those they targeted, just as they did to release Klansmen. In his 1924 U.S. Senate testimony, Kimbro spoke about two “treatments” used on a U.S. Marine and a doctor in Beaumont, stating, “the klan, as usual, claimed [they] had been guilty of immoralities, etc., and in order to bolster this claim, indictments were secured against them, and every energy of the Klan was exerted to secure convictions.” As part of that “energy,” the chapter recruited physician Dr. T. W. Hancock into the order, bind him to the brotherhood with the Klan oath, and manipulate his testimony against the two white men. In that particular case, Hancock refused to perjure himself, but others did. Later, in front of another grand jury, he was asked in regard to the Klan oath, “Are you going to stand behind him regardless of the law?” He replied affirmatively and added, “Stand by him and get him out.” In addition to Waco and Beaumont, evidence shows Klansmen lied to juries in Navarro County and De Witt County, and other victims faced indictments, including Cummings, who pled guilty to vagrancy.¹⁸

belong to the Klan. See, Norman D. Brown, *Hood, Bonnet, and Little Brown Jug, 1921-1928* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1984), 91.

¹⁸ *Senator from Texas*, 682, 683 (Kimbro quote), 687 (Hancock quote), 688, 692-694; Walters, “The Great War in Waco, Texas,” 72-73; Alexander, 42; *GDN*, May 8, 1921, 1; *GDN*, May 24, 1921, 1; *Port Arthur News*, May 27, 1921, 1; *HPost*, July 17, 1921, 1; *GDN*, September 18, 1921, 1, 4; *HPost*, November 27, 1921, 1. Dr. J. S. Paul was assaulted in early May and Scott in mid-July, 1921. The woman named Paul as the doctor who performed an abortion on her, which caused “her trouble” and led her to see Dr. Hancock, who could not testify that the operation caused it. She alleged that Scott, a Marine during World War I, was the father.

By mid-summer, KKK violence had spiraled so far out of the national and state Klan's control that leadership shifted tactics to regain control and improve their public relations. The Beaumont cases, as well as cases in Travis County and Williamson County, made clear that some judges and attorneys disagreed with the Klan's lawless tactics. After a white woman in Tenaha, Texas, was tarred and feathered in mid-July, KKK leadership ordered Kimbro to "whitewash" or cover up crimes committed by area members. The Houston Province called a meeting of the Exalted Cyclops in August to direct local chapters to publicly deny responsibility for all violence.¹⁹

For weeks after, newspapers across the state published official letters from local chapters restating their rhetorical illusion of moral purpose, denied violence, and warned those acting in its name. Papers also reported more charitable donations made by their local chapters. At the first well-attended Klan No. 6 meeting after the summer, the head of the Klokann committee gave a speech about the role and responsibility of the committee to the chapter and what the committee expected of the chapter's membership.

Hancock also stated the woman said "many times that her whole heart's desire was of putting Scott behind bars and at the same time convict Paul for the Ku Klux." For more on national press coverage of the Paul whitecapping, see footnote 10. Klan violence in Travis and Williamson County also faced national attention, albeit not to the extent of Beaumont. These cases had in common judges who rebuked the order. As in Waco, the Beaumont Klansmen faced a jury. Their attorney made Klan hand signals to the jury during the proceedings. Even the KKK chapter had publically taken responsibility for the attack on Paul and Scott, for which the Imperial Office publically revoked their charter, the jury cited insufficient evidence and let them go.

¹⁹ *Senator from Texas*, 683. In a Spectator editorial, Shannon chastised the Beaumont District Judge for allegedly making statements threatening to kill any Klansmen who act suspiciously around him. Without irony, Shannon hypocritically wrote, "Killing a man who might 'act suspiciously' around him is a queer way in which to uphold the constitution." See, *WhSp*, October 7, 1921, 4.

Essentially the Klokann committee sought to restore order to the organization by reasserting the committee's control over the group's coercive devices of intimidation and violence. In accord with the larger shift, the chapter gave fifty dollars to a widow in July and two cords of wood to another woman in November, both anonymously delivered with official notes to two well-respected white men in Wharton with the request to deliver the items to these needy women. Both men belonged to the order.²⁰

Despite organizational efforts to control their own, social acceptance of the KKK and their proclivities had emboldened white Texans, in and outside the order, to emulate their practices as a matter of white privilege. Many, however, were drawn to the

²⁰ *Taylor Daily Press*, May 24, 1921, 1; *WNT*, July 27, 1921, 1; *Corsicana Daily Sun*, August 13, 1921, 1; *WhSp*, August 12, 1921, 1, 6; *WhSp*, September 23, 1921, 1; *Courier-Gazette* (McKinney, Texas), August 17, 1921, 1; Klonklave Minutes, September 16, 1921, K6MB, K6R, WCHM; *Eagle*, September 8, 1921, 1; *Eagle*, September 29, 1921, 1; *Eagle Lake Headlight*, July 16, 1921, 10; *WhSp*, July 8 1921, 1. The letter printed by the McKinney paper came with a donation for a local charity, a similar statement of deniability, but a contains more overtly intimidating language than many others. By the end of the summer, several anti-KKK groups had formed in Texas as a response to lawlessness and concerns about secrecy of Klansmen on juries. Public statements by whites against the Klan in Wharton have not been found. Klan No. 6's first "charitable" donation was to Colonel William J. Simmons. Klonklave on April 21, 1921, noted \$100 for building a \$25,000 Imperial Palace in Atlanta. The Klonklave minutes did not mention the fifty-dollar donation made during the summer. Leland Brooks "received" the first request to deliver the money. Oswald Garrett, postmaster and former school superintendent, received the second. Garrett's brother-in-law, through his wife, was Texas Comptroller Lon A. Smith. Although never confirmed, some historians suspected Smith belonged to the Klan because of his eventual 1925 position on the Texas Railroad Commission, which was heavily influenced by Texas Railroad Commissioner Allison Mayfield, who died in 1923, and his brother Earle B. Mayfield, who won the 1922 U.S. Senate seat for Texas with aid from the Realm's political machine. Smith also appointed two Klansmen as Oil and Gas division deputy supervisors. For more on Smith, the Klan, the Mayfields, and the Texas Railroad Commission, see William R. Childs, *The Texas Railroad Commission: Understanding Regulation in America to the Mid-Twentieth Century* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2005), 156, 172-173. The U.S. Senate investigated the Mayfield election for possible electoral corruption by the Klan in 1924. For the hearing transcripts, see *Senator from Texas*. For more on the Klan's role in the Earle Mayfield election, Brown, *Hood, Bonnet, and Brown Jug*.

empowering gratification consumed through vigilante violence, which came with few consequences, and not the rhetorical message of moral correction. So the violence continued. A few weeks after Schultz's assault, and the same week as the Klavern's first public donation, an unofficial "Junior Ku Klux" formed, held a parade, then covered a fellow boy with corn syrup and cotton seed hulls. When one of their group "talked too much" about the attack, a dishonorable act that defied their junior brotherhood, they punished him by striking him on the backside, likely with a switch. With a hint of humor, the paper stated the boy "had his pants fanned," and learned his lesson. Echoing previous articles on the Schultz's attack and the April parade, Shannon wrote, "The *Spectator* editor does not profess to know who belongs to the Kid Klan," but proudly added, without fear of criminal assault charges, that the group included his youngest son, twelve-year-old Carl, and Carl's friends. The message their youth had received had more to do with masculine power and honor than morality.²¹

Whites in Wharton long ago had accepted physical violence, even when emulated by children, as right of white elite masculinity, regardless of the victim's race or guilt. Conservatively, at least twenty-three men in the Klan or men in their immediate family had faced murder charges since the WMUA took over. Senator William Hall, Sheriff Kemp, William Barbee, and his father James G. Barbee allegedly gunned down

²¹ *Eagle Lake Headlight*, July 16, 1921, 10; *WhSp*, July 8 1921, 1. For more on the idea of Klan violence, see Elaine Frantz Parsons, *Ku Klux: The Birth of the Klan during Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015). The national organization, then under Imperial Wizard Hiram Evans, formally established a Junior Ku Klux Klan in 1923. For more on the junior auxiliary, see Kathleen M. Blee, *Women of the Klan: Racism and Gender in the 1920s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

Hope Adams, a white man, in the street because he challenged the WMUA election in 1892. They also faced charges for “selling whiskey to minors,” which along with the murder charges, were dropped. Later, William Barbee faced assault charges in 1908 when he stabbed two men, one fatally, during an argument about a baseball game. Kemp faced murder charges again in 1905, as did John A. Elmore and James Ray. Brothers James A. and Spencer M. Clements, and their cousin James F. Burford, survived the Stafford-Townsend-Reese Feud that killed most of their brothers between 1871 and 1911. Two other brothers, Ed and Robert Farmer watched their father Henry violently take local government from black Republicans as a Jaybird, Fort Bend County’s WMUA, in the Jaybird-Woodpecker war in 1888 and 1889. While in the Klan in 1923, James Frank Hodges, grandson of a former county judge, killed an inebriated friend of his by slashing open an artery during a fight over a girl. In 1924, Hugh M. Hudgins shot August Wilbeck with a double-barrel shotgun at close range a day after Hudgins’ divorce. Wilbeck had been romantically involved with Hudgins’ wife, and they planned to marry once the divorce was finalized. Wilbeck bled to death on the same spot where the Klan shoved Schultz out of the car, between F. I. Moore’s store and Santo’s Gem Theater. Showing the limits of brotherhood, both Wilbeck and Hudgins belonged to Klan No. 6.²²

²² *Laredo Weekly Times*, 23 Aug 1908, 4; Criminal Court File Docket book, Case No. 2958, Twenty-Third District Criminal Court, Wharton County; *WhSp* November 23, 1923, 1; *WhSp*, December 19, 1924. For more on the Stafford-Townsend Feud, see James C. Kearney, with Bill Stein and James Smallwood, *No Hope for Heave, No Fear of Hell: The Stafford-Townsend Feud of Colorado County, Texas, 1871-1911* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2016). On a double date, James Frank Hodges’ friend Huston Faubion allegedly had been sexually harassing Faubion’s date. Both men had been drinking. Hodges bond was signed by

Klan Violence, Race, and Motivation

Assertions that members of the 1920s Texas Klan acted as civically concerned citizens seeking a way to restore moral order because law officers failed to enforce anti-vice laws, such as prohibition or prostitution controls, or because modernity weakened Protestant family values have been largely based on Klan rhetoric, lists of Klan violence printed in large-market newspapers, and extensive research in areas where the African-American community may have been particularly small. With the benefit of recent interdisciplinary scholarship on race and gender, an alternative perspective that explains why the historical records were skewed toward reporting white violence, while extracting individual motivations, and contextualizing white behavior in terms of the racialized constructions of the period, can re-center white supremacy as the purpose of the Ku Klux Klan.²³

Broadening the definition of violence to include concepts of collective memory and psychic violence allows a better understanding of the larger impact the Klan's presence had on African American communities throughout the nation. Psychic violence tortures through inflicting intense fear and anxiety to socially control an individual or

Klansmen P.G. Brooks, W. M. Stafford, J. H H. Dennis, William Barbee, J. H. Herring, and Hodges brother Wylie Hodges. The brothers' grandfather Judge Wylie J. Croom, not a member, a man from El Campo, and two men from Fort Bend also signed. Forrest Damon, personal friend of Kimbro, completed the list. On Hudgins' bond were all Klansmen: E. G. Brooks, L. G. Rust, J. R. Praytor, Exalted Cyclops G. L. Davidson, Klokian B. C. Roberts, P. G. Brooks, and T. M. Neal.

²³ Alexander, xvii, 58-59; Lay, *The Invisible Empire in the West*, 220.

specific group. Historically, when directed at a group of people, such as in prisoner of war camps or the daily trauma experienced during segregation by African-Americans, those in power inflicted psychic violence on a less powerful group through the physical torture of one of its individuals, which would degrade those marginalized while simultaneously providing a “psychic payoff” for those in power. Nearly every symbolic element of the 1920s KKK intended to cause such fear. Although heroes in the collective memory of white Southerners, in narratives constructed in black Southerners’ collective memory the group were terrorists. The symbols used by the organization, the metaphorical Invisible Empire’s illusion of omnipresence, the hood, robe, and fiery cross, all retained meaning throughout the twentieth century, because they held a message of intimidation. The Klan marching down Wharton’s streets or in printed notices in the newspapers, as well as the explicit warnings tacked up in Freedman town in April 1921, was an act of psychic violence, especially in a county whose Reconstruction ended only thirty years earlier. Even the name of the organization, inherited from its Reconstruction ancestor, was weighted with intimidation, and any violence committed by the 1920s Klan, even on white victims, communicated the power of this organization.²⁴

²⁴ Kidada E. Williams, *They Left Great Marks on Me: African American Testimonies of Racial Violence* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 49-50; Kwando Mbiassi Kinshasa, *Black Resistance to the Ku Klux Klan in the Wake of the Civil War* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland and Company, 2006), 2, 118-125; Polymeris Voglis, *Becoming a Subject: Political Prisoners During the Greek Civil War* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002), 130-135; Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 33 (quote); Ruth Thompson-Miller and Leslie H. Picca, “There Were Rapes!”: Sexual Assaults of African American Women and Children in Jim Crow,” *Violence Against Women* (Journal), 23 (July 2016), 934-950; Jonathan Markovitz, *Legacies of Lynching: Racial Violence and Memory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 34-41; Carole Emberton and Bruce E.

Recognition of the role of psychic racial violence, however, does not explain the racial disparity of physical violence reported by Texas Klan historians. As stated before, Klan tar-and-feather assaults found in the Schultz case made state and national news by following the ritual set in the Hobbs case; however, this device had deep roots that ritualistically racialized it as white. Since early America, white society used this tactic to punish and publically shame whites for immoral or contrary behavior, while using more brutal violence against blacks for a much broader array of triggers. In her syndicated column, Dorothy Dix praised the “Amalgamated Tar and Feather Brigade” in 1908 when a white man allegedly seduced another man’s wife because she felt the public shaming emasculated the man, eliminated the need for trial, and removed “burden” of murder for the husband. Although hot tar used often caused extensive burns, had the seducer been African American, the outcome would have been drastically different. In the early Twentieth century, white mobs often assumed the so-called burden, some would say extra-legal privilege, of murder in such cases. All things considered, emasculation through public shaming seems preferable to castration and death.²⁵

Baker, eds, *Remembering Reconstruction: Struggles Over the Meaning of America’s Most Turbulent Era* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2017).

²⁵ Dorothy Dix, “Moral Value of Tar and Feathers,” *Jasper Weekly Courier* (Jasper, Indiana), 25 Sep 1908, 1. The model for the Hobbs attack had older roots but the association with the 1920s Klan in Texas began with this first reported case. Until relatively recently, white academia ignored or marginalized the subject of lynching in U.S. history, even as African-American and Jewish sociologists and historians wrote about the economic, political, and psychological impact the practice had on black communities. In the last thirty years, however, lynching has been extensively researched from numerous interdisciplinary approaches. For more on United States’ history of lynching, see W. Fitzhugh Brundage, ed., *Under Sentence of Death: Lynching in the South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); James Allen, Leon F. Litwack, and Hilton Als, *Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America* (Santa Fe: Twin Palms, 2000); Robert L. Zangrando, *The NAACP Crusade Against Lynching, 1909-*

Furthermore, newspapers arguably reported Klan-on-white violence more because they found it more sensationalistic so more profitable. Large-market newspapers found any Klan stories helped newspapers sales, and starting with the Hobbs case in 1921, closely associated tar-and-feathering with the Klan. One theory may be newspaper editors concentrated on the method of attack more than the race of the victim when attributing violence to the order after the order decided to white-wash events. More likely, the history of white-on-black brutality seen in scores of lynchings made Klan warnings and assaults, often whippings, seem less noteworthy to editors and readers, when compared to white lawyers and doctors facing humiliation..²⁶

Warnings and whippings reported in newspapers happened because the paper

1950 (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980). For Texas, see William Carrigan, *The Making of a Lynching Culture: Violence and Vigilantism in Central Texas, 1836-1916* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2004); Cynthia Nevels, *Lynching to Belong: Claiming Whiteness Through Racial Violence* (College Station: Texas A&M University, 2007). For examples of tar-and-feathering during the American Revolutionary period, see Paul A. Gilje, *Rioting in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999).

²⁶ Felix Harcourt, *Ku Klux Kulture: America and the Klan in the 1920s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 12-14; Thompson-Miller and Leslie H. Picca, "There Were Rapes!", 934-950; Sarah Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 25-30, 110-111. Examples of more recent tar-and-feather cases from across the nation, as well as literary examples, can be found easily through electronic searches of newspaper databases. For examples, see "Tar and Feathers, Applied to the Person of Adj. Gen. Tarsney," *Indianapolis Journal*, June 24, 1894, 4; "Kidnapped by Masked Men," *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* (Honolulu, Hawaii), September 18, 1895, 3; "Ordered to Leave Town By Citizens," *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 19, 1901, 2; "Tar and Feathers for Four Persons, Man and Three Women Severely Punished," *Emery County Progress* (Castle Dale, Utah), August 4, 1906, 4; "Tar and Feathers and Brand are Applied to Emma Goldman's Manager at San Diego," *East Oregonian* (Pendleton, Oregon), May 15, 1912, 1; "Fled From Tar and Feathers; Cop Get Couple," *Pittsburgh Press*, August 14, 1915, 2; "Ordered to Go Away," *Democratic Banner* (Mount Vernon, Ohio), May 2, 1916, 5; "Bicknell Saloon Man Promises to be Loyal," *Indianapolis News*, March 29, 1918, 1. Jonathan Markovitz, *Legacies of Lynching: Racial Violence and Memory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 1-30.

was either notified by the targeted individual or by law enforcement. This begs the question: how many blacks or Mexicans would have gone to the newspaper or law enforcement, especially if they could not claim middle-class respectability? The county did not have a history of frequent lynchings, like Waco or Paris, Texas, but had a long history of systemic racism within the justice system, including disproportionate sentencing for blacks and whites, frequent round-ups of blacks as suspects, arrests of strangers or new-to-town/traveling-through; brutal punishments and deaths of leased convicts on local plantations, extra-legal executions (while-trying-to-escape) by law enforcement officers, and killed-in-the-line-of-duty deaths of officers by those they pursued, including Hamilton B. Dixon. Newspaper editors that joined the order showed overt sympathy in their reporting. Because of this history, it is highly unlikely anyone of color would report these events, and many, instead, collected what belongings they could and left their homes, children in tow, for Houston or nearby homes of friends and family. Without a written record, historians have no way of knowing how many black families the Klan threatened, attacked by Klan or incarcerated by Klan-instigated charges, which was the basis for Alexander's argument.²⁷

²⁷ *WhSp*, 8 July 1921, 6. The NAACP lynching record, compiled largely by the *Chicago New-Tribune* and the Tuskegee Institute, recorded two lynching incidents, the murder of the Crocker family and of an unknown black man, both in 1895. The more recent Equal Justice Initiative recorded four men killed in 1920. The author suspects many incidents went unreported or unnoticed by larger-market newspapers, such as the lynching of Ben Price in Glen Flora in 1908, found in *Amarillo Weekly Herald*, 8 October 1908, 7. David Chapman, "Lynching in Texas," (Master's Thesis, Texas Tech University, 1973), 100-101. For the NAACP list, see NAACP, *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States, 1889-1918* (New York: NAACP National Office, 1919). For more on the Equal Justice Initiative, see their website at eji.org. For an excellent analysis of memory, racial violence, and lost narratives in Fort Bend County and Wharton County, with particular attention to Kendleton, the Freedman town that to this day skirts the county line, see Maria Theresa Hernández, *Cemeteries of Ambivalent Desire*:

Two Wharton-related attacks which happened outside the county illustrate how mainstream newspapers missed Klan-on-black violence. In early 1923, Dr. Julius G. Smith, an African-American physician from the town of Wharton, burned to death in a Bishop calaboose in Nueces County, Texas, near Corpus Christi. Reasons given for his death by various publications split along the color line. What was known was Smith had been arrested by sheriff's deputies for reckless driving. The NAACP magazine *The Crisis* stated that a mob took him from the jail, then killed and burned him, because he "act[ed] like a white man." Exactly how he acted white was not explained, but whites have killed black men for economic success before. Historians William D. Carrigan and Clive Webb uncovered a similar story, that Smith's car broke down, and when he asked for help from a white woman passing by, she accused him of assault. Carrigan and Webb uncovered the story through local oral histories researching undocumented racial violence against Mexicans by whites in South Texas. According to those oral histories, local members of the *La Comisión Honorífica*, a group similar to a *sociedades mutualista* or mutual aid society but organized through the Mexican Consulate, identified the Klan as responsible for Smith's death, and in response, spearheaded an effective resistance and pushed the Klan out of town.²⁸

Unearthing Deep South Narratives from a Texas Graveyard (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008).

²⁸ *Crisis*, 26 (October 1923), 260; William D. Carrigan and Clive Webb, *Forgotten Dead: Mob Violence against Mexicans in the United States, 1848-1928* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 147-148; Cynthia E. Orozco, "Comisión Honorífica Mexicana," *Handbook of Texas Online*, found online at <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/pqc01>; Julie Leininger Pycior, "Sociedades Mutalistas," *Handbook of Texas Online*, found online at <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/ves01>. The 1920 census for Wharton, Texas,

The Wharton Spectator told a notably different story. In Shannon's version, Smith killed himself. Smith lived in Wharton, where he had a hospital for local black patients, since 1910. Driving home from Kingsville, he had a traffic accident with "a Mexican in a buggy," which led to his arrest. While in the small, wooden calaboose, he lit a fire to keep warm and died in the resulting blaze. Shannon further criminalized him as "crazy drunk" and claimed he was under indictment for "dope peddling." Shannon's convenient story criminalized Smith, one of the previously noted devices used by the Klan to claim legitimacy. As in other cases, the Klan utilized their members power in law enforcement and in the press to indict Smith's character both in Wharton and Nueces Counties. And his death away from Wharton fit with testimony given by Kimbro about working through other chapters to commit violence to protect members of the order. Since his death did not look like the tamer tar and feather parties used on white victims, white newspapers intimate the possible connection, if they reported it at all.²⁹

shows Smith was not married and born in Ohio in approximately 1870. His death certificate placed his birth in 1861 in San Augustine, Texas.

²⁹ Ibid., *WhSp*, 12 January 1923, 1; By 1923, several Wharton Klansmen, including John C. Studeman, Halbert Winborn, Frank Shannon's son, and Albert H. Armstrong had moved to Beeville, in Bee County, and Corpus Christi in adjacent Nueces County, with Bishop, a small town, in between. Beeville took a stand early against the Klan in 1921 and had an anti-Klan sheriff named Denver Chestnutt. He had become Catholic when he married. His brother Charles Chestnutt, of Wharton, did belong to the Klan. Winborn worked for the S&P railroad and his wife was head of the Wharton County Women's KKK. Studeman worked for the Wharton electric plant then was transferred to Bee County. His brother Ed Studeman, a banker, had a Klan funeral after he committed suicide in 1924. After these Wharton men moved to Beeville, the local Klan grew in number and purchased a permanent meeting place, three miles north of town. Armstrong lived there for less than a year. *San Patricio County News* (Sinton, Texas), November 1, 1923, 4; *San Patricio County News*, August 31, 1944, 1, 4; *Věstník* (Fayetteville, Tex.), October 22, 1924, 13; *WhSp* September 1, 1924, 3; *WhSp*, July 4, 1924, 2; Klonklave Minutes, July 9 1924, K6MB, K6R, WCHM.

Another example consisted of a conspiracy to commit murder between Klansmen in Houston and Wharton that directly targeted an African-American civil rights leader and newspaper editor in Houston in 1921, yet the story did not become publically known until unrelated circumstances put it in newspapers. Even then, few newspapers called much attention to the murder plot. In 1925, in Judge Ewing Boyd's Fifty-Fifth District court room, former Klan Kleagle George B. Kimbro laughed as he told the jurors how the Houston and Wharton Klans planned the murder of Clifton F. Richardson, editor of the *Houston Informer*, an African-American newspaper in 1921. The meeting included Kimbro, then-Houston Exalted Cyclops H. C. McCall and Albert H. Armstrong, the Wharton County constable who arrived first in the Schultz case and son of Reconstruction Klansman Robert A. Armstrong. The group fantasized various ways to kill the editor. One rejected suggestion was to lure Richardson to a doctor's office where they would kill him and cut up his body. Instead, they chose and set in motion Armstrong's plan to subpoena the editor to appear before the Wharton grand jury and explain something he printed in his paper. Then, two local unnamed Klansmen, "who could hit a dime from across the street with a rifle," would kill him as he entered the Wharton County courthouse. Although Richardson received the subpoena and secured an appearance bond for his court date, he learned of the plan and never went to Wharton.³⁰

³⁰ *Houston Chronicle*, March 20, 1925, 1, 19; *Houston Chronicle*, March 25, 1925, 1, 18; *HPost*, March 28, 1925, 1, 2; *HPost*, March 21, 1925, 1, 2; *GDN*, March 26, 1925, 1; *GDN*, March 28, 1925, 4; *Pittsburgh Courier* (Pittsburgh, Penn.), March 28, 1925, 1.

At the time of the event, in May 1921, the few related newspaper articles never hinted at Klan involvement, so until the trial, few knew about the Klan's plan to murder him. Initially, the *Houston Post* reported that the editor had fled the city after receiving a court summons. In his own paper, Richardson rebuffed the claim he left and told his readers he suspected a "frame-up" by those angered by the reports of lawlessness in his paper, notably the "Hunnish kultur" of the police force. Although this may have played a role, the Klan disliked Richardson's political activism as a vocal member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). A few months before the plan, Richardson went to court to gain voting rights in the local Democratic Party's primary elections which they restricted to only white voters. Initially defeated, Richardson and other black businessmen appealed the decision, which eventually went to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1924. This posed a real threat since a similar 1919 case in Waco, Texas, had local success. Richardson had been targeted several times before receiving the Wharton subpoena so he did not fall for the ruse. More importantly, he knew of Wharton County's reputation for racial violence, having reported on it previously. His own suspicions that he "could not see where [his] life would be safe in said county" led him to ask his attorney to investigate the subpoena, which subverted the plot. Without this testimony coming out in court, the Klan plot to murder Richardson may not have been known. Reports at the time failed to make the same assumption as in the Schultz case. Newspapers also failed to attribute to the Klan another attack, this one a brutal beating by Houston white police officers May of 1922 which left him with permanent injuries. Keeping in mind the number of law officers, lawyers, and judges

who were members, Klansmen had other structural methods of intimidation and violence to use on black men and women.³¹

Some newspapers reported several other acts of racial violence and intimidation by the area Klan which went unnoticed by major urban newspapers and historians. Jefferson (Jeff) H. Speaker, a highly respected African-American teacher and principal, received two notes at his home in Wharton in October of 1921. The notes warned him to leave the county within twelve hours. Speaker's family had learned long ago the careful balance of political activism with the appearance of accommodation. His family, who had lived in Wharton since before the Civil War, had faced similar threats in the past and had refused to back down. Part of the first generation born out of slavery, Speaker grew up surrounded by extended family on the farm of his grandfather, who died in Wharton in 1919 at the estimated age of 120. His father, Warren, and uncle, Anthony, both politically active after the war, farmed and eventually became merchants in the county seat. When the WMUA overthrew the Republican-dominated county government in 1889, the Speaker family stayed in the county—a brave response since Anthony, as county commissioner, was forced out. Jeff Speaker and his wife Mattie understood that

³¹ *HPost*, 19 May 1921, 18; *Houston Informer*, 28 May 1921, 1. Charles N. Love, et al., *v. G. W. Griffith*, 266 U.S. 32, 45 Supt. Ct. 12, (1924); *Press-Forum Weekly* (Mobile, Alabama), 20 May 1922, 1; Tyina I. Steptoe, *Houston Bound: Culture and Color in a Jim Crow City* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016), 42; Bernadette Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration: The Movement of Rural African Americans* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2013), 44, 161-162. According to Pruitt, Richardson referred to racial violence as “hellish and hunnish” after World War I. Kimbro, Armstrong, and Houston Mayor Oscar F. Holcombe each insisted in court that they were the ones that warned Richardson, the trial provided little other information about the murder plot. For more on the white primary case in Waco, see Walters “The Great War in Waco.”

Wharton white supremacy functioned through fear of the everyday possibility of violence.³²

Although the *Spectator* dismissed the notes as a student prank, Jeff Speaker took them seriously enough. He challenged white supremacy socially, politically, and economically, any of which made him a likely target of the Klan. Socially, he and his family, along with a handful of other African Americans, lived north of downtown, outside the segregated Freedmantown. Based on the 1920 census, many of his neighbors, including several who joined the Klan, were white. Like Hobbs, Speaker challenged the color line. He and his family brought blackness into white space and did so daily. As chairman of the county Republican executive committee, a position previously held by his uncle, he organized poll tax clubs to increase black voters in general elections. And similar to Richardson, Speaker helped organize a NAACP chapter, comprised of teachers, ministers, and farmers, in Wharton County in 1919. He and other members negotiated black voter support for a public promise by the local school board that if a school bond election was successful, the board would build a new black high school.³³

³² *WhSp*, October 7, 1921, 1; 1880 census; *HPost*, August 14, 1906, 4; Fraser Vertical File, Individual and Family Vertical Files, WCHM; Speaker Vertical File, Individual and Family Vertical Files, WCHM. According to the vertical file, Jeff Speaker was the principal at the Tisdale school as early as 1898 and Mattie Speaker at the Mount Olive school as early as 1917. John Milton Hodges, the superintendent of the Wharton Independent School District, and the local school board of trustees, which included president Richard H. D. Sorrel, vice president Leonard B. Outlar, Boone C. Roberts, Joe Schwartz, James H. Herring, Herbert G. Forgason, and Dr. John E. Irvin, were all white and all Klansmen, except Joe Schwartz, who was Jewish.

³³ *WhSp*, October 7, 1921, 1; 1920 census; *GDN*, December 13, 1910, 9; NAACP Branch Files, Wharton County, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Records, 1842-1999, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.; *Dallas Express*, April 19, 1919, 1. Tactics used by local law enforcement, even before the Klan, to publically undermine individuals' reputation and position in the community by criminalizing them may have played a

The chapter grew quickly, reaching over a hundred members within a month, but struggled to stay active, as did many other chapters, in racially tense Texas. Upon reporting the threat, Speaker turned the notes over to Sheriff Kemp. If Speaker knew Kemp was Klan is unknown. From the parade placards, however, he knew that the Klan publicly defied extending respectability to any African American, including teachers, when they warned all not to call black men and women “Mr.” or “Mrs.” He must have known about other Klan attacks on professional and middle-class black men in Houston, including their castrating a doctor, who allegedly had a sexual relationship with a white woman.³⁴

role in the conviction of Speaker’s son Edward for forgery in 1911. Edward served two years in the state penitentiary. Convict Registers, Vols. 1998/038-138-1998/038-176, Huntsville, 245, Register number 31945, Texas Department of Criminal Justice Records, Texas State Library and Archives, Austin Texas, digitized as Convict Record Ledgers, Texas Convict and Conduct Registers 1875-1945 database, found at Ancestry.com. The *Spectator* reported the school bonds paid for a new white high school on February 13, 1920. A year later, on February 11, 1921, Shannon noted the white board, to fulfill their promise to the black community, received a grant from the Julius Rosenwald Fund for Education and will ask for another next year. Then, with a Biblical quote about helping themselves, he lectured, “the colored patron must continue to do his full duty in the matter of co-operation.” To this he added that the white high school would begin serving hot lunches. *WhSp*, 13 February 1920, 1; *WhSp*, 11 February 1921, 1. For more on the Julius Rosenwald Fund and African-American schools, see James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

³⁴ *Dallas Express*, 8 February 1919, 5; Michael L. Gillette, “The Rise of the NAACP in Texas,” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 81 (April 1978): 393-416; Thad Sitton and James H. Conrad, *Freedom Colonies: Independent Black Texans in the Time of Jim Crow* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010), 160. The local NAACP chapter received their charter in February 1919 and held a membership drive later in June. More research on this chapter needs to be done to discern their activity and decline. The *Spectator* rarely mentioned African Americans outside of crime-related articles, and never reported that a NAACP chapter had started in the area. Nor did it report any other more coded language indicating an increase in political activity, such as stories about outsiders, radicals, laborers organizing, or even local Republican activity. This is not surprising since the area’s racial climate required their need to work secretly, which makes learning more locally difficult. According to Gerald Horne, the Bureau of Investigation, soon to be the Federal Bureau of Investigation or FBI, in Washington D.C. received reports from whites they heard blacks speaking Spanish and some buying high-powered rifles and

Speaker's middle-class status made him a target, but also aided in his protection. At least one Klansman took the threat seriously and stopped attending meetings because they threatened Speaker. According to the family, Joe P. McCain, a local stockman and a former Texas Ranger, and his family lived on the same block as the Speaker family and his wife employed Speaker's daughter, Teresa, to clean their house and babysit occasionally. The families remained friendly and stayed in contact into the 1970s when Teresa passed away. According to McCain's grandson, the Klan threatened to burn down the Speaker's home if they did not move out of the white part of town. When McCain learned of this, he went to the "Grand Dragon" and voiced his protest, but was told to stay out of it. Learning the attack was planned for a particular Saturday night,

ammunition. The Texas Rangers investigated similar reports in Houston, Dallas, and San Antonio during 1919 and 1920. The timing investigations coincided with the last years of the Mexican Revolution, grassroots organizing by the NAACP, the Red Summer, and a wave of lynchings and riots in Texas and the nation. Horne noted during that this period black boxer Jack Johnson, whose overt challenges to white supremacy both inside and outside the boxing ring had made him simultaneously a symbol of black manhood and a threat to white manhood, lived in Mexico, which he promoted as a place of racial equality. This culmination of events so soon after WWI prompted rumors akin to the Zimmerman note, that Mexico was recruiting disgruntled black Texans to aid them in a possible attack on the United States. Locally, the language concerns were unwarranted. Some African Americans in Wharton County likely knew Spanish from working on the larger white estates which employed Mexican farm hands. At least a few, including Ben Kinchlow, had grown up in Mexico, where his mother went after she was freed by her slave owner, probably Kinchlow's father. In adulthood, Kinchlow returned to the area and worked as a cowboy. In regard to gun purchases, local black residents armed themselves for protection after a quadruple lynching in which white law officers executed two black men, Washington and Osborn Giles, who allegedly killed a constable serving an arrest warrant, and a posse of white citizens lynched two black men who supposedly aided the Giles' initial escape. At least one gun-store owner, presumably white, required black customers to have a white advocate's written permission. Gerald Horne, *Black and Brown: African Americans and the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1920* (New York: NYU Press, 2005), 79; David F. Krugler, *1919, The Year of Racial Violence: How African Americans Fought Back* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 313, 431-432, 446. For more on Kinchlow, see John Fuller, "Ben Kinchlow: A Trail Driver on the Chisholm Trail," in *Black Cowboys of Texas*, ed. Sara R. Massey (College Station: Texas A&M University, 2004), 99-116.

Speaker armed himself with a shotgun and set up on his front porch to defend his family and home. McCain, also armed, sat next to him. Several times that night, Klansmen drove by the home, sometimes stopping and getting out. The last time, in the early hours of Sunday morning, Klansmen stopped again and told McCain to “get out of the way.” He responded by calling them by their names and asked which one wanted to die that night. They soon left and the Speakers stayed in their homes. According to McCain’s dues records, he joined at the first Klan meeting after the parade and officially resigned a year later.³⁵

Local black women, who did not have the same class protection as Speaker, made up the most targeted group of reported Klan violence. This pattern reflected black women’s daily vulnerability to physical assault and sexual exploitation found throughout the South. Working class and impoverished women of color were particularly vulnerable to abuse. In Wharton County, most women of color worked on family farms rented from

³⁵ Phone interview of Gene McCain, November 16, 2016, by author, notes in author’s possession; Gene McCain, *Grandpa Joe*, unpublished manuscript, in the author’s possession, 62, 67; “J. P. McCain,” KMBD, K6R, WCHM; Klonslave Minutes, April 6, 1922, K6MB, K6R, WCHM. Many members paid their dues for a year at a time. Based on the dates of naturalization and resignation, McCain probably did too, then quit when asked to pay his yearly dues in 1922. The author would like to thank Gene McCain, the grandson of John McCain, who contacted the author, voluntarily shared this story, and gave the author permission to use it in her dissertation. At the time, he did not know his father had joined the Klan and had not questioned why his grandfather had known the names of the Klansmen, including the “Grand Dragon.” He has since published it in his biography of his grandfather with the information the author shared with him. Joe McCain’s best friend, John Archer Elmore, a charter member of Klan No. 6, transferred from the Bay City Klan in Matagorda County with Albert H. Armstrong and Charles A. Davis. Elmore named his son after McCain. He also married the daughter of state senator and Klansman William L. Hall. Elmore, however, renewed his membership in January 1922, unlike his friend. “J. A. Elmore,” KMBD, K6R, WCHM. The Grand Dragon was probably Exalted Cyclops James R. Cox.

the old planter elite families had few protections if alone when the landowning patriarch or his son came by. Off the farm, black women were often limited to domestic housework at white homes or hotels that put them in a particularly vulnerable position in which they had to weigh their economic survival against the possibility of sexual harassment, assault, and rape by their white employer.³⁶

In a society still deeply rooted in plantation culture, white men continued to claim privilege over black bodies, both sexual access to black women and destructive violence over black men. Since slavery, whites had created a hypersexualized image of black women, referred to as Jezebel, to justify centuries of sexual abuse by white men and allow continued access without legal repercussion. The Jezebel stereotype painted black women as sexual, seductive, and licentious which shifted responsibility for white men's lack of self-control onto the victim. Furthermore, it artificially raised white women's moral status as it contrasted with the idealized True Womanhood that imagined white women as pure, pious, and submissive wives and mothers. The justice system reified the Jezebel stereotype by not criminalizing rape of black women since many whites believed black women could not be raped, essentially legalizing white male entitlement to black women's bodies. This white male privilege remained in the planter

³⁶ bell hooks, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (Boston: South End Press, 1982; reprint, second edition, London: Pluto Press, 1990), 15-38; MacLean, 161-163; Mark Fannin, *Labor's Promised Land: Radical Visions of Gender, Race, and Religion in the South* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee, 2003), 157-158; Sally G. McMillen, *Southern Women: Black and White in the Old South* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 2002), 31-41.

culture long after slavery ended.³⁷

The Klan's attacks on several black women in the area reflected this view. The first warning came during the Wharton parade in April when they posted a placard that warned "The Association of White Men and Negro Women Must Cease. We Want No Mixed Blood," onto "several pieces of property and houses in Freedmantown." Then, on a Monday night in early May 1921, robed and hooded Klansmen went to the homes of three black women outside of Eagle Lake, in Colorado County, Texas, not far from the Wharton County line. The men posted warnings on the women's front doors: "The Ku Klux have both eyes on you and certain white men. There must be no more association between white men and negro women. We will have no more mixed blood. Be sure you

³⁷ Ibid; Jaqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work and the Family from Slavery to Present* (Philadelphia: Basic Books, 2010), 34-36, 136-137; Angela P. Harris, "Race and Essentialism in Feminist Legal Theory," in *Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge*, eds. Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), 270, (261-274); Susan Tucker, *Telling Memories Among Southern Women: Domestic Workers and Their Employers in the Segregated South* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988; paperback ed., Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 20-22; Ruth Thompson-Miller, Joe R. Feagin, and Leslie H. Picca, *Jim Crow Legacy: The Lasting Impact of Segregation* (Lanham, MD: Roman and Littlefield, 2014)122-124; Teresa L. Amott and Julie A. Matthaei, *Race, Gender, and Work: A Multi-Cultural Economic History of Women in the United States* (Boston: South End Press, 1996), 161-162; Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860," *Dimity Convictions: The American Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (Columbus: University of Ohio Press, 1976), 45-109; Hazel V. Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of Afro-American Woman Novelist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 20-25; Diane Miller Sommerville, *Rape and Race in the Nineteenth-Century South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 157; Dorothy Roberts, "The Paradox of Silence and Display: Sexual Violation of Enslaved Women and Contemporary Contradictions in Black Female Sexuality," in *Beyond Slavery: Overcoming Its Religious and Sexual Legacies*, eds. Bernadette J. Brooten and Jacqueline L. Hazelton, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 44-45. This mentality remained in the justice system throughout the twentieth century. See, Danielle L. McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance, a New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power* (New York: Vintage Books, 2011).

heed this warning.” The *Eagle Lake Headlight* reported that all three notes had been signed by the Ku Klux Klan and had the official seal. It also noted that one of the women moved to Houston with her three children the next day. A few weeks later, on May 28, two black women near Eagle Lake left town after finding “genuine Ku Klux Klan warnings” tied to their front gates. The *Headlight* hinted the women were prostitutes and summarized, “The warnings stated that the two women had not been conducting themselves properly and gave them forty-eight hours in which to leave town.” In early July, masked men abducted and whipped Maud Perrino, a twenty-nine-year-old black farm worker, for not heeding their initial warning. The next morning, she reported the assault to a white doctor and denied the Klan’s allegation. When the county sheriff, who disliked the Klan, went to investigate soon after, he found her gone and her home empty. Similar warnings were found elsewhere in the county later that month, but the press gave few details.³⁸

Klansmen’s policing of black women’s sexuality reflected a eugenic-based view of white supremacy, while simultaneously enabling white male entitlement to black

³⁸ *WhSp*, 22 April 1921, 1; *Eagle Lake Headlight* (hereafter *ELH*), 7 May 1921, 1; *ELH*, 4 June 1921, 1; *ELH*, 16 July 1921, 10. 1920 census, 1910 census; *Weimer Mercury*, 29 July 1921, 1. On the 1910 census, Mary Perrino lived with her brother, sister and mother in a rented home. All three women were “working out” as farm laborers, which meant they worked as hired wage laborers and not on a family farm. Her brother worked as a railroad laborer. Other African Americans and Mexican immigrants listed on the same census page and those immediately preceding and proceeding it had the same occupations according to gender, i.e. men worked as railroad laborers and women worked as farm laborers. Although scant, the evidence available suggests the possibility that she may have worked as a prostitute. Considering the history of sexual exploitation in the plantation South and the few occupational choices available to black women, she may have found the commodification of sex a better or perhaps an inevitable alternative. See, Cynthia M. Blair, *I’ve Got to Make My Livin’: Black Women’s Sex Work in Turn-of-the-Century Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

women's bodies. Scientific racism arguments promoted by eugenicists claimed interracial sex brought the superior race to the same level as the inferior race. Based on this idea, anti-vice reform movements of the Progressive Era conceptualized individual health to behavior and both to the wellness of larger society. Reformers viewed immoral behavior as any act that may pollute the body which they translated into race suicide once taken to societal level. Prohibition campaigns and eugenic sterilization legislation of the "unfit" championed this rationale.³⁹ Concern over health and wellness increased during World War I as doctors reviewed the readiness of American men for military service. Cases of typhoid, tuberculosis, and Spanish influenza spread quickly among the close quarters of military men. Doctors also grew concerned over the number of men infected with sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), most notably syphilis, a disease the medical profession associated with prostitutes, immoral behavior, and African Americans. War-time anti-venereal disease campaigns, as well as the Klan, blamed black women for white men's extra-marital sex, regardless of her consent, and for those men infecting their wives with an STD. When a white mother transmitted the disease to

³⁹ Programs that promoted individual health, whether through the American Red Cross or Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), promoted racial health as well. Movements that focused on children's health created kindergartens and parks, ran Better Baby Contests, and promoted joining the Boy Scouts. David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 186-187. For the eugenic rationale behind their push for anti-miscegenation laws prohibiting interracial marriage, see the college textbook written by Paul Popenoe and Roswell Hill Johnson, *Applied Eugenics* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1920), 298-306. Popenoe's claim that biracial children advantages the "inferior race" and disadvantages the "superior one" was made in his chapter on immigration to caution against the "racial stocks" of American "patriots and founders," which he defined as French and English Protestants, as well as those of Germany, Scandinavia, and Ireland, having children with "Italians, Slaves, Poles Magyars, East European Hebrews, Finns, Portuguese, Greeks, Roumanians [sic]" because the "hybrid race" would cause the nation to decline.

her baby, the future of the race was threatened, hence race suicide.⁴⁰

This pseudo-scientific idea that connected the fate of the nation to the fate of white motherhood and white families fed moralistic campaigns against alcohol, prostitution, gambling, and in contrast spread the use of segregation and anti-miscegenation laws across the country during the poorly named Progressive Era. According to these pseudo-scientists, Anglo-Saxon civility and restraint placed the race at the forefront of global progress. This imagined characterization was constructed on already held racialized stereotypes of morality. From this irrational position, white men who frequently gave into their immoral impulses were regressing racially. They essentially crossed the *imagined* boundaries of race themselves and by doing so, threatened white supremacy. This view, however, conflicted with how many men from the Wharton's planter class viewed and exercised white male privilege. For them, their position in society entitled them to gratify their individual desires while controlling others' access to the sources of gratification. Social and legal boundaries, such as sexual access to black women and murder, did not apply to them in their world view, a perception often reified by the justice system, as explained earlier in the chapter. This privileged group had long viewed their power as above reproach and acted without concern for chains of authority or social restraints, not unlike those in the Texas Klan.

⁴⁰ Pippa Holloway, *Sexuality, Politics, and Social Control in Virginia, 1920-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 36-41; Maria I. Diedrich, *Cornelia James Cannon and the Future American Race* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010), 106-107; Sharon E. Wood, *The Freedom of the Streets: Work, Citizenship, and Sexuality in a Gilded Age City* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 104-108.

From this perspective, the Wharton Klan was fighting its own members about white privilege and individual responsibility to protecting the race.⁴¹

According to Horton Foote, many sons of the old landed class drank and gambled because they had little else to do but visit the sharecroppers and tenant farmers renting from their parents. His uncles, portrayed frequently in Foote's plays, drank openly unless around Foote's grandparents. Like many other elite men, they started drinking and gambling where they could in their youth. Foote's grandparents sent them to military school, the Allen Military Academy in Bryan, Texas, in hopes the rigid structure would set them straight. Other Wharton sons also went to Peacock Military Academy in San Antonio. Foote's uncle Tom H. Brooks, Jr., joined the Klan after returning home from Texas A&M University, where, along with poor grades, he got a woman pregnant. The boys, as Foote's family called them, never seemed to hold down a job, despite having the privileges of social status and economic opportunities provided by their father, Tom Brooks, the president of the WMUA. Their family name and status protected them from criminal charges, despite frequent run-ins with local and Houston law officers, including a fight outside a dance which left a man dead. From his uncles, Foote learned what immoralities existed in the shadows, but his uncles never took him along, unlike other boys he knew. His uncle Speed, who frequently crossed the GH&SA tracks to see black prostitutes, told young Foote of other men from notable families he saw there, usually while he drove Foote around and drank whiskey from his pocket

⁴¹ Ibid.

flask.⁴²

Foote wrote a play about one such story told by his uncle about Mentor Northington's relationship with a black prostitute in his play, "A Coffin for Egypt." Because he feared the play's interracial story would embarrass his home town and one of the county's leading elite families, he did not allow it to be produced until after his death. In the play, Foote intimated men in the Northington planter family had been raised to view illicit interracial sex as part of their manhood. According to the play, when Mentor's wife, Clara Northington learned from a friend that her husband's relationship with the woman was common knowledge, she left on a six year trip through Europe with their two daughters. Primary sources confirm Foote's account of Clara Northington's trip, as well as several other noted events in the play, indicating the Mentor's relationship may have been true too. Her passport application confirmed her trip to France and Italy, for "travel and study," and newspapers reported she visited

⁴² Foote, 32-34, 145-153, 159-169; Williams, 113; *WhSp*, 6 Mar 1925, 1; Horton Foote, *Genesis of an American Playwright*, ed Marion Castleberry (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2004), 50. See, Foote, *Farewell: A Memoir*; Gerald C. Wood, ed., *Horton Foote: A Casebook* (New York: Routledge, 2014); Willborn Hampton, *Horton Foote: America's Storyteller* (New York: Free Press, 2009); *WhSp*, 14 May 1920, 1, 8; *WHSp*, May 31, 1918, 8; *WhSp*, October 4, 1918, 10; *Bryan Daily Eagle*, 14 Sept 1915, 3; *HPost*, 19 Aug 1917, 40; *Bryan Daily Eagle*, 20 April 1916, 18; *Hpost*, 17 Aug 1919, 60. The Allen Academy began in 1896, and continues to offer private education in Bryan, Brazos County, Texas, today. Foote, 159, 161-170; Criminal Clerk Docket, District Clerk, Wharton District Court, WCHM. Wharton County had numerous examples of violence. When a fight at an El Campo dance left twenty-two-year old John Brooks Gary near death from knife wounds in 1920, the *Spectator* clouded the event in sympathetic tones, a contrast to how they reported similar events if the participants were Mexican or black. A charter member of Klan No. 6, Gary grew up on the Don Tol plantation, in the home of his grandfather, S. Tyre Taylor, and called numerous landed families kin, including his great uncle Hamilton B. Dickson. Gary's aunt, Ida Taylor, married Tom Brooks's brother William S. "Billy" Brooks. Both aunt and uncle had been rather public about drinking excessively and their extra-marital affairs.

family in San Antonio for several weeks before she left with her daughters. Furthermore, her passport application was dated August, 12, 1924. If Foote's story held any truth, then Mentor's illicit relationship happened while he belonged to the Klan.⁴³

Illicit relationships like these, as well as violence and vices, made Foote's grandfather Tom Brooks, Sr., hesitant to grant permission to any Wharton man to marry one of his daughters. Foote's aunts, all socialites, told stories of the men they dated, the drinking, dancing, and occasional fighting they saw as well. One aunt shared with him a list of her old beaux, most future members of the Klan, and that her father refused to

⁴³ Foote 168, 169; Charles Frank Robinson II, *Dangerous Liaisons: Sex and Love in the Segregated South* (University of Arkansas Press, 2003), 21-24; Horton Foote, "A Coffin in Egypt," (New York: ICM Partners, 2015); "Mentor Northington," KMBD, K6R, WCHM; Clara Beard Northington, Passport Application, Application No. 472539, August 12, 1945, *U.S. Passport Applications, 1795-1925* database, found online at Ancestry.com; *San Antonio Express*, August 11, 1924, 4. All of the Northingtons paid their full annual Klan dues at the beginning of 1924. The first production of "A Coffin for Egypt" was in New York in 1998, but not published until 2015. For more on the play produced in 2015, see, Nancy Malitz, "Famous Trouser Roles Folded Away, Opera Star Von Stade Channels a Queen of Egypt (Texas)," *Chicago On the Aisle*, 26 April 2015, found online at <https://chicagoontheaisle.com/2015/04/26/famed-trouser-roles-folded-away-opera-star-von-stade-channels-a-queen-of-egypt-texas/>. Foote typically used real local people and real stories as the basis of nearly all his plays, but changed their names. Many of his plays about Wharton were set in Harrison. In the play, "Maude Jenkins" was a copper-colored, "most beautiful, and in some ways the most refined" of all the local mistresses. Northington's character wrote he wrote her "love letters that she would read aloud when she was drunk to the young white boys in Harrison that came to her house of prostitution." Also in the play, Green Northington, Sr.'s character, called Leon, was quoted as saying "I don't know why any of them want to marry when they can have any nigger on the place for twenty-five cents." Or was it fifty cents?" Northington Sr.'s daughter-in-law, one of only two physical characters in the play described his outlook on life: "He thought, too, this was the world, this plantation, his father, old Leon, did . . . the beginning and the end of everything. He thought all you had to do was to ride your horse through the cotton fields all day and see that the tenants and the hands worked. . . ." See, "A Coffin in Egypt," 8. The play also tells the story of Mentor's nephew killing Mentor's brother and claiming self-defense to get out of a charge after seeing Mentor do the same. Later the nephew shot two men in a bar in Wisconsin and was found insane. Newspapers verify both of these stories. *Brownwood Bulletin*, August 13, 1954, 16; *ELH*, April 20, 1945, 1; "William Andrew Northington," Death Certificate, Wharton County, April 17, 1945, *Texas, Death Certificates, 1903-1982* database, Ancestry.com.

allow her to marry her favorite because he had biracial children. Because of Tom Brook's stance on local marriage, Foote's parents eloped and were estranged from her parents until Horton's birth. In many ways, Tom Brooks represented the sort of Klansman historians typified as the civically active member seeking to enforce social order. They belonged or donated to many of the local social and business organizations, and held considerable economic and political power. He and his brother P. G. Brooks, Leland's father, were founding members and officers in the WMUA, created to protect political white supremacy in the county. Tom Brooks had even served as president for several years. Perhaps Tom Brooks, Sr., and his brother joined the Klan for altruistic reasons, to straighten out the prominent white men in the county to eventually take their place as the local patriarchal protectors of the race. Yet, these men, who held wealth and power, possessed the structural controls for thirty years to correct the disorder that the Klan claimed as its purpose, so if motivated by a perceived moral degradation in society and their own families, they were motivated by their own failures as white patriarchs. In addition, how the local Klan was to right social wrongs, when it was started by those same men who crossed racial boundaries, particularly the Hudgins and Northingtons, and extended membership to Tom Brooks' son and those listed as fathers of biracial children in Foote's memoir, remains unclear.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Foote, 145-153. All three sons eventually left Wharton. The oldest, Tom H. Brooks, the only one old enough to join the Klan, attended Texas A&M University, his father's alma mater, in the fall of 1920. He failed out in less than a year, and while there, conceived a child out of wedlock. He joined the Klan in December not long after his return in 1921. He married once and had another child, but soon divorced. Several years after his father died, he was arrested in Houston and returned by the local sheriff to his mother. He later went to Galveston to work on merchant ships, then picked fruit on a ranch in Arizona, where he died at the age of fifty. His

Rumors surrounding the Klan attack on Henry Schultz pivoted on these same issues of race and gender. Although the *Spectator* refrained from naming his “reprehensible conduct,” whispers swirled of his failures as a son to care and protect his mother and his sexual relationship with his black housekeeper. At the time of the attack, Henry E. Schultz was sixty-one years old, came from a prominent local family, and had lived his entire life in the town of Wharton. He never married and his only profession listed in the census was farm manager, which in Wharton meant he visited the tenant farmers and sharecroppers who rented from his mother. His name rarely, if ever, made the newspaper, since he did not participate in reported social events, church functions, business associations, or fraternal orders. From the various available court indexes, he either stayed on the right side of the law or, at least, avoided arrest. His mother, Sophia Ahldag Schultz Beethe Ford, immigrated to Texas in 1835 from Germany, with her brother Frederich Wilhelm Ahldag, the grandfather of Klansman Henry Ahldag. In post-Civil War Wharton, she ran a well-respected hotel, which allowed her to live somewhat independently, despite two failed marriages. Judge Edwin Hawes described her as “a woman of fine character,” “a good business woman,” and “industrious and energetic.” By the end of her life in 1924, she owned nearly 800 acres of Wharton land. Henry Schultz’s sister married Joseph A. Hamilton, a Union soldier and Republican, who

brother Speed never married, never finished business school, and after the failure of his dry cleaning business, purchased by his mother, he never worked in a legitimate position again. He was arrested in Houston and California for selling drugs, and died of an overdose at the Milby Hotel in Houston. The youngest, Billy finished law school in Dallas after failing out of the University of Texas. His mother set him up with a practice but spent most of his day drinking. He lived off his mother’s instead. He also died at the Milby Hotel.

moved to Wharton in 1866. Hamilton became a planter, and amassed a sizeable estate that was inherited by his wife in 1917. Her son Joseph A. Hamilton, Jr. belonged to the Klan.⁴⁵

Local playwright Horton Foote remembered the story “that he was living with a black woman who had been hired to look after his senile mother,” and had been warned by the Klan to stop. Wharton County birth and death records supports the rumors. Between 1894 and 1899, Schultz fathered three children with Ida Beck, a forty-year-old biracial laundress working for a private family in the 1920 census. Beck’s children adopted the Schultz surname after the 1910 and 1920 censuses directly challenged the social boundaries of race that tradition had kept in place. If she ever took care of Schultz’s mother or actually was the subject of the rumors is unclear. Sometime in the early 1920s, Beck and her children moved to Houston so the timing suggests that Beck may have received a Klan warning. If so, it was never made public either by her

⁴⁵ Deposition of Edwin Hawes, Estate of Sophia Ford, 24 January 1925, Wharton County Probate Minutes, 326, online database, Wharton County Probate Minutes, Vol Ma., 1902-1938, *Texas, Wills and Probate Records, 1833-1974*, Ancestry.com; The previous chapter discussed Henry Ahldag, who married Albert Armstrong’s sister, Maggie, in 1913, and at the age of thirty-three, identified as a retired planter in the 1910 census. Schultz’s first cousin Frederich W. Ahldag II was a member of the WMUA and Henry Ahldag’s father. Sophia Ford married three times, divorced twice, and remained a widow after her third husband’s death in 1897 until she died in 1924. Ford’s probate record states Schultz saw to the estate and collected rents. The appraisement of her property, dated July 14, 1927, listed 790.5 acres, valued at \$11,550, and several Wharton town lots, valued at \$15,400. Three Klansmen or former Klansmen, Robert J. Wright, John T. Murphy, and Louis F. Worthy appraised her estate for probate, which was approved by former Klansman Judge John Norris and signed by former Klansman Frank L. Kral. Estate of Sophia Ford, Wharton County Probate Minutes, 315-329, Wharton County Probate Minutes, Vol Ma., 1902-1938, *Texas, Wills and Probate Records, 1833-1974*, Ancestry.com.

reporting it to newspapers or by law enforcement.⁴⁶

Yet, after his death in 1934, lawsuits involving the family estate suggest Schultz had syphilis, a disease tinged with immoral and racial meaning, which had caused his health to slowly deteriorate during the 1920s. The accusation carried intimations about his interracial sexual preferences, although said little about the consensual nature of the relationship. Contemporary attitudes often assumed men who contracted the disease did so through illicit sexual relationships, then feared contagion of other family members, particularly white women, the symbol of race purity, or children, the race's symbolic future. Other evidence suggests that syphilis was a serious local concern, one that, like the Klan, lurked in the shadows and rarely was documented to protect family reputations. One Klansmen's death certificate showed he died of complicating factors due to the disease, and significant circumstantial evidence suggests another, son of Klan No. 6's second Exalted Cyclops, Dr. Green L. Davison, also had the disease.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Foote, 31; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Thirteen Census of the United States, 1910* (Washington D.C.: NARA, 1910), Ancestry.com; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920* (Washington D.C.: NARA, 1920), Ancestry.com. In the 1920 census, Ida Beck info, children, owned home, mother washer woman in Richmond, Fort Bend County, later lived in Houston, where she was arrested for running a bawdy house or brothel. A direct descendent, who wished to remain anonymous, stated Henry Schultz never acknowledged his paternity. According to Sophia Ford's probate records, a black woman named Macy took care of Schultz's mother at the end of her life, which was three years after the Klan incident. Before Ford's death, another black woman, referred to as Macy in probate depositions, at the home.

⁴⁷ "In the Estate of H. E. Schultz, Deceased," 456-460.; "Charles C. Elliott," Death Certificate, Wharton County, November 18, 1940, *Texas, Death Certificates, 1903-1982* database, Ancestry.com. In regard to Schultz's medical condition, his sister's attorney asked question about hearing rumors of syphilis, as well as evidence of "eaten flesh" and gumma on his brain. Schultz's death certificate, which listed stomach cancer as the cause of his death, does not rule out the possibility. Green Davidson, Jr., moved to Dallas and lived in a private hospital called the Junius Sanitarium. He married the secretary of the hospital, who was also a resident. The hospital did not advertise, and had more permanent residents, listed in the phone directory.

Probate records hinted at mistreatment of his mother as another possible motivation. Testimony concerning a Sophia Ford's mental state and Schultz's care of her came out during a mental competency trial in 1922 and her daughters contest of her will in 1924. Both of these legal cases stemmed from Ford's decision to write a new will in 1921 that left her entire estate to Henry Schultz. The timing of these events and the witnesses for and against Schultz hint at a possible conspiracy between Hamilton and fellow members of the Klan to coerce Schultz into giving Hamilton sole control over the property after his mother, and Hamilton's grandmother, died. The sisters claimed their mother's new will had been written and signed while she was non-compos mentis, and that their brother Schultz, who profited from it, had hidden Ford's senility and treated her badly⁴⁸ They asserted he kept her away from family members, used "profane

The only physician affiliated with the hospital, Dr. J. B. Norris, was acquitted of having performed an abortion in 1912, and of murder after a gun fight broke out at a brothel. The hospital mysteriously burned down in 1929, and the Davidsons moved. In 1931 Norris officially added plastic surgery to his specialty of nerve disorders. Syphilitic conditions, along with deformities caused during World War I, were the most common need for this combination of specialties. Davidson, Jr., divorced in 1932, and in 1940 was a permanent resident at the San Antonio Insane Asylum, where he died by suicide in 1952. For more on syphilis, race, and social attitudes, see Susan M. Reverby, *Examining Tuskegee: The Infamous Syphilis Study and its Legacy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009). More the medical ambiguity surrounding the disease during the period, see Jeffrey M. Jentzen, *Death Investigation in America: Coroners, Medical Examiners, and the Pursuit of Medical Certainty* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 138; R Walter Mills, "Clinical Recognition of Syphilis: The Reactions of the Alimentary Tract and Extra-Abdominal Viscera," *American Journal of Syphilis* 4 (January 1920), 457; Samuel McClary, "Philadelphia—September 27, October 11," *Pennsylvania Medical Journal* 20 (November 1916), 129 (182-130); David Rochester, Jerome J. Brosnan, Francis H. Strauss II, "Syphilis and Squamous Cell Carcinoma of the Stomach: A Case Report," *Gastrointestinal Radiology*, 1 (December 1976), 335-337; *Times*, July 15, 1912, 5; *HPost*, July 11, 1912, 14; *Temple Daily Telegram*, February 20, 1916, 11; *Brownsville Herald*, October 3, 1929, 21; *Dallas City Directory*, 1915-1935, *U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995* database, Ancestry.com.

⁴⁸ "In the Matter of Estate of Sophia Ford, Deceased" (hereafter "Estate of Sophia Ford"), Case No. 1165, Wharton County, Probate Minutes, *Texas, Wills and Probate Records*,

language toward his mother” and, while under his care, she sustained minor injuries. Her physician, Dr. Bartholome R. Valls, the only local white doctor not on the Klan roles, testified to her decline and contributed it to dementia. Despite his testimony, Ford was found to be mentally sound in 1922 so her 1921 will was probated.⁴⁹

Other evidence, however, suggests an ulterior motive, one of fraternal protection and personal gain. Court depositions pointed directly and indirectly to Klansman Joe Jr. possibly orchestrating the assault to manipulate Schultz and gain access to his inheritance. Former judge Edwin Hawes, whose name does not appear in local Klan

1833-1974 database, Ancestry.com; *State of Texas vs. Sophia Ford*, case number 1044, “Estate of Sophia Ford.” Horton Foote’s plays *Carpetbagger’s Children* and *Dividing the Estate* were inspired by this family and estate conflict. Records on her competency hearing were submitted in the contest of her will and included depositions of county clerk Frank K. Kral and Judge W. G. Davis, both Klansmen. Ford’s daughters Benie Ewart and Rosa Dawdy, as well as Dr. Valls and Sheriff Kemp, were listed as those making the complaint. At this time, the author has not deduced why Kemp joined the complaint. The probate records never mentioned Schultz’s biracial children or his relationship with Beck. If his sisters knew about his and Beck’s children, or any others he may have fathered, they had sufficient cause to *not* include his racial transgressions in their case. Not only would they have run the risk of social embarrassment, but they would have legally acknowledged he had heirs. Regardless of legal questions of legitimacy and potential for continued litigation, all parties involved likely knew about the county’s most famous inheritance contest, which lasted for nearly thirty years and involved the biracial children of slave owner John Clark and his slave Sobrina. For more information, see Charles Frank Robinson II, *Dangerous Liaisons: Sex and Love in the Segregated South* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2003).

⁴⁹ “Estate of Sophia Ford,” 318-321, 324 (quote). Armstrong and Outlar both give similar statements, both of which, perhaps inadvertently, present a contrived picture. Their descriptions of that day hint that Schultz and his mother went to great lengths to show she had a clean home and alert memory. She led them through a tour of her home to show it well kept and relayed her recollections of their families lives in Wharton. Davis and Taylor also testified to that they had heard two of Schultz’s sisters, not including Minnie Schultz Hamilton, Joe Jr.’s mother, and Schultz’s brother were having economic difficulty despite receiving loans, investments, and property from Ford in the past. Schultz’s only brother, William, who went by “Billy,” did not contest the will. He had moved to Houston in 1920, was described as being blind and generally in poor health. In 1926, he died from a gunshot wound inflicted by his daughter’s ex-husband, after Billy stabbed him during an argument.

records, testified that after Ford amended her 1912 will to make Schultz the sole heir in 1921, “one of Hamilton [Sr.’s] children” had “threatened him with the Ku Klux” unless Schultz turned over “the new papers.” After he gave away his mother’s 1921 will, he had another drawn up. On face value, Schultz got his way over the Ku Klux family member and still inherited everything. But later documents indicate Schultz turned over the management of the estate to his nephew Joseph A. Hamilton, Jr., soon after his mother’s death, then left everything to Hamilton. Contributing evidence of his orchestrating his control over his grandmother’s estate, he did not join his mother’s and aunts’ legal probate contest in 1924 and, during that case, nearly all of Schultz’s witnesses belonged to the Klan, as did the judge, county clerk, district clerk, attorney, and the appraisers of Ford’s estate. Their membership, however, never made it into the legal record. Two key witnesses, Albert Armstrong and pharmacist Louis B. Outlar, witnessed her sign her will in May 1922, and testified to her sound mental state. Other members who testified on Schultz’s behalf included Klansmen James H. Herring, mayor in 1925, former mayor Robert H. Vineyard, and county tax assessor James P. Taylor, all of whom echoed Armstrong’s observations. Judge William G. Davis, who oversaw Ford’s 1922 competency hearing, explained its dismissal and testified to her expressing to him her desire to leave everything to Schultz because he had taken care of her. Schultz won the suit and inherited nearly 800 acres of land and several Wharton town lots all worth \$26,950. Hamilton secretly stood to gain the most and used the Klan to manipulate his

uncle Henry Schultz⁵⁰

Although Schultz's offenses against white supremacy or white womanhood may have contributed to coalescing support from fellow Klansmen, Hamilton did not share these concerns. Some evidence shows he and his uncle had similar lives and proclivities. He, too, managed his parents' estate, including visits to tenant farms and rent collection, long into his adult life. He also never married and lived in his parents' home until his mother died in 1941 when he was fifty-nine years old. According to one former Wharton resident, Hamilton raped seventeen-year-old Cammie Wells in 1898. From this, the resident's great-grandfather Harris Williams was born. According to Williams' family, Hamilton acknowledged paternity in the 1920s and employed him, stating, "he ran liquor for the Hamilton speakeasy." Although further evidence of the Williams' story has not been found in primary documents, it fits a larger pattern found in the local plantation culture of that time and place. Hamilton's position in Wharton society and his wealth

⁵⁰ "Estate of Sophia Ford," 326 (quote); "In the Estate of H. E. Schultz, Deceased," (hereafter "Estate of Schultz"), Case No. 1678, Wharton County, Probate Minutes, *Texas, Wills and Probate Records, 1833-1974* database, Ancestry.com. Other witnesses for Schultz but who did not appear in the Klan records, included P. G. Metzger and his wife, J. A. Capp, Hawes, Sheriff A. H. Reitz, and Forrest Damon. Reitz lived in El Campo, and had he joined the KKK, likely joined that local chapter. Damon also testified in the triple lawsuit between George B. Kimbro and the Klan mentioned earlier. He was a trusted friend of Kimbro and knew Armstrong well, but did not join. The probate case over the Sophia Ford estate occurred before Armstrong and Damon testified in Kimbro-KKK cases. Still, considering, first, the small size of the town of Wharton, and, second, the extensive kinship and commercial ties within the eastern half of the county, and, finally, the gossip overheard by Horton Foote, many residents, both white and black, probably knew who had joined the Klan by 1925. That might indicate that those most involved in the case, all of whom were white, generally regarded someone's affiliation with the order as inconsequential to the matter at hand, despite the impact this knowledge may have had on African-American witnesses.

would have legally protected him and Williams by extension.⁵¹ Other Klansmen who ran speakeasies included Mose Pettit and Steve Barclay, both who did so without legal consequence.⁵²

⁵¹ Born in 1881, Joe Hamilton, Jr., was thirty-six years old when his father died in 1917 and thirty-nine when he allegedly tarred and feathered his uncle. His sister Christine, ten years younger than Joe Jr., also never married and lived in their mother's home, which was reportedly worth \$15,000 in 1930. Abe Earl, sixty-six in 1930, was listed in the household as a cook. Other owned homes nearby on Richmond Road ranged from \$5000 to \$10,000. Schultz lived next door and the census recorded the home's value at \$6000. L. B. Outlar bought the Ford home before 1940. Hamilton died in 1965 of obstructive jaundice. Hamilton and Cammie Wells were approximately the same age. In 1900, she was single, lived alone, and was listed next to Judge Wylie J. Croom and his family, indicating she may have worked for him. The Hamilton family, with Sophia Ford next door, were listed seven households later. By 1918, she married and had moved to Greenville, Hunt County, Texas. She returned to Wharton eleven years before her death in 1964. Her son was the informant. Harris Williams could not be found in the 1920 census but lived in Wharton in 1930 and 1940. His World War I draft registration in 1918 showed he was a farmer, working for L.D. Votaw. He married in 1919 at the age of nineteen. His wife Valerie, maiden name Williams, was fourteen. In 1930, he worked for a public utility and owned a \$1500 home, one of the highest values on the page. Valerie did not have a listed occupation and all his children, ages three to ten, were in school. In 1940, he and his family remained in the home, listed at the same value. He worked as an ice delivery truck driver, had been out of work thirty-five weeks in 1939, and had income from other sources. The highest grade level in school he had completed was seventh grade. Valerie did not have a listed occupation, nor did his four children, ages ranging from twelve to twenty, and all were in school. They had been married forty years when she died in Wharton in 1959. Her occupation on her death certificate was house wife. Based on this data, Harris Williams' wife never worked outside their home. Anthony Briscoe Ross, Jr., provided the family oral history about Hamilton's rape of Cammie Wells, his acknowledgement of paternity, and employment. According to him, DNA tests through Ancestry.com confirmed the oral history. Anthony Briscoe Ross, Jr., Email, via Ancestry.com, October 8, 2017, in author's possession. He gave the author written permission to use his name and the information he provided by email, October 9, 2017, in author's possession.

⁵² "In the Estate of Mose Pettit, Deceased," Case No. 1678, Wharton County, Probate Minutes, *Texas, Wills and Probate Records, 1833-1974* database, Ancestry.com; Criminal Court File Docket book, Case No. 2958, Twenty-Third District Criminal Court, Wharton County. Pettit's ex-wife, Bertha Finney and her third husband James D. Whitten, Jr., of Wharton, were attacked by the Klan in 1921. Whitten fled to Arizona, where he was joined by his wife and step-daughter, Olive Pettit. There he was arrested, but charges were dropped after governor of Arizona refused to extradite him because the Klan's control over law enforcement in Texas prohibited Whitten's chances at a fair trial. Whitten died in 1923 of Tuberculosis. *Arizona Silver Belt* (Miami, Arizona), July 14, 1922, 1; *El Paso Herald*, July 28, 1922, 2; *Arizona Silver Belt*, February 14, 1923, 8.

Individuals like Hamilton, Northington, and other members of the Wharton County Klan No. 6 helped created the illusions of the order while they defied the exact moral order rhetoric it espoused. The privileges they claimed, they sought to deny others. Events such as these illustrate how little is known about Klan motivations in Texas during the 1920s, since they worked in the shadows and manipulated sources traditionally used by historians. Yet, by looking carefully, one can see the hooded outline of the order at work. In Texas, the organization's self-proclaimed moral and legal righteousness was nothing more than an illusion, a slight of hand, to distract from the power firmly grasped in their fists. As the events in Wharton indicate, white supremacy played a larger motivating role for the Texas Klan than previously thought. Furthermore, the cases of Smith, Hobbs, Richardson, and Schultz also show how deep the Klan imbedded itself into the justice system and how much they controlled the narrative. When pulled from the shadows, the Klan reality in Wharton had little to do with morality and more to do with social control, white supremacy, and personal advantage, all old traditions handed down from generation to generation.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION: POWER AND ILLUSION

When playwright and Wharton son Horton Foote died in 2009, Harper Lee, who rarely made public appearance, attended the memorial service of her close friend of fifty years. She called him a best friend. Foote said he felt like he had known Lee all his life. He described meeting her for the first time, stating, “It was just like we were cousins,” and credited the success of his screenplay with their “certain kinship.” They shared a childhood of white Southern heritage, with “tree houses, small towns, black cooks, and people like Boo Radley.”¹

Henry Schultz was Foote’s Boo Radley.²

For most of the film, Radley existed only in the imagination, a fearful unknown. His was the ramshackle house that looked scary enough that all the kids ran by it or dared each other to touch. Foote heard his adult relatives tell the story of the Ku Klux Klan and how a tar and-feathered Schultz ran the two blocks to his home. He remembered, as an adolescent, “[I] went to the picture show alone at night, I had to pass

¹ Michael Schaub, “Harper Lee was Intensely Private; Now 38 of Her Letters are Up for Auction,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 24, 2017, found online at <http://www.latimes.com/books/jacketcopy/la-et-jc-harper-lee-letters-20171024-story.html>. Marja Mills, *The Mockingbird Next Door: Life with Harper Lee* (New York: Penguin Books, 2014), 13 (Foote first quote); Rebecca Briley, “Southern Accents: Horton Foote’s Adaptations of William Faulkner, Harper Lee, and Flannery O’Connor,” *Horton Foote: A Casebook*, ed. Gerald C. Wood (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998; second edition, Routledge, 2013), 55-61, 56 (Foote second and third quote).

² Briley, 55-56; Wilborn Hampton, *Horton Foote: America’s Storyteller* (New York: Free Press, 2009), 145.

his house. I would see him sitting alone on his gallery and I would try to imagine what it was like being tarred and feathered and set loose . . . I imagined his house was haunted and I would get by it as fast as I could.”³

In many ways, Atticus Finch, *Mockingbird*'s moderate attorney and thoughtful father, reflected Horton Foote's father, Big Horton, on screen. He did not like guns and only used them when necessary. In his tailor shop, he personally greeted and attended to both black and white customers, and recognized local black professionals' status by making a point to shake their hands before they left his store. In the 1920s, he stopped extending credit to white customers but continued to do so with African American patrons, allowing them to pay off their debt slowly, because whites never paid on their note. Foote recalled how many black residents brought contracts to him for advice, and he “often served as an amateur lawyer and broker for them.” Yet, he joined Klan No. 6, with his father-in-law Tom Brooks, just after the Klan parade. He probably did not realize the larger impact of those actions, and may have joined for the same reasons as his father-in-law Tom Brooks, to set people like his brothers-in-law straight. Based on descriptions of conversations between Big and Little Horton, he believed in fairness and respect, but he accepted things as they were. Perhaps his quiet, subtle effort to treat the black men in his store with respect and help them broker their legal needs was the best Wharton County would allow without punitive consequences. Still, he paid a full year's dues in 1921 and 1922. Although his name only appeared in the minutes on the list of

³ Marion Castleberry, “Voices from Home: Familial Bonds in the Works of Horton Foote” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1993), 40-41.

inductees, in some ways, he was the illusion that allowed men like Armstrong and Hamilton to inflict their pain. He was the banal that protected the violent, much like those who signed the bonds for bad men.⁴

The second Ku Klux Klan in Wharton, Texas, represented a mixture of many things--progressive and conservative; the nation and the South; modern and tradition—but always white supremacy. As evidenced by its creed, Kloran, and rituals, it's founder William J. Simmons purposefully built a new organization with the bones of the old night-riding terrorist KKK, which intimidated Republican voters, burned black churches and schools, and killed an unknown number of African Americans and white allies to foster the end of Reconstruction and restore white supremacy. He cloaked the old with new mass-produced robes and hoods copied from the one of the most popular and technologically advanced movies of the period, *Birth of a Nation*, which on-screen celebrated the reunification of white men from the North and South for the purpose of protecting white supremacy by destroying the black character and his allies. Likewise, his orchestrated parades incorporated symbols of the old with modern dramatic flair, that simultaneously advertised the organization to new members and threatened those excluded, particularly African Americans, the subject of attack in the movie and in history. Even its organizational records brought modern ideas of efficiency and

⁴ Hampton, 145; Castleberry, "Voices from Home," 63, 64 (quote); Horton Foote, *Farewell: A Memoir of a Texas Childhood* (New York: Scribner, 1999), 28-29, 132-135, 157-159, 179-190; "Al H. Foote" and "Tom Brooks," Klan Member Dues Binder, Hamilton B. Dickson Klan No. 6 records (hereafter K6R), Wharton County Historical Museum (hereafter WCHM); Klouklave Minutes, Klan No. 6 Minutes Binder, K6R, WCHM.

conformity typical of a Progressive Era national hierarchical association to structure chapters that formed under an old group's name. Their banality of dues collection, bill payments, and committee work conducted in parliamentary procedures of Roberts' Rules of Order hid the violent attacks committed through coordinated plans between Klan chapters' Klokann committees.

Yet, the racial constructions of the first Klan had also evolved into something more complex, ubiquitous, and nationalistic—a modern American identity as Anglo-Saxon whiteness. The second Klan emerged decades after modern social sciences had developed and matured their pseudo-scientific cultural taxonomy of races, that categorized the peoples of the world according subjective definitions of civilization and progress that only served to reify Anglo-Saxon superiority. By 1920 Progressive Era movements had made this construction institutionalized in education curriculum, modern reforms, and government regulation of marriage and racial segregation. From it, stemmed multipronged pressures to improve the race with programs that worked on physical, mental, and moral health, while excising detriments such as alcohol and venereal diseases from white families. Implicit in national moral movements, such as prohibition and eugenics, was the fear that weaknesses of mind, will power, and physical health in white families would be inherited by their children, and collectively weaken the race. Essentially morality was racialized and nationalistic. For those who saw white supremacy in these terms, the fight was a collective one to improve the race to preserve its supremacy. Since they saw the United States as an Anglo-Saxon nation, protecting white supremacy kept America a superior nation, a notion echoed in Wharton Klan No.

6's placard "White Supremacy—100 percent Americanism."

Simmons, Kimbro, Evans, and other Klan leaders tried to make the second Klan the old heroes of the new white supremacy. They utilized the illusion of moral superiority and respectable citizenry to distract from and legitimize their old methods of social control and concentration of power. The organization parasitically fed off the occupational powers of their members and exploited their invisible access to structural power, and many of their members were willing and often enthusiastic accomplices. They used members in law enforcement, rail stations, telephone and telegraph offices, and post offices to surveil their fellow residents and plan an attack. Then, they tapped the brotherhood to control the criminal investigation, the public narrative, and sought to secure legal indictments against those they had publically indicted with an attack. They undermined due process by manipulating court proceedings with members on the jury and members' perjured testimony—when they got caught. But how many did not?

Many Klansmen in Texas found the power of anonymous physical violence and collective psychic violence palpable. So much so, that the organization had a difficult time forcing members to follow inter-Klan procedures that privileged the Klokann committee with these powers. Beginning in mid-1921, the national organization began to alter their public campaign. They encouraged public charity to women and churches. They denied responsibility for Klan attacks and offered rewards to find anyone falsely using their name—to commit the crimes they committed. Those members who did not commit physical violence but continued to pay dues to the organization, including Big Horton, again, aided and abetted Klansmen who tarred and feathered or planned

assassinations of black activists, even if they had no knowledge of the attack. And, they shared responsibility for the psychic violence the order perpetrated by merely joining them and allowing them to parade, have barbecues, and public initiations. If any whites in Wharton disagreed with the order's actions, they gave their complicit endorsement by remaining publically silent, even as violence spread in neighboring counties.

Much of the Klan violence in Texas was about white supremacy. As other historians have noted, the Klan targeted whites who violated society's moral codes and those who provided the means, such as bootleggers and prostitutes, but these attacks were less about morality and more about protecting whiteness. Even in cases when an individual Klansman used an attack or warning for financial or personal gain, privilege likely played a role. Furthermore, much like the psychic violence of a lynching, African Americans, Tejanos, and immigrants racialized as non-white, most notably from Mexico, bore the constant weight of the Klan's presence which they carried daily once they knew a local chapter had been formed. The KKK warning received by teacher and civil rights activist Jeff Speaker likely reverberated throughout the community.

This dissertation does not seek to be comprehensive in its analysis or its characterization. On the contrary, its intent is to *question* what is known about the Klan and encourage a reevaluation of the 1920s organization nationally that removes the illusion of benign banality. Considering the national organization changed their operational tactics to control their public image at the same time as many state chapters formed, how can historians tell if the Klan used structural power to target individuals with criminal indictments? In Wharton, and likely elsewhere in the South, this was an

old practice, a privilege of structural power. Did other regions of the country share this tradition? In other regions, where the Klan reportedly committed little if any racial violence, would that be the case using broadened definitions of psychic violence or contemporary scientific race constructions? And how many of those regions have a history of previous racial violence such as sundown towns or residential restrictions extra-legally enforced? If so, would individuals from socially marginalized groups report this violence to law enforcement or newspapers that may be controlled by the order?

Although its height of popularity in the 1920s was short, the Ku Klux Klan remains a part of American society. It inherited from its father and grandfather the DNA of white supremacy, secrecy, and violence. It still uses the same Kloran, ritual, creed, robes, hood, fiery cross, initiation rituals, bible verses, and pro-America rhetoric that seeks to protect the whiteness of the nation by socially intimidating the same groups it targeted in the 1920s. The generation seen today continues to parade. They marched in Charlottesville in 2017. They are not shy about using the same rituals and symbols. In 2016, they allowed comedian and host of “United Shades of America” W. Kamau Bell, who is African American, to observe a ceremony. And as with the order in 1920, the organization continues to evolve and modernize. They use their webpages to promote the organization, give un rebutted explanations of their purpose, provide links to other white supremacy organizations, and recruit new members anonymously, with their online membership application. On their websites, they still utilize the illusions of the 1920s by retelling its own history and appropriating old charitable works—including the \$50 given to a widow by the Hamilton B. Dickson Klan No. 6 of Wharton County, Texas—

for positive public spin. And they continue to kill people, even white people, advocating for any manner of social equality, especially racial equality.⁵

The greatest crime committed by the 1920s Invisible Empire of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan was to add to the rituals and symbolism that sustained and passed to the next generation their underlying racist ideology—that white supremacy was the core tenet of American identity and required violence when necessary to preserve racial order.

⁵ Andrew Katz, “The Story Behind the Viral Photo of the Officer and the KKK,” *Time*, August 14, 2017; updated, August 16, 2017, found online at <http://time.com/4899668/charlottesville-virginia-protest-officer-kkk-photo/>; W. Kamau Bell has used his show “United Shades of America” to explore questions of race and American Identity in the political, economic, structural, and social elements of the United States. His first episode of his first season focused on today’s KKK. The show airs on the CNN network. For more information on the show or to watch the episode, see the show’s website at <https://www.cnn.com/shows/united-shades-of-america>; Maya Oppenheim, “KKK Grand Dragon Says I’m ‘Glad’ Heather Heyer Died in Charlottesville,” *Independent*, August 16, 2017, found online at <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/kkk-leader-charlottesville-im-glad-girl-dies-heather-heyer-killed-james-alex-fields-jr-grand-dragon-a7895851.html>. The author found information on the current Klan from Klan websites but refuses to include a URL link to the site in her dissertation.

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APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY OF KLAN TERMS

Transcribed from the Kloran, 1916, pp. 52-54.

Invisible Empire—Geographically the universal jurisdiction of the order [Ku Klux Klan].

Realm—A sub-division of the Invisible Empire; a state or territory of the United States.

Province—A sub-division of a Realm—a county or a number of counties of a State or Territory.

Klanton—the jurisdiction of a klan from Canton—a corner or a small district.

Imperial Klonvokation—the Convention of the Invisible Empire and supreme legislative body of the Order—from convocation—an assembly called by higher authority.

Klorero—the convention of a Realm from Korero—a convention.

Klonverse—the assembly of a Province, from converse—as in a conversation or conference.

Klonklave—the gathering in secret session of a klan, from conclave—a secret meeting or locked room.

The Government of the Invisible Empire is vested with the Imperial Wizard, the Emperor, assisted by his fifteen Genii—the Imperial Officers constituting his official family; the government of a Realm is vested with a Grand Dragon, assisted by his nine Hydras—the Grand Officers; the government of a Province is vested with a Great Titan, assisted by his twelve Furies—the Great Officers, and a Klan is governed by an Exalted Cyclops, assisted by his twelve Terrors—the elective officers of a klan.

Kloran (The Book of the Klan)—Ritual and Lectures.

Klavern—the meeting place of a klan; from cavera—a large cave.

Klan—the unit of the Order; from clan—a number of men of kindred purpose who are bound together by an oath and who are very determined to enhance and protect each other's interest and welfare.

Klansman—a member of the klan; the title of the first Order, or K-Uno.

Klan Courier—the title of the Official Organ.

Klavalier—the soldier of the klan (Military Department), from cavalier—a courtly, polite, cultured and very courageous and skillful soldier of the 17th and 18th century.

Klavalkade—a parade or public exhibition; from cavalcade—a procession.

Anno Klan—in the year of the Klan; written thus: AK.

Anno Domini—in the year of our Lord; written thus: AD.

Imperial Wizard—the Emperor of the Invisible Empire; a wise man; a wonder-worker, having power to charm and control, from Vita—to know. The title is taken from the chief officer of the original Ku Klux Klan, who was designated as the Grand Wizard.

Klaliff—successor in officer.

Klokard—lecturer or teacher of the Klan, from Klo of Kloran, the book, and Kard, meaning teacher or reader.

Kludd—chaplain, from Culdee—the high priest of the ancient Druids.

Kligrapp—the Secretary, from Kirographer—one whose business is to write.

Klabee—the Treasurer, from Kaba—to keep, and Kees, and ancient Egyptian coin and means purse.

Kladd—the Conductor, from Kada—to lead or pull.

Klarogo—the Inner Guard, from caveo—to stop or beware, and interrogate, to question.

Klexter—the Outer Guard, from Ken—to look all around with the eyes, and External—outside.

Klokan—an Investigator, from Ko—to know, and Kannas—with the eyes.

Klokann—the plural of Klokan—the Board of Investigators and Advisers.

Imperial Kloucilium—the Supreme Executive Committee; composed of all the Imperial Officers.

Imperial Klepeer—a Supreme Delegate, from the words delegate and peers.

Grand Dragon—a title from the original Ku Klux Klan—the Chief Officer of a Realm.

Great Titan—a title from the original Ku Klux Klan—the Chief Officer of a Province.

Exalted Cyclops—the Chief Officer of a klan. Cyclops is from the original Ku Klux Klan.

Kleagle—title of an Organizer for the Order.

Giant—a title from the original Ku Klux Klan. A Klan Giant is a Past Exalted Cyclops; a Great Giant is a Past Great Titan; a Grand Giant is a Past Grand Dragon; an Imperial Giant is a Past Imperial Wizard.

Night-Hawk—a title from the original Ku Klux Klan. He is the custodian of the Fiery Cross, which he carries in all ceremonies and Klavalkades. He entertains waiting aliens just prior to their naturalization.

APPENDIX B

WHARTON COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS, 1850-1940

Wharton County, Texas, as described in the Introduction and Chapter III, developed from Texas's statehood to the Civil War into one of the state's few counties dependent on a plantation economy. Although it had a significantly smaller aggregate enslaved population compared to other counties, as seen in Table 1, it had the state's highest percentage of enslaved residents per county in 1860. Similarly, it had comparatively few slaveholders numerically, yet the county had the highest percentage of slaveholders per capita of local white residents at 7.12 percent. Over a third of these slaveholders, 35.94 percent, and 28.93 percent of the county's white families, belonged to the economically and politically elite planter class, traditionally defined as slaveholders with twenty or more enslaved persons (see Table 1). These percentages were significantly higher than every other county in Texas. When compared to counties in the Deep South that had the region's largest percent of enslaved African Americans, Wharton County's demographics, including the numeric strength of its planter class, ranks higher than those in Alabama, Georgia, and Florida, and among the highest in Mississippi and Louisiana (see Table 2). As illustrated by these figures and the county's history explained in Chapter III, Wharton County's plantation culture, transplanted from these other states, dominated local society and many families who later joined the Klan.

Table 1. Comparison of Slaveholding Counties in Texas, 1860.

Texas Counties in 1860 With the Highest Percentage of Enslaved People	Total Population	Aggregate Number of Enslaved Residents	White Residents	Percentage of Enslaved Residents In the County or State	Number of White Families	Total Number of Slave-Holders	Number of Slave-Holders in Planter Class (20+)	Percentage of White Residents in Planter Class	Percentage of White Families in Planter Class	Percentage of Slave-Holders in the Planter Class
Austin	10,139	3,914	6,225	38.60%	1220	324	46	0.74%	3.77%	14.20%
Bowie	5,052	2,651	2,401	52.47%	454	201	45	1.87%	9.91%	22.39%
Brazoria	6,823	5,110	1,713	74.89%	403	232	68	3.97%	16.87%	29.31%
Fort Bend	6,143	4,127	2,016	67.18%	398	260	61	3.03%	15.33%	23.46%
Grimes	10,307	5,468	4,839	53.05%	799	505	77	1.59%	9.64%	15.25%
Harrison	15,001	8,784	6,217	58.56%	1066	713	145	2.33%	13.60%	20.34%
Matagorda	3,454	2,107	1,347	61.00%	264	125	30	2.23%	11.36%	24.00%
Washington	15,215	7,941	7,274	52.19%	1220	627	125	1.72%	10.25%	19.94%
Wharton	3,380	2,734	646	80.89%	159	128	46	7.12%	28.93%	35.94%
Texas overall	604,215	182,566	421,649	30.22%	76781	21,878	2163	0.51%	2.82%	9.89%

Table 1, Source: *Historical, Demographic, Economic, and Social Data: The United States, 1790-2000*, Social Explorer, found online at socialexplorer.com; original data, U.S. Census Bureau, transcribed by Michael R. Haines.

Table 2. Wharton County Compared to Deep South Counties with the Highest Percentage of Enslaved Persons, 1860.

Counties with Highest Percentage of Enslaved Persons in the Deep South	Total Population	Number of Enslaved Residents	Percentage of Enslaved Residents in the County or State	Rank of County, Highest % of Enslaved Residents	Number of White Residents	Number of White Families	Number of Slaveholders	Number of Slaveholders In Planter Class	Percentage of White Residents in Planter Class	Rank of County, Highest % of Whites in Planter Class	Percentage of White Families in Planter Class	Rank of County, Highest % of Families in Planter Class	Percentage of Slaveholders in Planter Class	Rank of County, Highest % of Planters Among Slaveholders
Wharton County, TX	3,380	2,734	80.89%	9	646	159	128	46	7.12%	6	28.93%	9	35.94%	9
Issaquena County, Miss.	7,831	7,244	92.50%	1	587	151	115	81	13.80%	2	53.64%	2	70.43%	1
Concordia Parish, LA	13,805	12,542	90.85%	3	1,242	325	250	129	10.39%	4	39.69%	5	51.60%	5
Tensas Parish, LA	16,078	14,592	90.76%	4	1,479	441	330	209	14.13%	1	47.39%	3	63.33%	2
Madison Parish, LA	14,133	12,477	88.28%	5	1,640	387	329	170	10.37%	5	43.93%	4	51.67%	4
Bolivar County, Miss.	10,471	9,078	86.70%	6	1,393	236	297	159	11.41%	3	67.37%	1	53.54%	3
Wilkinson County, Miss.	15,933	13,132	82.42%	7	2,779	621	499	166	5.97%	9	26.73%	10	33.27%	16
West Feliciana Parish, LA	11,671	9,571	82.01%	8	2,036	454	298	102	5.01%	13	22.47%	21	34.23%	13
Jefferson County, Miss.	15,349	12,396	80.76%	10	2,918	567	425	187	6.41%	8	32.98%	6	44.00%	7
Tunica County, Miss.	4,366	3,483	79.78%	11	883	203	132	59	6.68%	7	29.06%	8	44.70%	6

Table 2, Source: *Historical, Demographic, Economic, and Social Data: The United States, 1790-2000*, Social Explorer, found online at socialexplorer.com; original data, U.S. Census Bureau, transcribed by Michael R. Haines.

Table 3 provides the numerical data used in Chapters III and IV regarding Wharton County's changing racial demographics from the Antebellum period into the Twentieth Century.

Table 3. Black and White Population of Wharton County 1850-1940.¹⁸⁵

Wharton County	Total Population	Black Population	White Population	% Black Population	% White Population
1850	1752	1242	510	70.89	29.11
1860	3380	2734	646	80.89	19.11
1870	3426	2910	516	84.94	15.06
1880	4549	3631	918	79.82	20.18
1890	7584	6119	1465	80.68	19.32
1900	16942	8717	8225	51.45	48.55
1910	21123	8889	12200	42.08	57.76
1920	24288	7884	16404	32.46	67.54
1930	29681	7903	21778	26.63	73.37
1940	36158	9214	26944	25.48	74.52

Table 3, Source: *Historical, Demographic, Economic, and Social Data: The United States, 1790-2000*, Social Explorer, found online at socialexplorer.com; original data, U.S. Census Bureau, transcribed by Michael R. Haines.

¹⁸⁵ The black and white population totals seen in Table 2 include foreign-born and native-born residents. Individuals born in Mexico or of Mexican descent have been included in the total black and white populations, according to their racial designation listed in the census. The only exception to this rule is the 1930 census, which allowed for a Mexican racial category. For that year, Social Explorer chose to combine the Mexican population total with other whites for continuity with previous and later census years. In 1890, the total population included four residents labeled "civilized Indian." It also counted 191 residents as foreign born, but only 171 of these were included in the white population total, which left the other twenty as black or Indian. In 1900, the census included nine foreign-born individuals: two born in China; four born in "Asia, except China," (but not listed under "born in Japan"); and three residents born in "other countries." Five of these nine were included in the total white population, three in the total black population. In 1910, census takers identified 34 residents as "Other," meaning not black or white, but Asian.

As explained in Chapter III, Wharton County's white population was heavily invested in enslaved labor and cash crops, having transplanted a plantation culture and economy brought with them from other regions of the South. Even though the county's population overall grew between 1850 and 1860, most of the growth came from white slaveholders forcibly moving enslaved African Americans to the county, demonstrated by the decreased percentage of white residents in that decade. After the Civil War, the white population actually declined as the now-free black population increased. As railroad construction and availability of convict lease labor expanded in the 1870s, the county population expanded and more whites moved to the county for economic opportunity, particularly land speculation. Racial demographics of the county remained largely consistent until the county's White Man's Union Association (WMUA) took political control in 1889, when the WMUA actively whitened the local population by recruiting white migration from other regions of the country and from outside the country (see Table 3).

The line graph in Figure 1 illustrates the county's dramatic demographic shift between 1890 and 1900. The percentage of African Americans in Wharton County, designated by the blue line, reached over 80 percent by 1860 and remained high until 1890, then declined sharply to 51 percent by 1900, even as the number of African-American residents grew numerically between 1890 and 1900 (see Table 3). This declining trajectory continued through the 1920s, illustrative of the local black communities' response to the pull of better jobs and education in nearby urban centers

and states further north and the push effects of continued discrimination and racial violence, including the Ku Klux Klan.

Figure 1.

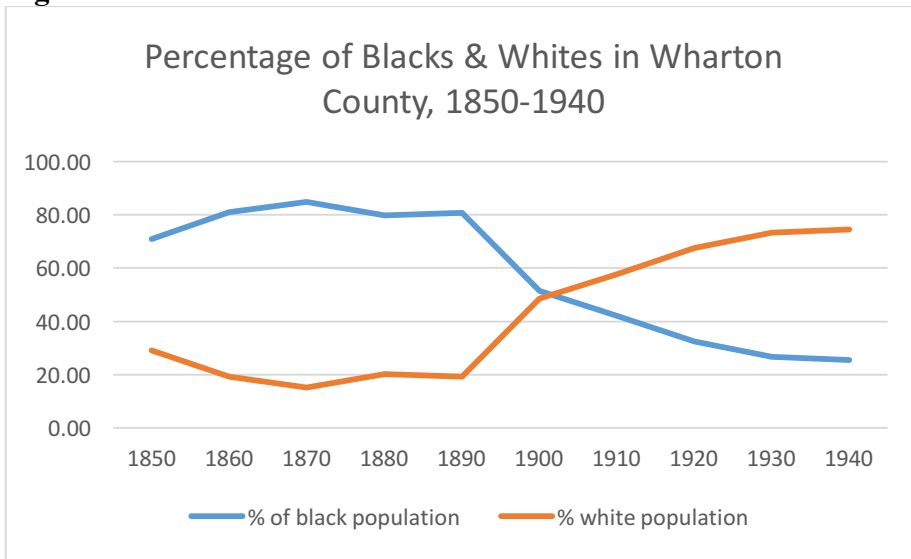


Figure 1, Source: *Historical, Demographic, Economic, and Social Data: The United States, 1790-2000*, Social Explorer, found online at socialexplorer.com; original data, U.S. Census Bureau, transcribed by Michael R. Haines.

Figure 2.

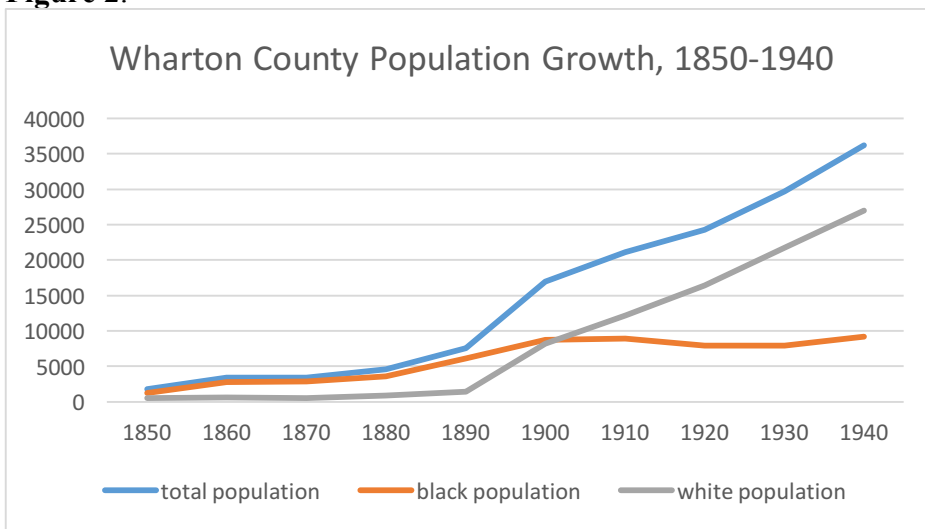


Figure 2, Source: *Historical, Demographic, Economic, and Social Data: The United States, 1790-2000*, Social Explorer, found online at socialexplorer.com; original data, U.S. Census Bureau, transcribed by Michael R. Haines.

Beginning in 1900, growth in the county’s population parallels the increase in the county’s white residents throughout the early Twentieth Century (see Figure 2). The binary racial categories suitably used to track the county’s demographics during the Nineteenth Century in these graphs fail to effectively illustrate how the county’s white population grew increasing complex and stratified. Although legally white, and labeled white by the U.S. decennial census, Mexican immigrants and Tejanos faced similar discrimination and racial violence as African Americans.

Table 4. Foreign- and Native-Born Mexican Population in Wharton County, 1870-1930

Wharton County	Total County Population	Total White Population	County Mexican Population, Foreign- And Native-Born	Percentage of Mexican Residents of Total Population	Percentage of Mexican Residents of White Population
1870	3426	516	7		
1880	4549	918	15	0.33%	1.63%
1890	7584	1465	25	0.33%	1.71%
1900	16942	8225	423	2.50%	5.14%
1910	21123	12200	830	3.93%	6.80%
1920	24288	16404	2050	8.44%	12.50%
1930	29681	16810	4968	16.74%	29.55%

Table 4, Source: *Historical, Demographic, Economic, and Social Data: The United States, 1790-2000*, Social Explorer, found online at socialexplorer.com; original data, U.S. Census Bureau, transcribed by Michael R. Haines; *United States Federal Census, 1870-1930*, enumerated manuscript, Records of the Bureau of the Census, National Archives and Records Administration, found online at Ancestry.com.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁶ Data for all categories, except Mexican and Mexican-American ethnicity, was obtained for Wharton County, Texas, from the U.S. Population Censuses, 1890, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930, found on Social Explorer. To find an approximate population for residents of Mexican descent, the author hand counted white individuals with Spanish surnames or parents born in Mexico in the U.S. Enumerated Population Censuses between 1900 and 1930, for Wharton County, found online at Ancestry.com. For all years included here, census takers likely undercounted African-American, Mexican and Tejano populations. Because of this and the fallibility of both the author and Anglo census takers in Wharton County, who frequently misspelled Spanish surnames, these numbers are offered only as estimates.

As explained in Chapters IV and V, a racial matrix of cultural elements, largely held by many white Americans, whose families came to the United States from Western or Northern Europe, was reified as science in the late 1800s, then promoted in university curriculums, social programs, and Progressive-Era reforms. This matrix stratified whiteness into groups that rationalized the protected privilege of some and marginalized others using Anglo-Saxon culture as its ideal.

Despite legal definitions and census labels, Anglo whites perceived Mexicans and Mexican immigrants living in Wharton County, and elsewhere in Texas, as less white than themselves or not white at all. The Mexican population in Wharton County had been historically small before the Twentieth Century. Between 1890 and 1900 many Mexican immigrants moved from the Texas-Mexico border area to seek better wages in farm labor and railroad construction jobs. Wharton County's Mexican community continued to increase after 1910, as many immigrants left their home country to escape

Residents listed as black, but whose parents were born in Mexico, were not included, since many of these residents lived in black communities and likely descended from former runaway slaves. For 1890, the 25 shown included only individuals born in Mexico, since an enumerated census for 1890 does not exist for Wharton County. Without an available enumerated population census for 1890, a hand count of individual native-born county residents with Spanish surnames was not possible. For 1900, this number includes those with Spanish surnames but unknown birth locations for parents or with an undesignated race. According to the Social Explorer database, 1900 census had 252 native born Tejanos (of those 103 with native parents) and 171 individuals born in Mexico. The Latino population of the total white population was 5.14 percent. 1910 Mexican count includes Mexican born and Tejanos but excludes convicts on convict farms of which there were 32 (3 Mex. born, 19 Tejanos with one or more Mexico born parent, 4 Tejanos with native parents, and 3 Tejanos with unknown parents, 3 Louisianans with Spanish last names, marked Mex. with unknown parents). The Latino percentage of the white population in 1910 was 6.19 percent; 1920 census Mexican born 1179, Tejano with Mexican parents 593, Tejano with Tejano parents 278. The Latino percentage of the white population in 1920 was 12.5 percent. 1930 Latino percentage of white population was 30%.

the political unrest and economic instability of the Mexican Revolution. Anglo elites consigned these new arrivals to manual labor, domestic workers, and other occupations traditionally held by African Americans. In effect, as blacks migrated out of the area, Anglo elites replaced these workers with Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, relegating them to a similar place within the county's strict racial hierarchy.

APPENDIX C

KLAN NO. 6: NEW ENROLLMENT BY MONTH AND BY YEAR

During the life of the Wharton Klan, from December of 1920 through the fall of 1924, the largest group of new members joined as charter members with forty-five men, twenty-two percent more than the next highest one-month total in November 1921 (see Table 1).

Table 5. New Members by Month and Year, Klan No. 6.

	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924
January		13	12	4	0
February		33	9	2	0
March		29	0	1	0
April		26	2	0	13
May		15	3	0	0
June		10	1	3	1
July		3	11	0	0
August		5	3	0	0
September		12	0	0	0
October		15	1	1	11
November		35	0	0	0
December	45	33	3	4	0
total	45	229	45	12	25

Table 5, Source: Hamilton B. Dickson Klan No. 6 Records, Wharton County Historical Museum.

This Klan chapter saw its highest annual enrollment and most consistent monthly enrollment during its first year, with a seasonal dip during the summer months (see Figure 3). New enrollment for 1922 declined sharply, so much so that new membership

for the entire year equaled that of the chapter's charter membership. New inductees continued to decline throughout 1923, which saw a sporadic trickle of new membership during the first six months. In 1924, the final year of the records, the Hamilton B. Dickson chapter saw new Klansmen in only three months, April, June, and October, with nearly all joining in the spring and fall months.

Figure 3.

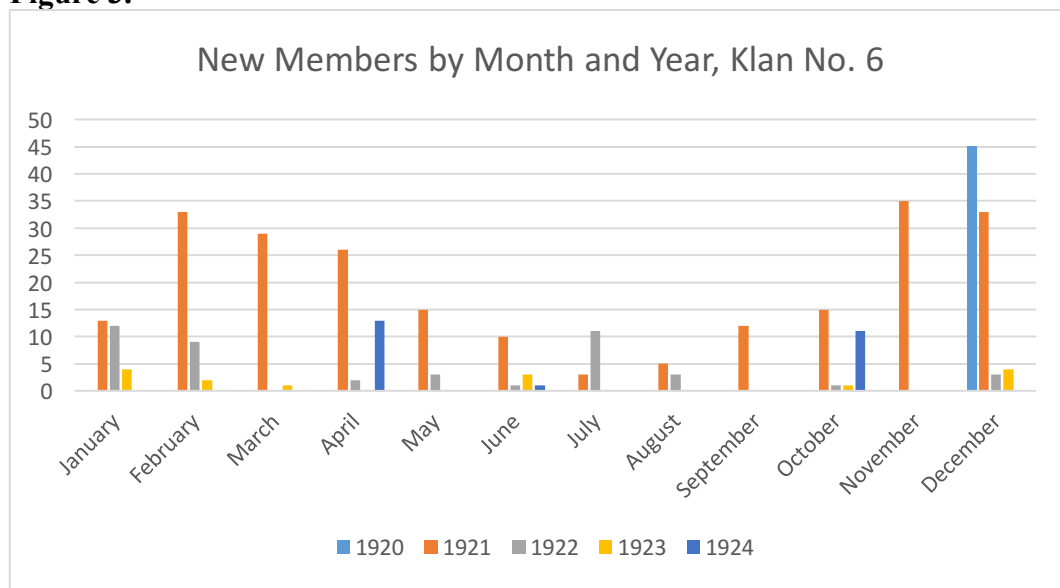


Figure 3, Source: Hamilton B. Dickson Klan No. 6 Records, Wharton County Historical Museum.

Two spikes in 1924, as well as July of 1922, resulted from the local chapter funneling all new membership into a few large outdoor naturalization ceremonies. The timing of these spikes also corresponded with Texas's primary and general elections, during which the Klan became a central political issue and sponsored candidates for the U.S. Senate and state governor (see Figure 4).

Figure 4.

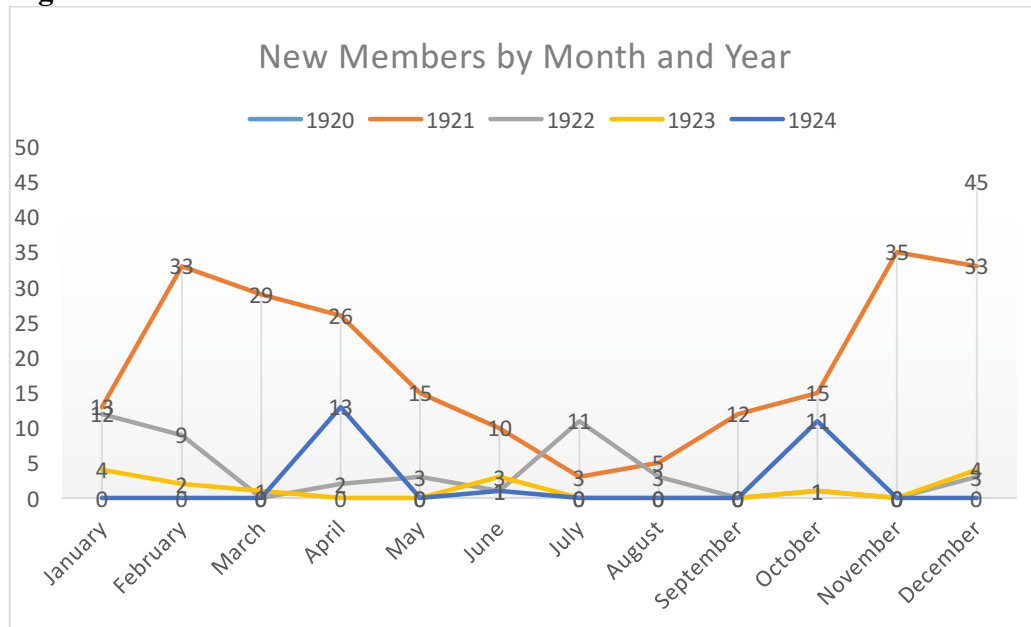


Figure 4, Source: Hamilton B. Dickson Klan No. 6 Records, Wharton County Historical Museum.

APPENDIX D

KLAN NO. 6: AGE AND MARITAL STATUS

A breakdown of Klansmen's ages at the time of their induction into the Hamilton B. Dickson Klan ranged between 18 and 76 years old (Table 2) with the 77 percent of the chapter's members between twenty and forty-nine-years old (Figure 3).

Table 6. Age Breakdown of Klan No. 6

age	count	median	mode	min.	max.
70s	5	72	72	71	76
60s	28	64.5	62	60	68
50s	35	54	57	50	57
40s	85	44	44	40	49
30s	100	35	35	30	39
20s	87	24	23	20	29
18-19	11	19	19	18	19

Table 6, Source: Hamilton B. Dickson Klan No. 6 Records, Wharton County Historical Museum.

An overwhelming number of these men were married (Figure 4). Many had started families and were building careers or had established businesses and children on the verge of adulthood by the time they joined the Klan. The bulk born after 1872, they grew up in the Jim Crow South, saw the United States grow into a global power, and personally benefitted from the local restoration of white supremacy in Wharton County through the White Man's Union Association. They disproportionately dominated the chapter compared to the county population. Using the 1920 U. S. Census demographic range, 33.9 percent of Wharton County's population were between the ages of twenty-

one and forty-four, while 65.8 percent of the chapter's membership at induction fit within this age range.

Figure 5.

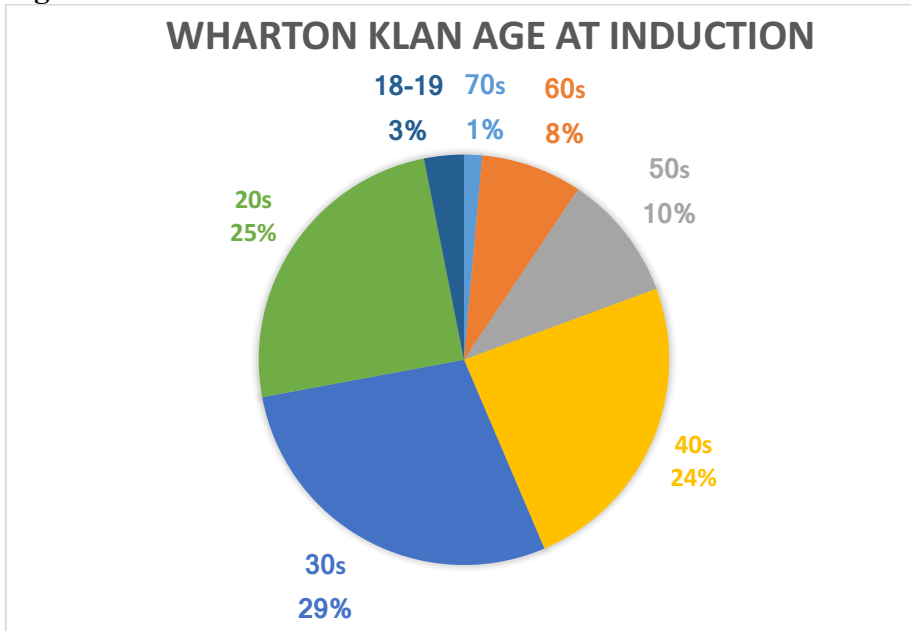


Figure 5, Source: Hamilton B. Dickson Klan No. 6 Records, Wharton County Historical Museum.

Figure 6.

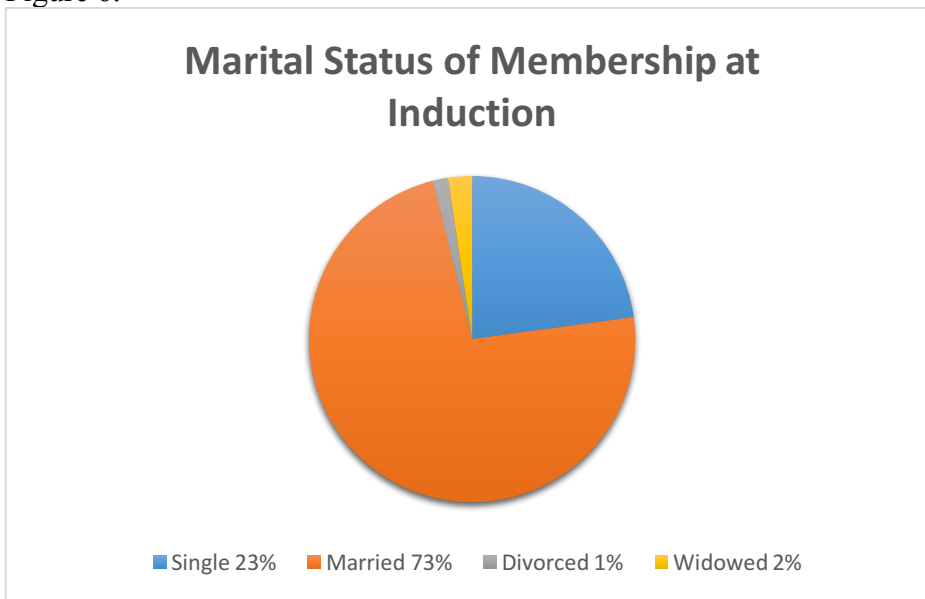


Figure 6, Source: Hamilton B. Dickson Klan No. 6 Records, Wharton County Historical Museum.

The dominance of those between the age of twenty and forty-nine reflects a larger pattern seen in Klan chapters in New York, Michigan, and Ohio (see Table 7). Wharton’s Klan No. 6, however, had a relatively equal number of members in their twenties, thirties and forties, while Buffalo, New York, and Youngstown, Ohio, had a significantly larger percentage of members in their twenties and Newaygo, Michigan, had fewer members in their forties. With further investigation, these differences may be reflective of local economic conditions and urban employment opportunities.

Table 7. Age Comparison of Wharton Klan with Other Klan Chapters

Klan chapters	percent of members in 20s	percent of members in 30s	percent of members in 40s	percent of members in 50s	percent of members in 60s
Wharton County, Texas	24.8	28.5	24.2	10.0	8.0
Youngstown, Ohio	35.4	30.8	19.6	7.6	2.1
Newaygo, Michigan	25.7	25.5	19.8	12.6	6.9
Buffalo, New York	43.1	31.5	14.9	5.7	2.1

Table 7, Sources: Craig Fox, *Everyday Klansfolk: White Protestant Life and the KKK in 1920s Michigan* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2011), 121; William D. Jenkins, *Steel Valley Klan: The Ku Klux Klan in Ohio's Mahoning Valley* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1990), 82; ; Shawn Lay, *Hooded Knights on the Niagara: The Ku Klux Klan in Buffalo New York* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 108; Hamilton B. Dickson Klan No. 6 Records, Wharton County Historical Museum.

APPENDIX E

THE DIFFICULTY OF RURAL RELIGION AND OCCUPATION

Rural life does not always allow for easy categorization of Klansmen's religious affiliation or occupation. While many individual Klansmen regularly participated in church activities, the majority of those whose names appeared in the records of Klan No 6 had tenuous ties to any specific church or faith. Those who lived away from the county's two largest towns of Wharton and El Campo had few choices of organized congregations to join. Often congregants shared buildings, rotating Sundays with other faiths, and ministers with congregants in other towns. Many county residents identified simply as Christian and attended church when work and weather permitted, regardless of which congregation gathered that particular Sabbath. Others never attended church. Tom Brooks, Horton Foote's grandfather, provides a useful example of this difficulty. Although his wife joined the Methodist Church, he never formalized his affiliation, identified as simply Christian, and did not typically attend services. When he died in 1925, his service was conducted by both a Baptist and Methodist minister and was held in the Presbyterian church.

Similar to religious identification, the dictates of rural life complicated creating a profile of local Klansmen's occupations. Many Klansmen in Wharton County switched occupations, some frequently, or had more than one source of income, especially prominent men with significant land holdings. Employment or occupation listings in the census record proved an unreliable method to identify this category because they often

only listed one occupation or used terms too broadly. Historians using occupational categories created in urban areas, often lumped all farmers into one group. To apply those categories to Wharton county would disregard the economic stratification that existed, especially when using the self-identified terms shown in the census. Locally, the variation listed farm, farmer, farm laborer, farm owner, farm operator, farm manager, planter, stockman, and planter/stockman. In comparison with property holdings found in local tax records, locals blurred the lines between these categories significantly without any clear pattern of over or under estimation. Several listed as farm laborers actually managed either their parent's farm or a family estate. These ranged from a few acres to several thousand acres, Farm managers may have worked for wages, such as on the expansive Pierce ranch, or again, managed a sizeable estate for their widowed mother or senile father. In the latter case, these managers essentially controlled the estate and were more akin to planters, and some planters had little to no land of their own.

The landed elite families of old Wharton tended to protect their property in estates that held it together instead of breaking it into smaller farms and dispersing it as inheritance. Because of this practice, several sons of wealthy families were listed in the tax records as possessing no real estate and only a small amount of personal property, when any was listed at all. To further complicate assessing wealth, many families had invested in individual oil wells or companies in Wharton county, adjacent counties, the Desdemona field near Fort Worth, and fields in Louisiana. Others invested in Sulphur beds in and around the region as well. This income did not always make it into the tax rolls. Economically one certainty existed in Wharton County. The county's economic

well-being was tied directly to the land directly, and to cotton in particular. As crop prices rose and fell, so did available income in town, including bankers, merchants, physicians, and contractors.

Table 8. Occupations of Klan No. 6 Membership

Occupation	No. of Klansmen	Percent of total
farmers	131	36.90
--value \$10,000 +	20	15.27
--value \$5000-\$9999	14	10.69
--value \$1000-\$4999	31	23.66
--value \$500-\$999	8	25.81
--value \$100-\$499	8	6.11
--value \$0-\$99	32	24.43
--cannot find value	10	7.63
--farmer & stockman	8	6.11
farm manger	2	0.56
farm laborer	5	1.41
stockman	5	1.41
business owner	25	7.04
business manager	8	2.25
jeweler	1	0.28
salesman	20	5.63
--traveling	7	1.97
--auto	3	0.85
banker	4	1.13
clerk	12	3.38
physician	8	2.25
dentist	2	0.56
pharmacist	3	0.85
minister	7	1.97
apiarist	1	0.28
vulcanizer	1	0.28
oil salesman	1	0.28
abstractor	1	0.28
newspaper emp.	1	0.28

bank cashier	4	1.13
attorney	8	2.25
insurance	6	1.69
real estate	4	1.13
auto dealer	2	0.56
mechanic	9	2.54
county employee	12	3.38
state employee	2	0.56
federal employee	4	1.13
student	9	2.54
tinner	1	0.28
undertaker	1	0.28
engineer	8	2.25
--civil	4	1.13
--electrical	1	0.28
--stationary	1	0.28
--ice & light plant	1	0.28
--water works	1	0.28
soda manufacturer	2	0.56
electrician	2	0.56
machinist	2	0.56
contractor	2	0.56
cement finisher	1	0.28
carpenter	5	1.41
painter	2	0.56
waiter	1	0.28
bookkeeper	8	2.25
principal	1	0.28
school super.	1	0.28
barber	3	0.85
RR agent	2	0.56
RR engineer	2	0.56
RR conductor	1	0.28
RR foreman	2	0.56
RR operator	1	0.28
RR clerk	2	0.56
RR asst. supt.	1	0.28

RR pipefitter	1	0.28
Railroad man	3	0.85
RR supt.	1	0.28
Roadmaster	1	0.28
oil mill manager	1	0.28
oil dealer	1	0.28
oil mill supt.	1	0.28
oil driller	1	0.28
phone operator	1	0.28
express agent	1	0.28
oil salesman	2	0.56
more than 2 jobs	34	9.58

Table 8, Source: Hamilton B. Dickson Klan No. 6 Records, Wharton County Historical Museum.

Figure 7.

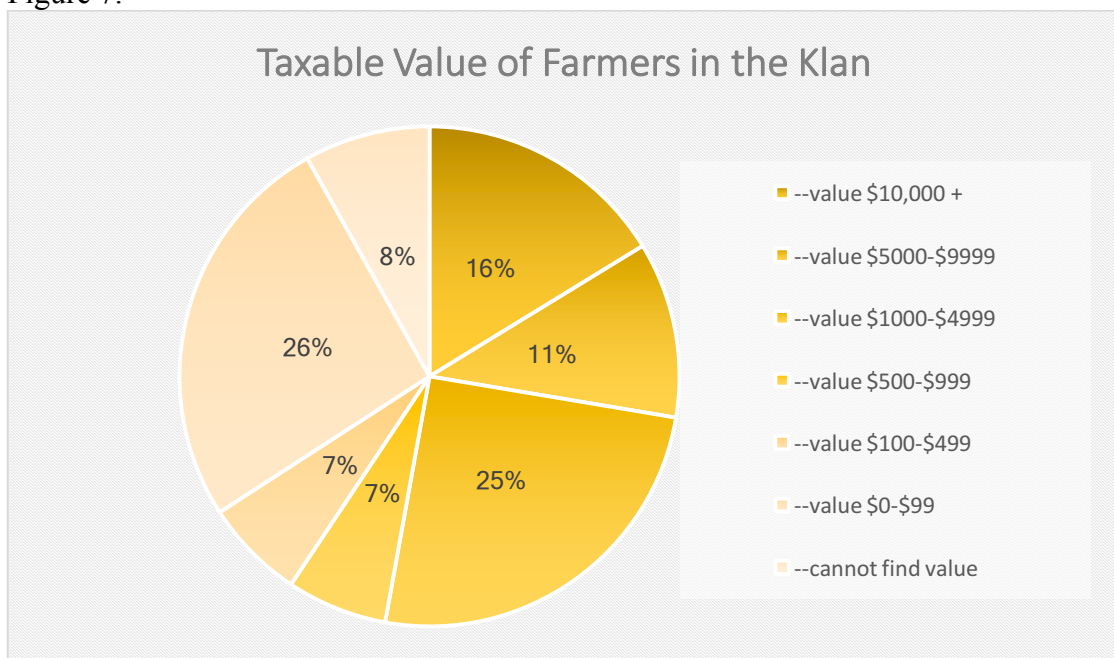


Figure 7, Source: Hamilton B. Dickson Klan No. 6 Records, Wharton County Historical Museum; Wharton County Tax Roll, 1920 & 1921, Series 2, 1911-1921, Office of the Tax-Assessor-Collector (OTAC), Texas State Library and Archive Commission, Austin, Texas (TSLAC); Wharton County Tax Roll, 1922 through 1927, Series 3, 1922-1947, OTAC, TSLAC.