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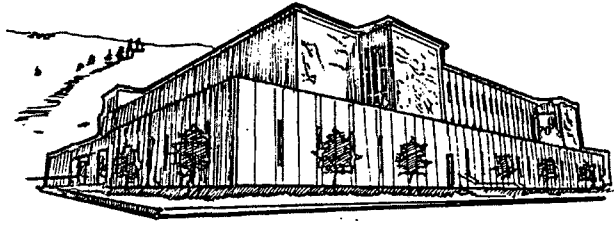
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University of  
Montana

THE BOYS IN BUTTE:  
THE KU KLUX KLAN CONFRONTS THE CATHOLICS, 1923-1929.

By  
Christine K. Erickson  
B. A., University of Montana, 1988

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
Master of Arts  
University of Montana  
1991

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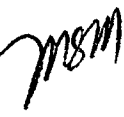
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The Boys in Butte: The Ku Klux Klan  
Confronts the Catholics, 1923-1929 (126 pp.)

Director: Michael S. Mayer 

This thesis examines the Ku Klux Klan in Butte, Montana from its founding in 1923 to its demise in 1929. A city renown for its Irish Catholic heritage, Butte seemed an unlikely choice of residence for the fiercely white supremacist and militantly Protestant order. However, approximately 181 men did consider it worth their while to join Kontinental Klan No. 30 over the course of its six year existence.

Who joined, why they joined, and what they did as members of the Kontinental Klan are the main focal points of the thesis. As minutes from meetings, personal letters, and official documents revealed, much of the Klan's character in Butte focused on secret fraternalism. This emphasis was in part by design and in part by necessity. Secret fraternalism was inherent in the Klan's program and provided the foundation on which the Klan built its program of 100 per cent Americanism, white supremacy, and militant Protestantism. The Klan recognized and capitalized on the appeal of secret fraternalism during the 1920's, when secret fraternities still enjoyed great popularity.

However, the Klan depended on activism, both political and social, to indoctrinate society with its standards of morality. In Butte, Klansmen experienced difficulties in pursuing such an activist program in the midst of an overwhelmingly Catholic and immigrant population which did not look kindly upon an organization that vowed to dismantle Catholic influence in politics and education. Thus, Kontinental Klansmen turned more to the fraternal aspects of the order, such as giving gifts to and collecting funds for sick members, attending (and giving) festive banquets, and participating in ritualistic work.

The Kontinental Klan's focus on fraternalism was not enough of an incentive to keep members interested. Its inability to bring about changes in the community played a vital role in Klansmen's commitment to the order. In addition, the Klan's fall from power on the national level, the deterioration of the economy, the public's weariness of correcting society's ills, and the availability of mass media entertainment contributed to the Kontinental Klan's decline.

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## INTRODUCTION

TO THE GRAND DRAGON, HYDRAS, GREAT TITANS, FURIES, GIANT KLEAGLES, KING KLEAGLES, EXALTED CYCLOPS AND TERRORS, AND CITIZENS OF THE INVISIBLE EMPIRE OF THE REALM OF MONTANA, IN THE NAME OF OUR VALIANT AND VENERATED DEAD, I AFFECTIONATELY GREET YOU BY VIRTUE OF GOD'S UNCHANGING GRACE:<sup>1</sup>

With this greeting, Imperial Wizard Hiram Wesley Evans ushered the Realm of Montana into the Invisible Empire on September 16, 1923. The Montana Ku Klux Klan had expanded sufficiently to warrant official Realm status and joined the swelling Klan network that had not yet reached its peak of 3 to 5 million members. Complete with appropriate "herewiths" and "hereby ordereds," this official document briskly divided Montana into four Provinces, appointed Hydras and Great Titans to assist in governing, and sternly laid out the financial responsibilities of the Montana Klan to the Imperial Palace. Although these financial obligations would plague the Realm, such problems, and others, would surface only later. In 1923 the future appeared promising, at least to the irrepressible Grand Dragon of Montana, Lewis Terwilliger. In his first official document, Terwilliger pronounced optimistically that the Ku Klux Klan embodied "the very soul of America, and is growing by leaps and bounds from coast to coast...." Montana Klansmen were "now ready to get

into the harness and operate as a real Realm organization."<sup>2</sup>

Hoping to become a part of Terwilliger's vision, the Klan in Butte received its charter on December 26, 1923. From its official recognition to its demise in late 1929, Kontinental Klan No. 30 encountered experiences like no other Klan in the state. Surrounded by a large Catholic immigrant community, Klansmen in Butte soon discovered their limitations while looking on enviously at the growth of "real 100% towns" such as Livingston.<sup>3</sup> In many ways, it is amazing that the Kontinental Klan even existed, let alone survived for six years. This thesis will discuss and analyze the Ku Klux Klan in Butte during the 1920's.

No examination of a local Klan is complete without first understanding how the national organization worked. A brief overview of the Klan's history, its centralized structure, message and mechanics, will suffice--its notorious dealings from beginning to end have been documented thoroughly.<sup>4</sup> A look at Montana's experience, drawn primarily from Terwilliger's official circulars, will provide a general background on the Klan's plans, successes and failures in the state.

After sketching the preliminaries of Klankraft at the national and state levels, an analysis of the Klan in Butte can begin. Recently uncovered documents, mostly letters, circulars, pamphlets, and minutes from meetings, present a unique opportunity to explore the development of a fiercely



white supremacist and anti-Catholic organization in a strongly Catholic and immigrant city. The city's character helps to explain why over 180 white, native-born, Protestant men "journey[ed] through the mystic cave in quest of citizenship in the Invisible Empire."<sup>5</sup> The attraction of secret fraternalism compelled many to join; indeed, David Chalmers called the Ku Klux Klan "the great fraternal lodge of America."<sup>6</sup> With all its prerequisites of fraternalism in place, an appropriate costume, elaborate rituals and a blend of well-known patriotic and uniquely Klanish symbols, the hooded order could compete with the other brotherhoods -- some 800 of them in the 1920's.<sup>7</sup> However, no other secret fraternal organization, even those that restricted membership to whites and Protestants, offered its members as full a menu of adamant white supremacy and vehement anti-Catholicism as the Ku Klux Klan.<sup>8</sup>

These attitudes were part and parcel of the Klan's secret fraternalism, but, at the same time, they hindered its development. For the Klan to exercise influence beyond its own membership, it depended on acceptance by the larger community. Irish Catholics had dominated Butte's social structure and economy for years; consequently, flexing the Klan's muscle in politics and education proved impossible. Thus, Klansmen in Butte channeled their energies more toward fraternal involvement, such as sending cigars to sick members and flowers to their wives, collecting donations for brothers

in need, attending (and giving) festive banquets, and participating in the daily operations of a small, secret fraternal order.

As it turned out however, secret fraternalism was not a strong enough glue to hold the Kontinental Klan together. Its inability to enact changes in the community, or at least to make a small difference, contributed to the Klan's decline in Butte. As a consequence of the Klan's impotence, apathy gelled quite early among Kontinental Klansmen. The downswing of the economy and the effects of modernization also played roles in the Klan's collapse. The Klan survived in Butte -- literally -- as a social club, participating in secret fraternal rituals, listening to pep talks from Terwilliger, and discussing the "evils" that existed in the community. It quietly folded in 1929.

## NOTES

1. Hiram W. Evans, official document, September 16, 1923. Ku Klux Klan files, Small Collections 236, Eastern Washington Historical Society. Hereafter known as KKK, EWHS.
2. Lewis Terwilliger, official document No. 1, 1923, Box 4 File 31, KKK, EWHS.
3. Letter from Floyd S. Cofer to J.A. Bray, March 30, 1925, Box 1, KKK, EWHS. Bray replied that he was "gratified to know there is a community where one can feel free and not as we are here...." Bray to Cofer, April 14, 1925, Box 1, KKK, EWHS.
4. The standard works are David M. Chalmers, Hooded Americanism: The First Century of the Ku Klux Klan, (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1965); Kenneth T. Jackson, The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-1930, (Oxford University Press, 1967); Arnold S. Rice, The Ku Klux Klan in American Politics, (Washington D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1962).
5. William Joseph Simmons, The Kloran, 1916, Box 4, KKK, EWHS, 27.
6. Chalmers, Hooded Americanism, 118.
7. Alvin J. Schmidt, Fraternal Organizations, The Greenwood Encyclopedia of American Institutions, (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980), 3.
8. See Noel P. Gist, "Secret Societies: A Cultural Study of Fraternalism in the United States," University of Missouri Studies XV (October 1940): 129 and 131.

## CHAPTER ONE

### "THE KLAN IS COMING"<sup>1</sup>

"Those Ku Kluxers ain't going to get me and I'm staying right here in town...[they] ain't scaring nobody."<sup>2</sup>

The Ku Klux Klan marched into Montana in late 1922 and moved quickly across the state's expansive territory in search of new recruits. Kleagles, or agents, discovered hundreds of white, native-born, Protestant Montanans willing to part with a ten dollar initiation fee for the privilege of wearing the hood and robe. It was not altogether surprising that many Montanans welcomed an organization that preached patriotism and 100 per cent Americanism. Native born citizens may have felt uneasy over the influx of immigrants into the state to work in the mines of Butte and eastern Montana, or perhaps the mood of super-patriotism and intolerance championed by the notorious Montana Council of Defense during World War I still lingered during the early 1920's.<sup>3</sup>

Whatever Montanans may have thought, Imperial officials surely viewed the Big Sky country as a potential source of revenue and as an opportunity to increase their political clout. It has been well established that the Klan operated

as a money making business and that it aspired to politics.<sup>4</sup> Larger membership numbers translated into bigger profits, and those members could be organized into a powerful voting bloc.

Dreams of expanding his order's influence must have crossed the mind of Imperial Wizard Hiram Wesley Evans during his first of two trips to Montana. He claimed optimistically to a reporter from the Billings Gazette, that "the Klan is the largest organization of its kind in the country... [membership] can be expressed in millions, somewhere between two and 20, with 20 perhaps, nearer the mark." Actually, between 3 and 5 million Klansmen paid dues during the order's peak in 1923-24.<sup>5</sup>

A tiny percentage of those millions, just over 5,100 members in 1924, hailed from Montana. Evans' one-stop tour of the sparsely populated state allowed him to assure isolated Klansmen that they were indeed an important and welcome component of the national organization. Although the long distance to eastern Montana prevented many Klansmen from attending the lectures, approximately 1300 enthusiastic Klansmen greeted the Imperial Wizard in Billings on November 14, 1924.

Evans first expressed his "satisfaction" with the election of Calvin Coolidge and then proceeded to reiterate a few of the main principles of the Klan, themes with which the audience was undoubtedly quite familiar.<sup>6</sup> Evans asserted that the Ku Klux Klan represented all white, gentile, native-born

Americans. These Americans needed awakening to the threat immigration posed to the purity of native blood and to the sanctity of America's democratic institutions. Restriction, and restriction soon, Evans warned, was of primary importance before America degenerated any further. He reminded attentive Klansmen that educating children in the principles of 100 per cent Americanism was just as important as restriction. Only public schools--not Catholic parochial schools--could properly meet this vital need. Evans chose not to elaborate on the Catholic issue in Billings, a surprising omission considering that the hooded order never hid their hatred and distrust of Catholics, particularly those in political office.

Super-patriotism and anti-Catholicism were two of the Ku Klux Klan's main themes during its brief but powerful surge during the 1920's. However, when the Klan's founder William Joseph Simmons decided to resurrect the order from the graveyard of southern reconstruction in 1915, he was not yet aware of the potential power of religious bigotry that the Klan would exploit at a later time.<sup>7</sup> Instead, Simmons emphasized a fierce white supremacy and fraternalism, or "Klanishness."

While blatantly advocating racist sentiment ("Keep caucasian blood, society, politics and civilization PURE!"), Simmons laced his argument with fraternal appeal.<sup>8</sup> The self proclaimed joiner evidently thought the Ku Klux Klan would

provide the ideal setting for lasting fraternal benevolence. With the faithful practice of Klanishness, a Knight of the Invisible Empire could float in "the lofty heights where the genial breezes of reciprocal fraternal fellowship forever wafts their inestimable blessings and the sun of Divine approbation is always bright."<sup>9</sup> Although Simmons enjoyed composing fanciful fraternal verses, he concentrated more on building the foundation of his order.

The Klan's constitution outlined in excruciating detail the rules and regulations governing the new order. From the Imperial government in Atlanta on down to the local Klans, Simmons explained the order's functions and Klansmen's obligations. In keeping with fraternal tradition, Simmons designed strange and mysterious titles for his officers. Klaliffs (vice-presidents), Kligrapps (secretaries), Klabees (treasurers) and a host of similarly named officials assisted their superior officers, "Grand Dragons," "Great Titans" and "Exalted Cyclopes." These presidents ruled over their respective territories: Realms (states), Provinces (territories within states) and Klans (local organizations). Kleagles, appointed by the Imperial Wizard or Grand Dragon, took charge of field work and propagandizing ("kluxing").

The Imperial Wizard also fabricated all fraternal rituals, regalia, paraphernalia, uniforms and honors. The Klan's sacred book, the Kloran, provided detailed diagrams and carefully worded dialogue for opening, closing and

naturalization ceremonies, ceremonies that "all Klansmen are required to study and imbibe [their] wholesome teachings and morally profit thereby."<sup>10</sup> Simmons warned that the Kloran's spiritual contents were top secret; no Klansman could ever discuss its teachings to "aliens." Separate rituals for funeral services, installation and reception ceremonies complimented the Kloran, and if nothing else, made new Klansmen exercise their memorization skills.

An expert at creating secret fraternal rituals, laws and titles, Simmons employed them with great enthusiasm, but failed miserably when it came to skillful organizing and marketing. By 1920, the Ku Klux Klan could claim only a few thousand members restricted to the deep south. The hooded order's fortunes changed when Simmons collaborated with publicity and fundraising experts Edward Y. Clark and Mrs. Elizabeth Taylor, who transformed the obscure southern fraternal order into a thriving, money-making business.<sup>11</sup> The new leaders tapped the undercurrents of racism and nativism already present among the American population; it required only some skillful prodding and promotion to spread the word of Klankraft. Linking together racial hatred, religious bigotry, and avid patriotism, Clark, Young and Simmons launched a successful recruitment campaign and signed up over 100,000 new members within 18 months.<sup>12</sup> Soon, Kleagles ventured from their southern homes to establish Realms in the Southwest, West and Midwest.



As the Ku Klux Klan expanded its empire, internal tensions erupted in Imperial headquarters. Content with designing fraternal rituals and unwilling to participate aggressively in politics, Simmons found himself on the losing end of a battle with Hiram Wesley Evans, an ambitious dentist from Dallas, Texas. By November 1922, Evans wore the purple Imperial hood and robe.<sup>13</sup> The new Imperial Wizard later remarked with disdain that the Klan in its inception was a simple and weak fraternal society that incorporated rather vague notions of patriotism and Protestantism.<sup>14</sup>

Evans dreamed of larger conquests. Political control, Evans believed, was the next logical step for the Klan to take. Sympathetic officeholders could implement the Klan's program for American society more effectively than a simple appeal from the outskirts. The Klan's political successes and failures have been well documented; David Chalmers, Arnold Rice, Charles Alexander and others have examined its influence in politics at the national, state and local levels.

The Klan enjoyed varying degrees of success. Politicians who wore the white robe, or, at least supported the Klan's principles, gained seats in local and state governments. However, the Klan's victories at the polls did not necessarily indicate political success once in office. Arnold Rice has suggested that the Klan's lack of political experience and its attempts to influence local, state, and

national governments hastened its eventual demise. Further, the American public opposed the intervention of a secret fraternity into the political arena.<sup>15</sup>

The Klan's political aspirations constituted only one of many factors contributing to its dissolution after 1924. Violence was always associated with the Klan. Klansmen engaged in whippings, tarring and featherings, and lynchings in the Midwest and South which destroyed whatever veneer of patriotic and fraternal benevolence the order professed to claim. Although violence instigated by the Klan captured the attention of newspapers, so too, did anti-Klan riots.<sup>16</sup> As the true nature of the Klan surfaced, most citizens exposed to Klan activities became less likely to be persuaded by the Klan's professions of patriotism and fraternalism. Further, scandals involving Klan officials at the state and national levels did little to boost the Klan's self-proclaimed commitment to law and order.<sup>17</sup> In addition, both Chalmers and Jackson suggest that the Klan's failure to establish a positive program and to secure results contributed to the Klan's disintegration.<sup>18</sup> For example, the Klan's inability to follow through on its promises to eliminate Catholic influence in education and politics and to instigate a return to traditional values discouraged Klansmen from retaining their memberships. Finally, enactment of the immigration bill of 1924, (for which the Klan claimed more credit than it deserved) eliminated the "threat" of "undesirable" people

flooding America and, along with it, one of the Klan's substantial arguments.

Woven in with these detrimental factors of political involvement, violence and broken promises, was the Klan's overall failure to adjust to a changing society. While the secret order continued their crusade against the "enemies" of America, Americans discovered more interesting outlets on which to devote their energies during the 1920's. Latching on to accessible recreational activities such as cars, movies and radios, Americans tended to consider their own interests first, rather than worrying about saving society. After 30 years of concentrating on society's ills, the reformist tradition had worn thin.<sup>19</sup>

As Klan enrollment slipped across the country, Imperial headquarters struggled to recapture Americans' interest. They found the perfect scapegoat in the Democratic presidential candidate for 1928. Al Smith, the wet, Catholic urbanite from New York, epitomized the very image against which the Klan had been fighting, and he incurred the fiercest and vilest of Klan wrath. Even when Herbert Hoover decisively defeated Smith, the Klan continued to rage against "Romanist Propaganda" and the "Pope-King."<sup>20</sup> However, the hooded order's energetic efforts to vilify Smith, and Catholics in general, failed to convince Klansmen to pay their dues. Volumes of pamphlets and papers published by the Kluxer press declared that the Klan's battle against foreign

entanglements, anti-Americanism and the "negro crisis" was not finished, but membership numbers continued to plummet.<sup>21</sup> Approximately 200,000 Knights remained on Klan rosters in 1928, and that dropped to around 50,000 members by 1930, down from the 3 to 5 million in earlier years.<sup>22</sup>

As the Ku Klux Klan shrunk to its original confines in the deep South, Klansmen in Montana had already begun to turn in their robes. Never a strong organization in terms of political achievements and numbers of members, the Realm of Montana had wielded little impact as a state-wide force by 1930. But when Montana officially entered the Invisible Empire back in 1922, few considered the possibility of defeat and obscurity. Montana "citizens" considered themselves as an integral part of a permanent and growing organization, a secret fraternal society that would promote 100 per cent Americanism and Protestantism.

The determined Lewis Terwilliger ruled from the Grand Dragon's throne throughout the Klan's existence in Montana. The former mayor and high school principal of Livingston conducted Klan business in a no-nonsense style, abiding by Imperial laws and asking Montana Klansmen to do the same. Partly because of his efforts, the Realm issued membership cards to approximately 4,030 white, Protestant, native-born Montanan men during 1923-1924. By the end of 1924, the number swelled to just over 5,160, probably the Klan's peak in Montana.<sup>23</sup> Over fifty local Klans were granted charters in

Montana during the 1920's, although when membership numbers declined in later years, many local orders either dissolved or combined with others.<sup>24</sup>

During his nearly ten year reign in office, Lewis Terwilliger attempted to shape Montana into a "real 100%" Realm of which the Imperial Palace would be proud. Several general themes emerged in Terwilliger's official circulars that reflected the national program, including the need for political control and anti-Catholicism, two issues that came to a climax during the presidential campaign of Al Smith. These circulars provided most of the information concerning his efforts. Further, the circulars revealed the more mundane aspects of the Klan's business, the endless quarterly reports, frequent changes in constitutional policies, and pleas for subscriptions to the Kourier (the official mouthpiece of the Klan). Not surprisingly, a ceaseless cry to expand membership permeated the circulars. Certainly this demand represented an inherent part of Terwilliger's personal desire to register support for the Klan's program, but pressure from Imperial headquarters undoubtedly also played a role.

The relationship between political aspirations and membership drives was clearly an important one for the Klan, which measured success at the polls. Terwilliger warned that Klansmen who did not support the order with "their whole heart and soul and vote, should be asked to withdraw, and let

us know that they are with our enemies."<sup>25</sup> Terwilliger followed the Imperial headquarter's position and emphasized the importance of voting as a unit. He requested that Klansmen put aside their personal preferences and vote according to the political committee's recommendations.<sup>26</sup>

Terwilliger's political committee distributed handouts that listed candidates' names and parties to all local Klans. A series of mysterious letters followed each name, specifying religion, fraternal affiliations, stance on prohibition, plus special secret indicators signalling a record of hostility or favoritism toward the Klan. A key for cracking the code would arrive in the mail a few days later. Such efforts naturally hoped to produce political victories, but just as important, secret codes served to create a sort of fraternal conspiracy--allowing members to believe that they were part of a larger scheme.

Membership numbers though, never rose high enough to satisfy Terwilliger. Echoing pleas from Imperial headquarters, Terwilliger stressed that local Klans needed to "make a special effort" to seek out and naturalize "faithful and dependable" men.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, recruiting members, and, more important, retaining current members, proved a continual problem with the Montana Klan.

In an attempt to boost their membership, Terwilliger urged local Klans to hire -- at their own expense -- professional lecturers, often ministers, to speak before

lodges in order to renew enthusiasm and to initiate recruits. After engaging such speakers, noted Terwilliger, "local Klans have had in them a revival of the spirit of Klancraft."<sup>28</sup>

Terwilliger had reason to be concerned with the level of enthusiasm in local Klans. The difficulties of large scale organizing in the state presented a constant problem and prompted the Realm office to stress the importance of faithful attendance at meetings to keep up-to-date with Klan activities. Terwilliger admitted that "distances are too great to allow us to visit each other and gain the inspiration and new ideas that we all need."<sup>29</sup> The Grand Dragon hoped that the huge number of publications the Imperial office churned from the Kluxer Press would revive waning interest. Subscription (for a dollar a year) to the Kourier kept Klansmen informed of current events. Other papers such as The Fellowship Forum, a fraternal weekly that gave "the unvarnished truth about all current matters" according to Terwilliger, assured Klansmen of a proper viewpoint on issues of national interest.<sup>30</sup>

Providing local news proved a more difficult task. The Montana Klansman folded in early 1925 from lack of funds after a lifespan of only a few months. Terwilliger expressed his sorrow over the paper's failure, stating that although the Klansmen in Belgrade "published one of the best little Klan papers in the United States. . . [its failure] proved that the time was not yet ripe for a Klan paper in Montana."<sup>31</sup>

Declining membership meant that The Montana Klansman never received a second chance. Not quite 1,500 Klansmen submitted dues in 1927.<sup>32</sup>

Themes of membership renewal, political obligations, and pep talks continued to dominate the official circulars in late 1927.<sup>33</sup> During the presidential campaign of Al Smith, Terwilliger pleaded with departing members that the awesome task of preserving America for Americans laid on Klansmen's shoulders.<sup>34</sup> Even the declaration that Klan work was "high and holy work--a work in which angels and archangels might delight to engage" failed to motivate Montana Klansmen.<sup>35</sup> The defeat of Al Smith hastened the end of the Ku Klux Klan nationally, although Terwilliger made a gallant effort to revive whatever scattered remains were left in Montana.

Only \$3.13 remained in the Realm treasury in October 1929.<sup>36</sup> By January 1931, Terwilliger was still pleading for prompt quarterly reports from the few Klans remaining and still asking that Klansmen subscribe to the Kourier.<sup>37</sup> As the effects of the depression deepened in Montana, the Grand Dragon made a last desperate, and almost pitiful call for Knights to remain active in August 1931. He soothed loyal Klansmen that they need not worry if their local chapters had dissolved. A loyal Klansman could submit \$6.00 for dues and become a member of the Grand Klan of Montana; in return for his interest and money, he would receive the Realm's official



bulletins "together with pertinent literature from time to time." Terwilliger reminded Klansmen that the Realm needed them and that Klansmen needed "the close touch that membership in the Grand Klan will give."<sup>38</sup>

Perhaps a few faithful Klansmen across the state heeded Terwilliger's plea to remain, if, indeed they heard it at all. Most of the Klans in the state had already collapsed, including the Kontinental Klan. One or two loyalists in Butte continued correspondence with Terwilliger after Butte's official charter had long dissolved, but only four Klansmen bothered to attend the local Klan's last meeting in May 1929; even most of the officers had stayed home.

Back in December 1923, however, the members of the newly formed Kontinental Klan were not thinking about possible failure. Instead, they busied themselves with the immediate future. How would they recruit trustworthy and faithful Klansmen from the predominately Catholic city of Butte? Could they dare risk burning a cross on the nearby bluffs? Could they hammer a dent in the Catholic controlled political machinery? These concerns, and others that developed later, would occupy the Klansmen in Butte throughout the 1920's.

## NOTES

1. Chapter title is from a song in American Hymns, (Buffalo, New York: International Music Co., n.d.), Box 5 File 16, KKK, EWHS.
2. "Slim" answering to police officers after he received a threatening message signed by the Klan. Anaconda Standard, March 23, 1923, 6.
3. See Nancy Rice Fritz, "The Montana Council of Defense," unpub. Master's Thesis, University of Montana, 1966, and Arnon Gutfeld, "Years of Hysteria, Montana 1917-1921," unpub. PhD dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1971, for background information on Montana during WWI.
4. See Charles C. Alexander, "Kleagles and Cash: The Ku Klux Klan as a Business Organization, 1925-1930," Bus. Hist. Rev., 39(3), 1965, and Arnold S. Rice, The Ku Klux Klan in American Politics, (Washington D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1962).
5. Estimates of Klan membership were numerous, but all fell within the same general range. David M. Chalmers, Hooded Americanism: The First Century of the Ku Klux Klan 1865-1965, (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1965). Chalmers estimated over 3 million, p. 291. Kenneth T. Jackson, The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-1930, (Oxford University Press, 1967). Jackson estimated over 2 million, p. 23. Arnold S. Rice estimated over 4 million, p. 12. Former Kleagle Edgar I. Fuller writing under the pseudonym Marion Monteval, estimated 5 million members. Marion Monteval [Edgar I. Fuller], The Klan Inside Out, (Claremore, Okla., 1928; Negro Universities Press, 1970), 45. The New Republic stated in 1923 that 2.5 to 4.5 million people had joined. The New Republic, Vol XXXVI, (November 21, 1923): 32.
6. Billings Gazette, November 15, 1924, 1.
7. William G. Shepherd, "How I Put Over The Klan," Collier's, July 14, 1928., 6.
8. William Joseph Simmons, The Practice of Klanishness, (Atlanta, 1918), 5.
9. Simmons, The Practice of Klanishness, 4.
10. William Joseph Simmons, The Kloran, (1916), Box 4 File 10, KKK, EWHS, 5.

11. Chalmers, Hooded Americanism, 31.
12. Rice, The Ku Klux Klan in American Politics, 7; Jackson, The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 10.
13. Internal bickering continued to smolder within Klan ranks, as Klansmen loyal to Simmons refused to acknowledge Evans' rule. Evans prevailed after a lengthy and messy courtroom battle that resulted in Simmons retaining all copyrights and receiving a monthly salary. For all practical purposes, Simmons faded into obscurity, although legal haggling continued for another one and one half years. See Chalmers, Hooded Americanism, 105-107.
14. Hiram Wesley Evans, "The Klan's Fight for Americanism," North American Review, 223 (Summer, 1926): 35.
15. Rice, The Ku Klux Klan in American Politics, 36-37.
16. See Stanley Coben, Rebellion Against Victorianism: The Impetus for Cultural Change in 1920s America, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 153-155, for examples.
17. Coben, Rebellion Against Victorianism, 151.
18. Chalmers, Hooded Americanism, 295; Jackson, The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 254.
19. See Frederick Lewis Allen, Only Yesterday, (Harper and Row, 1931), especially pp. 155-187, for an informal account of Americans' interests during the 1920's. The Kalispell Times noted sarcastically that children were no longer staying home "because their parents are out in the car or seeing the movies." Kalispell Times, July 19, 1923, 4.
20. Hiram Wesley Evans, "The Klan Answers," pamphlet, 1929, Box 4 File 28, KKK, EWHS, 5.
21. Ibid., 6.
22. Rice, The Ku Klux Klan in American Politics, 12.
23. Membership numbers were derived from the yearly Realm taxes. Each member was taxed 25 cents per quarter equalling \$1.00 per year. In 1924, the Realm reported \$4,036 in Realm taxes, thus, approximately 4,036 people were members of the Klan. This number is approximate, and is on the low side because of the nature of the tax system and the fluctuating membership rolls. An exaggerated count of over 6,000 was given to the Billings Gazette, probably by a Klansman, in 1923. September 25, 1923, 5.

24. Lewis Terwilliger always included an "honor roll" on his official circulars for prompt submission of quarterly reports. Minutes from Kloreros also printed names of local Klans. An example of Klans joining was the Ravalli County Klan, number 47 on the list (and therefore formed late in the decade). Most likely it was a combination of the Stevensville and Hamilton Klans, both established earlier.

25. Terwilliger, Official Circular, November 11, 1924, Box 5 File 1, KKK, EWHS.

26. Terwilliger, Official Circular, June 2, 1924, Box 5 File 1, KKK, EWHS.

27. Ibid. It seems that Montana experienced a problem with securing men of these qualities. After an informal investigation of the state's Klans, a Knight recommended to members at the Klorero in 1924 that "the house of many klans should be cleaned of undesirable members." (Minutes from the Klorero, August 24, 1924, Box 4 File 29) The Resolutions committee concurred, and asserted that the "Realm needed cleansing from the deplorable condition in which some of the Klans have been left by their organizers, in particular to the type of men naturalized...." Any pleas stressing the necessity of "cleansing" the Montana organization all but disappeared in later years as Terwilliger grew more and more concerned with decreasing membership.

28. Terwilliger, Official Circular, August 30, 1924, Box 5 File 1, KKK, EWHS.

29. Terwilliger, Official Circular, January 1925, Box 5 File 2, KKK, EWHS. Poor conditions of roads also halted Klansmen from traveling long distances to conventions or other gatherings. A small attendance at the 1927 Klorero was blamed on the heavy rains throughout Montana, making it difficult to drive on dirt roads, which the Billings Gazette described as "20 years behind the times." Billings Gazette, August 11, 1924, 4. Further comments on Montana roads are contained in the Billings Gazette on October 1, 1923, 4, and in the Kalispell Times September 6, 1923, 8.

30. Terwilliger, Official Circular, July 15, 1927, Box 5 File 3, KKK, EWHS.

31. Terwilliger, Official Circular, approx. March 1, 1925, Box 5 File 2, KKK, EWHS.

32. Financial Report of the Grand Dragon of the Realm of Montana, August 1, 1927 to June 1, 1928, Box 5 File 5,

KKK, EWHS.

33. Unfortunately, Terwilliger's messages to Montana Klansmen are missing for most of 1926 and half of 1927, as too are the minutes from the Klorero of 1926. However, extrapolation from the circulars of late 1927 indicate that, more than likely, Terwilliger's message did not change during that time.

34. Terwilliger, Official Circular, October 10, 1927, Box 5 File 3, KKK, EWHS. Terwilliger asserted that "this great question [of who will be President] must be decided by the Klan."

35. Terwilliger, Official Circular, December 12, 1927, Box 5 File 3, KKK, EWHS. Terwilliger constantly reminded Klansmen to "check [their] work in Americanism and Protestantism."

36. "Financial Report of the Grand Dragon of the Realm of Montana," June 1, 1928 to October 1, 1929, Box 5 File 6, KKK, EWHS.

37. Terwilliger, Official Circular, January 8, 1931, Box 5 File 7, KKK, EWHS.

38. Ibid.

## CHAPTER TWO

"COME JOIN THE K.K.K. IN THE OLD TOWN TONIGHT"<sup>1</sup>

"...I am warning you that you cannot afford to run any risk in getting some men [in the Kontinental Klan] who will betray you."<sup>2</sup>

Grand Dragon Lewis Terwilliger

### I

At first glance, Butte hardly seemed conducive to the emergence of a white supremacist and militant Protestant order. Indeed, "Butte, America" harbored thousands of immigrant Catholics and was marked by the indelible stamp of Irish Catholic presence, politically, economically, and socially.<sup>3</sup> However, closer examination of this mining city (and Butte was a city, not an obscure western mining camp) indicates that strains of anti-Catholicism existed well before the Ku Klux Klan arrived.

The much publicized and explosive feud from 1888-1900 between two shrewd financiers and mine owners, Marcus Daly and William Andrews Clark, contributed to the religious tensions of later years. While the political origins of the "War of the Copper Kings" are beyond the scope of this study, its religious foundation -- and ramifications -- are not. Recent research suggests there was more to the Daly-Clark

feud than Daly's "betrayal" of Clark and the Democratic party in 1888 for strictly political reasons. Clark's failed bid for territorial delegate was due to the overwhelming support Daly and the Irish gave to Clark's Republican opponent, Thomas H. Carter. The assumption that Daly hoped to wield greater influence over a Republican delegate during a presumed Republican administration still has some validity, but in fact, the primary answer to the conflict rested with both men's different, and conflicting religions.<sup>4</sup> While both Clark and Daly were Democrats and Irish-born, Clark was a Protestant, an Orangeman who, by association, supported the British policy on Ireland -- a slap in the face to any Irish Catholic. Daly, on the other hand, "wore his Irish Catholicism like a badge" and belonged to several Irish nationalist sects.<sup>5</sup> These differences came to the fore during Clark's campaign for territorial delegate and resulted in Daly and the Irish Catholics voting overwhelmingly for the Republican candidate, a rarity in Irish voting behavior. Clark never forgave Daly for his loss, and the battle for domination of the mining industry started in earnest and continued until Daly's death in 1900. However, the divisive religious lines laid down in 1888 would last longer.

Certainly religion and national loyalties played a part in Daly's and Clark's hiring practices. Irish Catholics arriving in town could count on finding employment in one of Daly's mines, a fact that spurred even more immigrants to

Butte.<sup>6</sup> Daly hired an enormous number of his fellow countrymen for all positions in his industry, which undoubtedly contributed to Irish loyalty to Daly. On the other hand, Clark preferred to hire Cornishmen to work in his mines. These loyalties and practices continued even through the 1920's, after Daly was dead and Clark had effectively retired from the mining business.

While Clark and Daly locked horns over the control of mining interests in Montana, the 1890's witnessed a new era of intolerance nationwide. Increasing political and educational gains made by Catholics instigated a wave of anti-Catholicism that soon resounded across the country in its most organized form, the American Protective Association. Economic downswing as well as industrial and political tensions also contributed to the rise of this fierce anti-Catholic order that claimed two million members at its peak.<sup>7</sup> It certainly appealed to the Protestants in Butte, including, as rumor had it, Clark.<sup>8</sup> By 1894, 2,000 had joined to oust the "dupes of Rome" from American political and educational institutions.<sup>9</sup>

That even 2,000 people thought it crucial enough to join spoke volumes of the influential propaganda that the APA circulated throughout the country. Members in Butte even published a weekly, the Examiner, for two years to keep fellow "APAer's" informed of local events and to warn of the Catholic "threat." The virulent anti-Catholic rhetoric spewed



out by the APA publication rivaled that of its successor, the Ku Klux press. It targeted all who "wore the chains of Romanism" but it saved its most potent venom for priests and the "Dago at Rome."<sup>10</sup> The APA launched tirades against "the complete control of our great cities by Romanism," the Catholic "attack on our public school system," and the Catholic "control of the heads of government at Washington [sic]."<sup>11</sup> The similarity between the Klan's and the APA's arguments was striking.

More specifically, the Examiner wondered when Butte APAer's would realize that "deeds, not words, are what win."<sup>12</sup> Likely, sore memories still lingered from a tremendous riot on the 4th of July of the previous year that pitted Irish Catholics against APA supporters and left one person dead and hundreds injured. APA banners loudly displayed in two saloons sparked the riot. The militia finally dispersed the rioters after hours of fierce fighting, but not before Irish firemen gleefully turned their nozzles towards the offending saloons and completely demolished the interiors, utterly soaking the inhabitants.<sup>13</sup>

The riot did not quell the APA's bid for control in Butte. In fact, the organization successfully backed APA sympathizer William Thompson for mayor in 1895, but their success was short-lived. Two years later, Thompson lost his bid for re-election when Marcus Daly "turned his thousands of miners loose" to vote for the opposition, an Irish Catholic

candidate.<sup>14</sup> By that time, the APA had already passed its peak in numbers and influence and had tumbled from any position of authority across the country including Butte.<sup>15</sup> However, the intense Catholic and anti-Catholic loyalties did not simply fade into oblivion. The religious division would emerge once again, though on a much smaller scale, in Kontinental Klan #30.

## II

The Klan must have entered Butte with some apprehension, for there was no guarantee that they could effectively tap that reservoir of nativism. After all, immigrants and Catholics still dominated Butte, and, as the APA discovered, this majority thought little of an organization that referred to the Pope as "an impatient, meddling individual controlled by a Jesuitical lot of assassinous villains."<sup>16</sup> Moreover, this majority would use violence to counter anti-Catholicism. In other words, the Klan could not just saunter into town and expect to receive a warm welcome. Kleagles, or field workers, often from another city, had to know whom to contact.

Kleagles arriving in Butte most likely followed the time tested approach of hunting for recruits in the business community.<sup>17</sup> A list of charter members of the Butte Klan

reveals that this may have very well been the case. Among the first members of the Kontinental Klan #30 were a lawyer, two managers for large department stores, the president of Montana Motors, a certified public accountant, a broker, and the manager of Western Fuel (who later became mayor of Butte).

<sup>18</sup> For obvious reasons, the Klan wished to attract stable men in positions of respect and power. Men in high positions often knew people in city government, and any extra leverage the Klan could wield in the community would be to their ultimate advantage. In addition, such men had access to large numbers of people, such as business associates and brothers in fraternal orders, and therefore were in a favorable position to solicit for other members.

After a Kleagle established the framework of the new order and supplied members with the proper materials, the burden of recruitment fell upon the local organization. Besides the obvious method of asking personal friends and business associates, Klansmen looked to fraternal orders, particularly the Masons, to serve as a recruitment ground.<sup>19</sup> The Klan targeted Masonic support for several reasons. As with most other secret fraternal orders, patriotism and belief in a supreme being were part and parcel of the Masonic creed. Only whites were allowed to join. While certainly not all Masons subscribed wholeheartedly to the Klan's tenet of absolute white supremacy, race consciousness was a contemporary concern in society.<sup>20</sup> The Masonic order also had

anti-Catholic roots stretching back into the 18th century. Not incidentally, the APA found willing recruits from Masonic lodges during the 1890's.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, more people belonged to the Masons than any other secret fraternal order in the country, and its membership included politicians, bankers and businessmen. American Masons had been participating in solemn and ritualistic ceremonies since the mid-1700's; indeed, the Masonic ritual and structure later served as the model for the hundreds of orders that materialized during the late 19th century.<sup>22</sup>

The Masonic lodge was not just a men's club, whose doings newspapers relegated to the back page. Newspapers devoted a great deal of space to Masonic activities, including the latest meetings, installation ceremonies, and picnics.<sup>23</sup> Thus, a Klansman who was also a Mason, had access to a large number of possible candidates. He might also already have friends within the order who would be more apt to sample a new fraternity on a friend's recommendation.

Certainly, the Klan depended more upon this loose association with the Masons than the other way around. This was not to say that the Masonic lodges officially sanctioned this association. Indeed, when the Knights of Columbus uncovered partially filled Klan membership lists and forms in the local Masonic lodge in Roundup, Montana, the Masons considered it an "embarrassment."<sup>24</sup> In response to a claim stating that Masons constituted a large portion of the Klan

and that the Klan enjoyed Masonic approval, the grand master of the Massachusetts grand lodges declared that the "klan has no connection with and neither does it have the support of any masonic jurisdiction."<sup>25</sup> However, the Butte Bulletin reported that a "prominent New York Mason" alleged the close connection between the Klan and the Masons.<sup>26</sup>

Whatever the official position of the Masonic order, there was no doubt that the Masonic lodge served as a pipeline for the Kontinental Klan. Judging from the obituaries, of the 68 Klansmen who died in Butte, 58 were Masons.<sup>27</sup> These numbers may have been even higher since it is quite probable that some of the 113 remaining Klansmen who left Butte after the late 1920's also enjoyed dual membership.

The Klan's reliance on Masonic membership continued throughout the 1920's, especially when anti-Catholics geared up to oppose Al Smith's presidential campaign of 1928. By this time, Klan numbers had dropped drastically across the country; the Klan in Butte had less than fifty members in good standing. Albert Jones, the last Kligrapp for Butte and a Scottish Rite Mason, mentioned to a fellow Klansman that he had already sent in "our directory Masonic Roster" to the Rail Splitter, a hostile anti-Catholic magazine, and that his friend should do the same.<sup>28</sup> That same year, Lewis Terwilliger, who was also a Scottish Rite Mason, wrote to Jones and discussed his recent address to the Masons in Big

Timber. Terwilliger informed them that "any Mason who would vote for Al Smith was a traitor to his organization and should turn in his card." Terwilliger noted to Jones that all but one Mason agreed with him, since "you find occasionally a Mason who is not true to the best interests of Masonry...I imagine you would have quite a few of them in Butte."<sup>29</sup> Though these exchanges indicate that the Klan hoped to include Masons in their propaganda drive against Al Smith, the point remains that in fact it could count on support from some Masons.<sup>30</sup>

The Klan's relationship with the Masons touched just a part of the order's desire to expand their influence and membership numbers. The Imperial Palace and Terwilliger never stopped pushing the local Klans to enlist new support.<sup>31</sup> Recruitment was an extremely important component of the Klan; it was, after all, what generated money for the Imperial and Realm coffers. Further, a larger membership meant more political clout at the polls.

Searching for recruits often involved more than just individuals recruiting friends or lodge mates. Detailed and ambitious membership drives planned by the Imperial and Realm staffs supplemented local efforts. One such drive covered two weeks in October 1924, undoubtedly timed to coincide with the upcoming election. Terwilliger issued to each Exalted Cyclops and Kligrapp in the state explicit instructions for the program. After local Klans had devised a list of all

"eligible aliens" living in their jurisdiction, they would then send the potential candidates invitations and admission cards for a special meeting.<sup>32</sup> At the meeting, a national lecturer on the Imperial payroll would deliver a rousing patriotic speech to Klansmen and candidates alike, in hopes of securing more members.<sup>33</sup>

All proceedings took place under a cloak of secrecy, which lent a certain appeal to the whole process. Candidates received invitations no sooner than two days before the scheduled meeting in order to prevent news of the event leaking to unfriendly residents. All admission cards were cleverly numbered, odd numbers for newcomers and even numbers for Klansmen, ostensibly so that Klansmen could tell who the aliens were without risking their identities. Likely, it did not make any difference at all, particularly in the smaller Klans, where everyone knew each other anyway. If Klans followed the rules carefully however, Terwilliger affirmed that this program procured "wonderful results" and "a revival of the spirit of Klankraft" wherever it was implemented. The Kontinental Klan must have produced a convincing program, twelve residents of Butte paid their ten dollar klectokens that quarter, the second highest batch of recruits in its history.<sup>34</sup>

Between 1923 and 1929, approximately 181 residents of Butte decided to become Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.<sup>35</sup> This membership number represents the most solid figure and

provides the base for an analysis of who the Klansmen were and what they did for a living.<sup>36</sup> The data indicate that members came from a wide socio-economic spectrum. They ranged from professionals to laborers, with most settling somewhere in between. Studies of Klansmen throughout the country reveal similar findings. In Butte, however, Klansmen did not represent the local breakdown in occupations, particularly in one area, mining.

Occupation	Percentage of Klansmen Working	Percentage of Butte Men Working
Clerical	15.4	6.0
Trade	17.0	13.2
Mechanics	29.1	20.5
Mining	14.3	41.0
Transp/Comm	15.9	6.3
Domestic	1.6	5.0
Public Service	1.6	2.4
Agriculture	2.2	0.9
Professional	2.2	4.7

Numbers are from the 14th census, 1920.

Considering that the mining industry dominated Butte, miners in the Klan were under represented by one third, a significant percentage. Two factors could account for this discrepancy. The primary explanation rested with the employment practices of the mines. Even though Marcus Daly had long since died, his mines still employed immigrants and



the sons of immigrants. The Irish still constituted a large portion of the working force, along with others of European descent. Further, it is safe to assume that most of these miners were Catholics. Certainly this was true of the Irish. The census of 1926 strengthens this assumption with its claim that 70 percent of Silver Bow county, which was essentially Butte, considered themselves Catholics.<sup>37</sup> Thus, by sheer numerical odds, the majority of miners, particularly in the Anaconda mines, were foreign and Catholic--unlikely places for budding Klansmen.

Another possibility, though not easily substantiated as the previous supposition, was that Klansmen simply chose not to work underground because they preferred not to work alongside of immigrant-Catholics. More to the point, a Klansman would find himself in an unenviable position if Irish Catholic miners discovered his affiliation thousands of feet underground. In the hazardous and dangerous depths, it would take only one "accident" to send a miner to the hospital with a serious injury, or to the morgue. Realizing that membership in the Klan begged for trouble, sympathetic miners may have chosen not to join, or sympathizers might have chosen not to become miners.

Of the miners who were Klansmen, less than half worked in one of the Anaconda Mining Company's 25 mines in the Butte area. In addition, the majority of men employed at ACM did not just shovel rock. They were engineers, shop foremen, and

electricians, which indicates that Klansmen who worked for ACM enjoyed a more elevated job status and in so doing, would not run as great a personal risk if their identity were exposed as if they had worked as ordinary miners. Conversely, well over half of the miners in the Klan worked for Elm Orlu, a Clark Mine. Most of these men did work in lesser skilled jobs. Approximately 65 per cent of the Klansmen employed at Elm Orlu joined in 1927, which suggests a massive recruitment effort on the part of the Klan. The Klan likely fueled their argument with anti-Smith and therefore, anti-Catholic propaganda to draw in the workers. Evidently, the Protestant-Catholic lines drawn during the Clark-Daly feud still lingered.

Another trend emerges from the data that made up the difference for Klansmen's paucity in the mines. The percentage of Klansmen in clerical positions more than doubled that of the norm in Butte. Jobs in transportation and communication revealed similar results. This could indicate only that these occupations filled the gap left open by the mines, but it could also mean that people working in jobs with little opportunity of advancement would be more attracted to the Klan's offer of Knighthood which included a chance for promotion and recognition in the secret fraternal world. In any case, the data does reemphasize that most Klansmen did not work in the city's largest industry. Instead, they chose positions as conductors, clerks, and

salesmen. Twenty-four per cent of the men who worked in transportation and communication jobs drove for the Butte Electric Railway, another one of Clark's businesses.

Although this percentage is not as strong an indicator of the Protestant-Catholic split as with the Elm Orlu Mine, it does suggest some consistency.

The question now remains as to whether or not Klansmen's occupations mirror those of other Klansmen across Montana. The information for Montana is scarce, Kloreros and a few personal letters provided most of the names. Any Klansman listed in the minutes of the Klorero usually served on various committees or were elected as Realm officers. Thus, this sample of Klansmen in Montana represented a much more select group than the Kontinental Klan. Montana Klansmen who served as one of Terwilliger's Hydras or on one of the committees in the 1920's included five lawyers, three doctors, an assistant high school principle, a pharmacist, a state superintendent of the Montana Children's Home Society, and at least ten reverends.<sup>38</sup> Terwilliger was the former mayor of Livingston and "among the leading educators of Montana."<sup>39</sup> Only one Klansman from Butte acted as an officer, a master mechanic at Elm Orlu, which suggests that either the conventions looked more to white collar workers to make decisions and to assist in Realm activities or that the Butte Klan did not participate extensively in Realm conventions.

This may have well been the case. Doctors and lawyers

could undoubtedly afford to take the time off to journey to the yearly two-day conventions held in various Montana cities. Sales clerks, machinists, and conductors would experience greater difficulty in coming up with the funds. In addition, taking time off work in order to attend a Klan convention likely would not sit well with the employee's supervisor. In this same vein, any outside activity sponsored by the Klan, be it conventions or outdoor meetings, would present that much of a greater chance of being discovered. Klansmen from the immigrant Catholic city of Butte chose not to risk it.

Even by joining, however, Klansmen in Butte ran a real risk. Thus, the Klan held some kind of appeal to these men that overpowered the hazards of belonging. Certainly the anti-Catholic remnants of the APA lingered, but there was more to the association than bigotry. A large part of the Klan's intrigue involved the secret and mysterious world of fraternalism.

## NOTES

1. Chapter title is from a song in American Hymns, (Buffalo, New York: International Music Co., n.d.), Box 5 File 16, KKK, EWHS.

2. Lewis Terwilliger to Albert W. Jones, January 29, 1929, Box 5 File 6, KKK, EWHS.

3. According to an old story, the Irish first characterized Butte as a city of America, and not of Montana. Butte certainly was like an island unto itself as it had little in common with other Montana cities. See David M. Emmons, The Butte Irish, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 62.

4. See David M. Emmons, "The Orange and the Green in Montana: A Reconsideration of the Origins of the Clark-Daly Feud," Arizona and the West 28 (1986): 225-245.

5. *Ibid.*, 234.

6. *Ibid.*, 236-237.

7. Interestingly enough, the order originated in Clinton, Iowa, a city with a large number of immigrant Catholics. Donald Kinzer mentioned in his study of the APA that membership figures soared in states where the population of Catholics was strong. Further, the growth of the APA was due to increased participation by Catholics in society and government. See Donald Kinzer, An Episode in Anti-Catholicism: The American Protective Association (Seattle: The University of Washington Press, 1964), 180.

Membership in the APA, like the Klan, was difficult to ascertain owing to the secret nature of the order; thus the dearth of membership rosters. Desmond believed that membership hovered around one million during its peak. Humphrey J. Desmond, The A.P.A. Movement, (Washington: The New Century Press 1912; repr., New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1964), 12, 70, 71. The Examiner (Butte) claimed that 2 million joined by the beginning of 1895 and had grown to 3.5 million at the beginning of the next year. The Examiner (Butte), March 26, 1896, 4. W.H. Trynor, president of the North American Review claimed in June 1896 that the APA had a membership of 2,500,000.

Charles Ferguson affirmed that the APA suggested in their literature that "the Catholics had planned and instigated the Civil War." Charles Ferguson, Fifty Million Brothers, (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1937), 325.

8. Emmons, "The Orange and the Green in Montana," 233.
9. Ibid., 115; Michael P. Malone, The Battle for Butte, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981), 66. For APA membership claims, in Butte, see the Examiner (Butte), August 3, 1895, 4. The Examiner (Butte) affirmed that 3,952 Butte citizens had registered in the APA in Butte by 1896. March 26, 1896, 4. The quote is from the Examiner (Butte), June 29, 1895, 1. Using a bit of fraternal mysticism, APA'ers usually ended correspondence by signing F. P. and P., Yours in Friendship, Purity and Protestantism. Montana APA'ers were more enthusiastic and signed off with F. P. and P. T. W. T. P., Yours in Friendship, Purity and Protestantism, and to Hell with the Pope. Kinzer, An Episode in Anti-Catholicism, 51.
10. Examiner (Butte), June 15, 1895, 1.
11. In addition to Kinzer's An Episode in Anti-Catholicism, see John Higham, Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism 1860-1925, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2nd ed. 1988), 80-87, about the APA. For information on the APA riot in Butte, see Copper Camp, WPA, Montana State Department of Agriculture, Labor and Industry, (New York: Hastings House, 1943), 55-59.
12. Examiner (Butte), June 29, 1895, 5.
13. Copper Camp, 55-59. The Daily Intermountain (Butte), July 5, 1894, tartly reported that "the occupants of the saloon resented the liquid refreshments offered and returned the complement by firing bullets filled with gunpowder and lead back at the firemen."
14. Copper Camp, 47. Also, see Emmons, The Butte Irish, 98-99.
15. The APA's decline was due mostly to the stress of the presidential election in 1896. Kinzer, An Episode in Anti-Catholicism, 176.
16. Examiner (Butte), August 3, 1895, 4.
17. The Roundup Tribune reported that in Great Falls, "an official of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan--a 'cyclops' or something like that--" met with businessmen for the purpose of establishing a local Klan. Roundup Tribune, June 1, 1922, 7.

18. Charter membership list, Box 1 File 24, KKK, EWHS. Forty-two Klansmen were listed, occupational information was found for 26.
19. Fraternal agents were very helpful in facilitating membership drives particularly in the late 19th century. Mary Ann Clawson discusses this in Constructing Brotherhood: Class, Gender and Fraternalism, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 217. Former Kleagle Edgar I. Fuller, writing under the pseudonym Marion Monteval, claimed that Klan membership "was directed from the beginning to a conquest of the Masonic fraternity." "Nearly all" Kleagles were Masons. Letters from Imperial headquarters concerning Masons support his claim. Further, Fuller believed that it was the Klan's intent to engulf all Protestant fraternities under its cloak. See Marion Monteval, [Edgar I. Fuller], The Klan Inside Out (Claremore, Oklahoma, 1928; Negro Universities Press, 1970) 53-61.
20. In fact, the American Masons still call Black Masonic lodges, titled "Prince Hall Masonry," illegitimate. These lodges were well entrenched by the 1920's. See Alvin J. Schmidt, Fraternal Organizations, The Greenwood Encyclopedia of American Institutions, (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980), 124-125. For the resurgence of racism in the 1920's, see Higham, Strangers in the Land, 270-277.
21. Higham, Strangers in the Land, 80. Higham states that the APA's founder, Henry F. Bower, was "a devoted Mason." Further, Protestants made up the bulk of Masonic membership, though some Catholics did join in defiance of the Roman Catholic Church's position. The Church finally allowed Catholics to become Masons if they wished in 1976.
22. Schmidt, Fraternal Organizations, 122. According to Schmidt, 155 new fraternities emerged between 1877 and 1903, with an additional 98 new orders between 1904 and 1925. See appendix 2.
23. For upcoming statewide meetings, The Billings Gazette would include special inserts complete with photographs of solemn looking Shriners in the main paper.
24. Louise G. Rasmussen, interview by Laurie Mercier, Oral History 812, Tape 1, Montana Historical Society, Helena, MT, October 11, 1984. Rasmussen stated that her father, the editor of the Roundup Tribune and an opponent of the Klan, was a Mason. After the incident however, he stopped participating in the local lodge. Also in Roundup, C. Oliver remembers two women discussing the Klan and that one woman declared that "all Masons were Klansmen." C. Oliver,

interview by author, notes in possession of author, August 2, 1990.

25. Grand Master Arthur D. Prince, Butte Miner, June 17, 1922, 2.

26. Butte Bulletin, January 5, 1923.

27. Cemetery records are located in the Silver Bow Archives, Butte, Montana. Obituaries for 58 Klansmen were discovered in the Butte Miner, the Butte Daily Post, and the Montana Standard. Robert Alan Goldberg in "Hooded Empire: The Ku Klux Klan in Colorado, 1921-1932," Ph.D. diss., The University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1977, stated that of the leaders of the Denver Klan, 88 per cent were Masons. Many also belonged to Knight Templars, Odd Fellows and other fraternal orders. See p. 62.

28. Albert W. Jones to H. A. Johnson, October 16, 1928, Box 1 File 27, KKK, EWHS.

29. Lewis Terwilliger to Albert W. Jones, October 20, 1928, Box 5 File 5, KKK, EWHS.

30. Jones asked the Fellowship Forum, a rabid Protestant fraternal weekly how many Masons there were in the U.S.. Jones was probably calculating the potential voters who would vote against Smith, undoubtedly he was pleased with the Forum's reply of approximately 3,250,000 Masons. Albert W. Jones to the Fellowship Forum, August 16, 1928. Reply, September 17, 1928, Box 1 File 27, KKK, EWHS.

31. Almost all of Terwilliger's official circulars discussed some aspect of soliciting membership or retaining enthusiasm of current members. Reinstating lapsed members was also important. Terwilliger often received instructions from Imperial headquarters on methods for recruitment.

32. Lewis Terwilliger, Official Circular, August 30, 1924, Box 5 File 1, KKK, EWHS.

33. Ibid.

34. Kontinental Klan Quarterly Report, 4th quarter, 1924, Box 2 File 14, KKK, EWHS.

35. In most cases, it is difficult to tell exactly when they became members, and for how long, especially since no concrete and inclusive membership lists exist.

36. City directories, Klectoken receipts, and obituaries



provided occupational information for Kontinental Klansmen in Butte.

37. Bureau of the Census, Religious Bodies: 1926, Vol. 1, 639.

38. Names are from Kloreros and personal letters, KKK, EWHS. Occupations are from city directories. The list includes 68 out of 125 known Klansmen in the state (not including Butte).

39. Progressive Men of the State Of Montana, (Chicago: A. W. Bowen and Co. 1902), 883-883. Montana: Its Story and Biography, ed. Tom Stout, Vol. II (Chicago: The American Historical Society, 1921), 234. Lewis Terwilliger was also characterized as a man of "strong mentality" and "one of the best known Masons and Knights of Pythias in Montana."

## CHAPTER THREE

### "THE MYSTIC CITY"<sup>1</sup>

Klansman, Klansman, Of the Ku Klux Klan,  
Protestant, gentile, native born man,  
Hooded, knighted, robed and true,  
Royal sons of the Red, White and Blue,  
Owing no allegiance we are born free,  
To God and Old Glory we bend our knee,  
Sublime lineage written in history stands,  
Wierd, mysterious Ku Klux Klan.<sup>2</sup>

America needed an army, explained Imperial Wizard Hiram Wesley Evans, an army to defend and uphold the three "great racial instincts" of Americans, "loyalty to the white race, to the traditions of America, and to the spirit of Protestantism."<sup>3</sup> The Ku Klux Klan was that army, and its brand of Americanism attracted millions of eager candidates. It was also a secret fraternity imbued with all of the drama and mystery that characterized secret fraternalism -- that magic carpet ride into never-never land. In particular, this appeal may have been a primary attraction for joiners in Butte. Certainly the Klan recognized the economic potential of combining secret fraternalism with its program; indeed, the Klan believed that "a secret, militant, ritualistic order" provided the best vehicle to promote and to accomplish its goals.<sup>4</sup>

These goals included revitalizing America's religious heritage, i.e., Protestantism, or "true Christianity." According to Evans, the very character of America was created by and based on individualism, independence, and freedom -- virtues promulgated only by Protestantism. This imagery of pure white virtuous Protestantism as the religion of America's forefathers appealed to the patriotic side of candidates. By including Christ as "the Klansman's Criterion of Character" and the Bible as the "source of all true wisdom" in its rituals and propaganda, the Klan also appealed to fundamentalists.

According to former Kleagle Edgar I. Fuller, the Klan "recruited its strength" from Catholic urban centers by igniting traditional Protestant fears of Catholic influence and power in society and government.<sup>5</sup> This line of attack proved to be one of the Klan's most potent arguments. Again, Evans stretched his case back to the country's founders to justify his position. The Klan claimed that the original colonies "were settled for the purpose of wresting America from the control of Rome..." yet the Catholic Church persisted in its battle for final domination -- and its strength was growing.<sup>6</sup> The Klan's message then, was to expel Catholics from positions of influence and return to the founders' original intent. In Montana, Klansmen at the Klorero of 1927 determined that "the pioneers who built the foundation of Montana's greatness" sought to keep Montana

free from un-American values. Klansmen further expressed distrust of immigrants who subjected the state to their "foreign and anti-American ideals."<sup>7</sup> Likely, they were thinking grimly about the sizable number of Catholics in Silver Bow County.<sup>8</sup>

In rejecting a pluralistic culture and emphasizing a return to traditional moral values, the Klan fulfilled a common function of fraternal societies. Noel P. Gist's study of secret fraternalism argued that secret fraternities operated as "conservers of traditional morality."<sup>9</sup> Indeed, the Klan provided a sanctuary for those who honored the home as "the Birthplace of the Nation."<sup>10</sup> Within the home, children could learn American traditions and women could remain in their rightful place, protected against modern influences.

If fundamental Protestantism and traditional morality provided a new twist on the first Ku Klux Klan's program, the tenet of white supremacy remained intact. The Klan of the 1920's laced its argument with current racial theories that portrayed the Nordic race as supreme. Conversely, all other groups of people, mainly immigrants from southeastern Europe and blacks, were inferior stock and unworthy to wear the badge of American citizenship.<sup>11</sup> The Klan's prejudices towards ethnic groups appealed to some native-born in Butte, particularly since most of Butte's immigrants embraced Catholicism.

While white supremacy was synonymous with the Klan, it was probably not the main issue that attracted candidates from Butte. Native-born Protestants in Butte were likely intrigued with the Ku Klux Klan's local propaganda claiming that it was the expanded version of the Klan of Reconstruction, now revised and molded into "a fraternal, patriotic, ritualistic society of national scope"<sup>12</sup> Its "ABC's" were "America first," "Benevolence...based on justice," and "Clanishness...real fraternity practicing to each other in all things honorable [including] a devoted, unflinching loyalty to the principles...of the order in promoting the highest and best interest of the community, state and nation."<sup>13</sup> Such a patriotic description would perk up the ears of any fraternal joiner. Not only was this an appeal to fellowship, the Klan sold itself as a defender of Americanism and patriotism -- ideals that seemed worthy of upholding.<sup>14</sup>

This was not a new notion. The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920's captured the tail end of a string of nativist orders dating from the nineteenth century. One dominant theme prevailed in these orders, to keep America free and for Americans. Secret societies such as the Order of United Americans, the Patriotic Order Sons of America and the Order of United American Mechanics stressed patriotism and sought to prevent the influx of Irish Catholics and other immigrants into the country.<sup>15</sup> The Guards of Liberty, the Order of Free

and Accepted Americans and the Order of the Little Red School House, among others, carried on the nativist cause.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, at least some expression of nationalism, racial purity, and morality prevailed in most societies.<sup>17</sup> Even the larger fraternal orders that commanded a staunch following such as the International Order of Odd Fellows and the Masons "often appeared to be strongholds of nativist sentiment...."<sup>18</sup> The Ku Klux Klan, "the great fraternal lodge" of the 1920's neatly wrapped up those traditional nativist elements (including patriotism, anti-Catholicism, anti-Semitism, and Anglo Saxonism) in a secret fraternal package and offered it to the public.<sup>19</sup>

Americans were "the world's great joiners" stated Charles Merz in 1927; he estimated that 30 million Americans belonged to around 800 secret fraternal orders.<sup>20</sup> Included among the 31 secret societies in Butte, besides five local chapters of several Catholic societies, were six lodges of the Odd Fellows, three lodges of the Knights of Pythias and twelve lodges of the Masons.<sup>21</sup> Evidently, secret fraternities met some sort of need to warrant that degree of support. Joining enabled members to expand business contacts, a common tactic of fraternalists. Doctors and lawyers could pass out business cards; politicians could hustle votes.<sup>22</sup> Charter members of the Kontinental Klan, among whom were several businessmen, might have considered the Klan as another

potential source of revenue. First however, they had to be eligible to join.

Most secret fraternities insisted on rigid membership qualifications. By limiting membership to those who held beliefs and values conducive to the fraternity's creed, an organization could sustain its integrity and operate more efficiently.<sup>23</sup> Religion, race and nationality were the three main criteria used to judge the suitability of a potential candidate. The Klan followed suit and erected strict barriers to membership. Only white, Gentile, native-born men who owed "no allegiance to any foreign government, nation, political institution, sect, people or person" could join.<sup>24</sup>

Other fraternities went beyond the general requirement of Protestantism and attached additional qualifications. The Junior Order of United American Mechanics, the Patriotic Order Sons of America, the Loyal Orange Institution, and others, stipulated that members must not only be Protestant, but that they believe in the separation of church and state and favor public education over private.<sup>25</sup> Candidates also had to pledge their unswerving loyalty to the U.S. government above all other governments. These provisions were a blatant reference to the Catholic Church, which they perceived as the primary antagonist of America's well-being. Thus, the Klan continued an anti-Catholic tradition set in place by other secret societies including the American Protective Association.

Race constituted the most common barrier to membership. A sociologist of fraternal organizations, Mary Anne Clawson, asserted that "racial exclusion was a hallmark of mainstream American fraternalism."<sup>26</sup> Many fraternities such as the Masons, the Odd Fellows, the Knights of Pythias, and the Woodmen of the World, typically included a "whites only" clause in their constitutions. This exclusion pertained to those whose family genealogy included any degree of Black, Asian, or Native American blood, no matter how far removed. In response to questions "regarding quarter breed Indians" for membership, Grand Dragon Lewis Terwilliger reiterated the Klan's position and stated that any amount of Indian blood would void the candidate's application. However, one Montana Kligrapp admitted that "the character of the man would decide me" in a similar situation.<sup>27</sup>

Nationality was a third main barrier to membership. Many of the same societies that required Protestantism as a prerequisite also limited membership to native-born Americans. Among them were the Junior Order of United American Mechanics, the Patriotic Order Sons of America and the Fraternal Patriotic Americans. The Improved Order of Red Men, Foresters of America, and the Modern Woodmen of America required American citizenship for admittance.<sup>28</sup> Though the Klan's constitution clearly prohibited foreign-born from joining, strict adherence lapsed in some cases. A few Klans in Montana naturalized foreign-born, especially



Canadians, much to the dismay of Terwilliger, who warned that any Klan guilty of doing so in the future would lose its charter. He reminded members that the Klan provided an alternate "fraternal home," the Royal Riders of the Red Robe, for the foreign-born who believed in the Klan's basic principles.<sup>29</sup>

The native-born clause did not stop the Kontinental Klan from naturalizing at least two Englishmen, one of them from Cornwall.<sup>30</sup> Perhaps the two candidates had lied about their birthplace, or perhaps the Kontinental Klan simply brushed aside the issue. This also suggests that the Klan was aware of the traditional tension between the English, especially the Cornish, and the Irish Catholics.

The Klan in Butte demonstrated more concern about a candidate's religion than with his place of birth. Certainly, Kontinental Klansmen grew suspicious of any hint of Catholicism in their organization. In one meeting, Klansmen reported that a fellow Knight was once a Catholic, and the Exalted Cyclops quickly formed a committee of three to investigate the matter.<sup>31</sup> The committee concluded by the next meeting that the "evidence [was] insufficient to warrant action" against the supposed offender.<sup>32</sup> Terwilliger commented further on membership qualifications during one his appearances in Butte. "There is such a thing as being too careful" while recruiting, he admonished. A man whose wife was Catholic was not a good bet, but an ex-Catholic who "has

repudiated the Church sometimes makes the best of Klansmen."<sup>33</sup>

Keeping Klan ranks from becoming tainted with even remotely "un-American" qualities was a major concern as the Kontinental Klan narrowed the field of acceptable candidates further in 1929. Members proposed an amendment to their By-laws that would banish any Kontinental Klansman who married a Catholic, Jew or Black. When submitted to the Realm office for approval, Terwilliger stated he was "in hearty accord" with the idea, in case any Klansman should "forget his American ideals" and enter an unacceptable marriage.<sup>34</sup> He suggested that the Kontinental Klan pass the amendment as a resolution instead, and to add Asians to the list.

This exclusionary policy practiced by the Ku Klux Klan had its benefits. It reminded members that they were the select few, an elite group specifically chosen to uphold and defend "American values." In this sense, the Klan was what Herbert Blumer described as the "in-group," an organization whose members believed that their values, ideals and goals, and only theirs, satisfied the needs of society.<sup>35</sup> By its very nature, an in-group inspired loyalty and further commitment to the order.

Conversely, the "out-group" represented every aspect that opposed or negated those "worthy" values.<sup>36</sup> This kind of "us versus them" mentality further strengthened members' bond with the order and with each other. By aligning themselves against "un-American" people, the Klan had a reason for their

existence and a destiny to fulfill.

The Klan capitalized on its exclusiveness to the fullest, which made the appeal of belonging that much stronger. Just by meeting the eligibility requirements and paying the ten dollar Klecktoken, a worthy candidate could become a "citizen" of the Invisible Empire, a vast empire, he was led to believe, that stretched across the nation, and was growing daily.<sup>37</sup> Not only could Klansmen feel satisfied that other Americans held similar beliefs, but also that a powerful and influential order chose them to carry out a larger plan to reinstill traditional values in a society gone astray. The real power and appeal of a secret organization, however, rested with the local lodge. Indeed, maintaining the local lodge was considered paramount in order to address local issues and to maintain the Klan's influence.<sup>38</sup>

The local lodge provided an opportunity for Klansmen to get acquainted, particularly in Butte, where the Klan was not widely accepted. In addition, the potential for creating lasting fraternal bonds was much greater in Butte and in those Klans with a small number of members.<sup>39</sup> Participation in "Klankraft," or ritualistic work, created an atmosphere of purpose. This development of esprit de corps, which Herbert Blumer defined as "the sense which people have of belonging together and of being identified with one another in a common undertaking" constituted the essence of the Klan's secret fraternalism and provided an important tool for Realm and

Imperial headquarters.<sup>40</sup> After all, members who felt comfortable enough together, could work together, and above all, the Klan wanted its members to concentrate on playing an activist role in their community. By convincing Klansmen that what they were doing and what they believed in was correct and necessary, officials could count on continued support.

Esprit de corps had the effect of giving Klansmen a greater sense of power and comfort when working as a group. It tended to diffuse responsibility for actions members would normally have been reluctant to do on their own.<sup>41</sup> Thus, the Ku Klux Klan established numerous committees for all sorts of purposes, including education committees (to check out the "deplorable" conditions of Butte's education system), political committees (to establish the worthiness or unworthiness, as was usually the case in Butte, of political candidates) and community-oriented committees, such as the committee to sniff out suspected "moonshine joints." Although the Kontinental Klan never came close to the level of physical attacks and abuses that other Klans across the country launched on Blacks, bootleggers and others of perceived immoral standards, simply belonging imparted a spirit of unity and of doing "good work."

Belonging also meant shedding the outer skin of everyday life and metamorphosizing into a new self, an alter ego, complete with an appropriate costume. Part of the attraction

of any secret fraternity opened up the possibility of becoming someone different and much more grand. Twice a month, an ordinary shopkeeper or salesclerk transformed into a Knight of the Ku Klux Klan, a title reminiscent of chivalry and the myths of Knighthood from years past. The quarterly elections of officers, or "Terrors," presented further opportunities for honor and responsibilities. If elected, a Knight could wear the exotic mantle of an Exalted Cyclops, a Kligrapp, a Kladd, or a Nighthawk, enjoy an elevated status within the group and play a dramatic role in the rituals.<sup>42</sup>

The privileges of membership also extended to activities outside the Klavern, or meeting hall. Imperial and Realm headquarters urged local Klans to mix business and pleasure by conducting parades and outdoor meetings. In a study of the Klan in Texas, Charles Alexander stated that for some members, the Klan "became the center of their social life."<sup>43</sup> Grand Dragon Lewis Terwilliger kept Montana Klans posted on formal as well as informal get-togethers, such as the hearty invitation extended to all Klansmen to attend a naturalization ceremony in Columbus. Klansmen could not only reaffirm the spirit of Klanishness, but also sample "600 miles of the best fishing streams in Montana."<sup>44</sup> Encouraging fraternal brotherhood and comraderie among Klansmen was not implemented only for the members' benefit; it suited the purpose of the Klan too, and was therefore encouraged.

Outdoor meetings and demonstrations served another

purpose. More than any other secret society, the Klan wanted exposure, yet it also wanted to retain just enough secrecy to elicit comment and to entice possible candidates. As Klan membership slipped by the mid to late 1920's, Evans and Terwilliger accelerated their pleas for parades, demonstrations and outdoor meetings in order to give "the public the visible proof" that the Klan "was here to stay."<sup>45</sup> Giving visible proof of their existence was not the top priority, or a feasible one, of the Kontinental Klan, for obvious reasons. It was a quiet organization in Butte; still, Klansmen held joint meetings with the Whitehall Klan from time to time to fraternize with other members.

In all secret fraternities, rituals expressed the order's commitment to its principles and further reinforced members' commitment to the order. Of the ceremonies secret fraternities enacted, including opening, closing, installation, reception and funeral ceremonies, the initiation rites proved the most important and the most elaborate. The Klan's "naturalization" ceremony was no exception. Not only did it mark the magical transformation of an outsider from an alien world to a trusted brother, but this ceremony was also the candidate's first impression of the order -- and favorable impressions could lead to continued financial support and recruitment of new members.

In order to gain admittance into this Empire, a candidate had first to prove his worthiness to the Klokann,

an investigatory committee of three. Other secret fraternal orders typically employed similar kinds of inspection for examining recruits. After scrutinizing the applicant for appropriate qualifications and hints of any suspicious activities, the Klokann presented his application to the Klavern for approval three separate times.<sup>46</sup>

After the candidate gained the approval of the Klavern and paid the Klecktoken, he was initiated into K-Uno, or the Order of Citizenship, the first degree of Klankraft. This rite of passage was designed to impress upon the candidate the great secrecy, seriousness, and exclusiveness of the Invisible Empire. First, however, the nervous applicant waited in the "outer den" for further instructions while Klansmen began the evening with the opening ceremony. As with all ceremonies, Klansmen followed precise instructions complete with dialogue from the Kloran.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, the ritual required practice and memorization in order to conduct a snappy showing. After the designated Terror prepared the altar and lit the fiery cross, Klansmen sung the opening Klode, and the Kludd (or Chaplain) delivered the leading prayer to attentive Klansmen who stood "steady with heads reverently bowed."<sup>48</sup> The Exalted Cyclops then officially opened the Klonklave and proceeded with the naturalization ceremony.

Thus began the candidate's long and involved quest for citizenship. He had "made the honorable decision to forsake

the world of selfishness and fraternal alienation and emigrate to the delectable bounds of the Invisible Empire and become [a] loyal citizen(s) of the same."<sup>49</sup> After the Exalted Cyclops and his Terrors considered the candidate's "manly petition" for membership, they asked the candidate a series of binding questions to make sure that the candidate was fully committed to the principles of the Klan. After receiving the first part of the oath, the candidate moved to the inner den, where the Klan sternly reminded him that if he betrayed the trust of the order, he would face banishment while his "conscience would tenaciously torment him, remorse would repeatedly revile him, and direful things would befall him."<sup>50</sup> Secret fraternities typically included similar self-threats in their oath, some even more graphic than the Klan's.<sup>51</sup>

The candidate continued his journey into the Invisible Empire as he stepped cautiously into the darkened Klavern. Hidden in the shadows, the Klokard or instructor, chanted a prayer that hailed praise to the candidate's choice of fraternities: "God give us men! The Invisible Empire demands strong Minds, great hearts, true faith and ready hands...."<sup>52</sup> After further dialogue and questions, the candidate visited each fully cloaked and masked officer and listened to solemn addresses on Klanishness, patriotism and good citizenship. The Kladd, "who should study well his part...for his is a very important and impressive part," then



led the candidate to the sacred altar for the final sections of the oath. The Exalted Cyclops continued with the dedication ceremony that included more grave speeches and reminders of the seriousness of the candidate's commitment ("Mortal man cannot assume a more binding oath.")<sup>53</sup> Klansmen then sang a short stanza asking God to give "grace" to remain true to the Oath. The Kloran suggested that this last prayer be sung "in a low, soft, but distinct tone, preferably by a quartette."<sup>54</sup>

The Kludd led members in a dedicatory prayer; then the Kladd and the Exalted Cyclops gave the candidate instructions in "the way of the Klavern" and the "Klonversation." Finally, the Exalted Cyclops recited the lecture on K-Uno, a ludicrous memorial to the Klan of Reconstruction. He reminded Klansmen of the "valiant, chivalric Ku Klux" who "dissipated the cruel storm of the American reconstruction" and rescued wives and daughters from "the licentious longings of lust-crazed beasts in human form." The Klan also saved the South from the carpetbaggers, "the vultures of gluttonous greed" and scalawags, "the conscienceless cadaverous wolves of treason."<sup>55</sup> Clearly, if the candidate had not already formed an opinion of the Klan's origins, this lecture set him straight.

With the end of the lecture, the new Klansman's symbolic journey into the Invisible Empire ended. He had probably listened to similar lectures in other secret fraternities;

such romantic tales of the order's origins were common among secret fraternities. These tales served as one tactic of attracting and retaining members and reaffirming Klansmen's status who were already members.<sup>56</sup>

If a new Klansman was already a member of another secret fraternity, he realized the importance of keeping the rituals a closely guarded secret.<sup>57</sup> Retaining secrecy was considered essential, as the fraternal oaths and the self-threats testified. During the naturalization ceremony, the Exalted Cyclops ordered Klansmen to keep "a klansman's eye of scrutiny" upon the new applicants, in case one of them turned out to be "a cowardly weakling or a treacherous scalawag."<sup>58</sup> The initiation for K-Duo, or the second degree, warned the newly initiated to stay clear of wicked Klansmen who sought to destroy the order "through the lure of gold, the lust of flesh, the passion of hatred, or the whisperings of personal ambition."<sup>59</sup> This system of in-house spying insured loyalty to the order and impressed upon members the burden of secrecy.

But guarding secrets was not just restricted to the Klavern. The emphasis on secrecy strengthened the barriers between the in-group and out-group. The third degree, or K-Trio, declared that secrecy must "remain one of the cardinal principles of the Klan...[since] the alien world must never know our strength."<sup>60</sup> Terwilliger sternly informed the Klans

of Montana that "the alien world is eager to learn everything it can of the inner secrets and working plans of the order."<sup>61</sup> The fact that probably most "aliens" cared little about the Klan's fraternal secrets was beside the point. Stressing that the Klan's secrets were valuable commodities assured Klansmen of the exclusiveness of their order. It also heightened the sense of their own self-importance, for if enemies desired to uncover the Klan's secrets, surely that indicated that the Klan was still needed to flush them out.

Klansmen could also look to ritualistic work for inspiration and guidance. Typically, secret fraternities incorporated into its rituals symbols that represented its beliefs, such as flags and Bibles. Members could identify with these objects, recognize them as part of a culture they were trying to defend, and in so doing, became more unified. During the opening ceremony of the Klan, the American flag was draped over the altar, upon which the designated Terrors placed a sword (which represented Klansmen's willingness to defend Christianity), a bottle of dedication fluid (water) and a Bible. Typical of Protestant orders, the Klokard flipped open the King James Bible to a specific passage, in this case, to Romans XII, which depicted a good Christian life.<sup>62</sup> In K-Trio, the Klan added the U.S. Constitution. Most secret fraternities did not include the cross in their rituals, but the Klan made the fiery cross their calling card. It symbolized the "sincere, unselfish devotedness of

all Klansmen to the sacred purpose and principles." It also symbolized the Klan's presence in the community.<sup>63</sup>

As individuals, Klansmen wore badges and regalia, indicating their status within the order. For example, special symbols accompanied the attainment of degrees. Knights Kamelia, or Klansmen who attained the second degree purchased a baldric manufactured by the Klan in its profitable Robe Plant in Atlanta for \$1.50. Made of "red satin, lined with white, with gold trimmings and the white Camelia flower embroidered in the center," the baldric and the K-Duo membership card were the "distinguishing badges" of Knights Kamelia.<sup>64</sup>

No secret fraternity was complete without passwords, codes, countersigns, and secret handshakes. Such signals identified fellow members during rituals and confirmed their inclusion in the order. To maintain the veil of secrecy, fraternities changed passwords and countersigns regularly; the Klan changed its every quarter. The Klan's "Klonversation" added to the intrigue of this fraternal conspiracy: "Ayak" (Are you a Klansman), "Akia" (A Klansman I am) and "Sanbog" (Strangers are near, be on guard).<sup>65</sup> The Klan even referred to their own Ku Klux Kalender, complete with days, weeks, months, and years. Starting at the bottom of the list and working up, the Kalender offered a menu of awesome sounding titles.

DAYS	WEEKS	MONTHS
7. Desperate	5. Weird	12. Appalling
6. Dreadful	4. Wonderful	11. Frightful
5. Desolate	3. Wailing	10. Sorrowful
4. Doleful	2. Weeping	9. Mournful
3. Dismal	1. Woeful	8. Horrible
2. Deadly		7. Terrible
1. Dark		6. Alarming
		5. Furious
		4. Fearful
		3. Hideous
		2. Gloomy
		1. Bloody

The year of the Klan began with the month of May (Bloody) and dated back to 1866, or the origins of the first Klan.<sup>66</sup> Thus, the Imperial Palace granted a charter to the Realm of Montana "on the Dark Day of the Wonderful Week of the Furious Month of the Year of the Klan, LVII," or, on September 16, 1923.<sup>67</sup> Though Klansmen used these kalenders only for official documents, the order's symbolism carried over to personal letters. Members usually signed off "Yours, ITSUB," or, "In the Sacred and Unfailing Bond," referring no doubt, to the oath that bound Klansmen to the principles of their order. To members who enjoyed keeping secrets, these fraternal codes were truly a conspiracy of infinite possibilities.

Secret fraternities often established military auxiliaries to boost their appeal. For example, the Masons and the Odd Fellows offered "Knighthood" in the Knights Templar and the Patriarchs Militant of Odd Fellowship. The Woodmen of the World, the Maccabees, and the Knights of

Pythias also created military orders. The Klan extended its military character to the Klavaliers, a select group of Klansmen who participated in K-Duo initiations, guarded public meetings and marched in parades.<sup>68</sup> While Edgar I. Fuller claimed that every large Klan organized a company of Klavaliers, Terwilliger just hoped that the Realm could finance one team.<sup>69</sup> There is no evidence to suggest the formation of a group of Klavaliers in Butte. If the Klavaliers had appeared in Butte, its functions would almost certainly have been relegated to the ritualistic work. Public displays by robed and masked Klansmen, let alone a "company of uniformed Klavaliers under military drill and discipline," would not have set well with Butte's Irish Catholic contingent.<sup>70</sup>

Mary Ann Clawson has stated that the attraction of a military order gave members an opportunity to parade in front of people and to wear elaborate costumes, but that the military display also represented warfare against those people or ideals that did not meet with the order's approval.<sup>71</sup> The latter definition certainly applied to the Klan, whether they established a company of Klavaliers or not. The Klan sought to train its men "into a disciplined...army," poised and ready to "remove the invader" from American soil.<sup>72</sup> Naturally, the Klan felt itself well qualified for the job and it stressed the importance of this mission to new

recruits and seasoned members.

Competition for members' interest did not stop with the offering of side attractions such as military adjuncts. Much of secret fraternalism's appeal rested with the attainment of degrees. According to fraternal tradition, this social stratification developed esprit de corps and propelled members into earning even higher degrees.<sup>73</sup> A gradual process, it also assured stability and attempted to allow only the most diligent members to advance. The Klan claimed that attaining higher degrees was "of the utmost value in building morale and increasing interest."<sup>74</sup> Theoretically, only those Klansmen who proved themselves "worthy" could advance their knowledge of the "philosophy" of Klankraft. Attainment of higher degrees was supposed to be a goal for those most dedicated and inspired, goals originally designed to elicit greater honor and prestige.

Degrees also presented a great opportunity to introduce new dramatic elements into the ritual to retain members' interest.<sup>75</sup> Indeed, secret fraternities recognized the entertainment value of the rituals, which often provided a competitive edge in soliciting members.<sup>76</sup> Grand Dragon Terwilliger believed that if the ritualistic work were conducted properly, new members would remain intrigued and former members would automatically reinstate.<sup>77</sup> He insisted that "many fine orders thrive on RITUAL ALONE," but to obtain

the maximum benefits, local Klans should "train" their "degree teams" to perfection.<sup>78</sup>

These degree teams, which mostly consisted of the Exalted Cyclops and his Terrors, studied the ritualistic dialogue and diagrams for three degrees, each covering 30-50 pages. The offering of three to five degrees was typical of most orders, and the Klan followed suit with K-Uno (probationary), K-Duo (Knights Kamelia) and K-Trio (Knights of the Great Forest). The Imperial Klonvokation instructed Evans to establish a fourth degree, K-Quatro or the Order of Protestant Knighthood, but little was heard about that in Montana.<sup>79</sup> The Klan considered adding yet another degree to their program, the "House of Mirth" or the "Animated Order of Klankraft." This was not unusual as most secret fraternities in a move designed to retain members' interest, established "playground" or "fun" degrees. Such degrees were usually offered in conjunction with the more serious aspects of the order and provided another outlet to escape reality for an evening by performing bizarre rituals and wearing elaborate costumes. Indeed, such adjuncts were "characterized chiefly by a lack of seriousness and solemnity."<sup>80</sup>

However much the Klan recognized the appeal of fraternalism, it came under some criticism. Edgar Fuller, Mason and former Klansman, asserted in 1928 that "the Klan in its practices utterly despoil fraternalism" by its greed for money and its superficial overtures to fraternal



benevolence.<sup>81</sup> Indeed, it seemed as though the Klan offered its degrees like a year-end clearance sale. The first of these special deals occurred in late October, 1924. The Imperial Klonvocation decided to grant K-Duo to all members who only had a robe, or had ordered one, and were naturalized before October 1, 1924. This was a time span of less than thirty days!<sup>82</sup> Such a short period was hardly time enough to determine whether a member was worthy of such a degree, particularly with the Kontinental Klan, where Klansmen gathered in Klonklave on the average of twice a month. In addition, the Imperial Palace offered the K-Duo free of charge for a limited time. Thereafter, the second degree would cost five dollars.

The deals for degrees reappeared in early 1927. Imperial Wizard Evans decided that the K-Trio would "be given to every K-Uno member in good standing" free of charge, to be conferred only on a chosen day between January 10 and March 1, 1928.<sup>83</sup> Evans even changed the standard method of conducting business from the K-Uno to the K-Trio, although the first degree remained the initial entrance ritual. Instead of a thirty day "probationary period" as in 1924, newly naturalized Klansmen were immediately eligible to receive the K-Trio, though it was not considered "proper" to issue both degrees on the same night.<sup>84</sup>

Several factors emerge in this seemingly perplexing alteration in ritualistic work. The Klan's purpose in

conferring these degrees in haste was undoubtedly dealing with the upcoming general elections in 1924 and 1928. By enticing Klansmen with an extra degree, the Klan hoped to keep interest level high enough to reap rewards at the polling booth. This was especially the case when the Klan offered K-Trio in 1928, as it gathered its forces against the Catholic presidential candidate Al Smith. How could any true Klansman refuse Terwilliger's call to save America from the scourge of the Catholic Church?<sup>85</sup>

It is impossible for me to find words sufficiently strong to tell you how important for our God, our country and our Realm will be the meeting to be called upon a certain night in every Klanton throughout the bounds of the Invisible Empire. It will certainly prepare us to meet the greatest crisis in the history of our nation....

When the call comes, let nothing except serious illness or unavoidable accident keep you from your Klavern. At a single moment, throughout the Invisible Empire, further knowledge of Klankraft will be given you....

When you joined the Klan you said you could be depended upon. Your Grand Dragon is depending upon you.

Terwilliger also understood the importance of fraternal mysticism as he tried to drum up support for the third degree in 1928. He cleverly intertwined fraternal appeal -- more knowledge of the Klan's inner secrets -- and Americanism. In fact, the whole gist of the third degree centered on "the cause of Protestantism" and on the fact that Klansmen had to be ready to sacrifice themselves for that cause, even to the extent of making a will to insure that loved ones received their just due. The third degree revealed its "deeper

mystery" at the end of the ceremony. Such mystery was none other than "the force of fraternalism," the powerful "force working for righteousness" throughout time. For the first time in history, instructed the Klokard, all of the various orders who have struggled for justice, particularly the "philosophical and operative" forms of secret fraternalism, were now meshed into one, the Ku Klux Klan. Even the "spirits of the mighty dead" (who were not "merely a stage setting" tartly reminded the Klokard) were watching and guiding the 42 Kontinental Klansmen, or "Kwalified Knights of the Great Forest," as they bore "the torch of progress" towards a Protestant America.<sup>86</sup>

After the Klan cheered the defeat of Al Smith in 1928, taking more credit for the defeat than they deserved, the Catholic "threat" was removed. The Imperial Klonvocation decided that the third degree had served its purpose in proving the "superiority" of Protestantism, and Klans should conduct their meetings once again in the first degree. It also switched the names of the degrees. Knights Kamelia became the name of the third degree, while Knights of the Great Forest became the name of the second. The Imperial Klonvokation offered no explanation for this confusing transfer. But for about two months, the third degree, while still called the Knights of the Great Forest, cost members nothing except for the one dollar registration fee that included a year's subscription to the Klan's mouthpiece, the

Kourier. Starting immediately, both the second and third degrees became optional.<sup>87</sup>

Along with making the degrees elective, the Klonoconvocation also decreased the initiation fee from \$15.00 to \$10.00 and decreed it optional to buy the robe, previously a requirement. This strategy indicated that the Klan realized that it needed to lessen its economic demands on its remaining members. It also hoped to retain its integrity by making the Klan more economically feasible for possible candidates.

Although the Klan in effect warped the whole meaning of the fraternal selectivity process and made the attainment of degrees less worthy and less meaningful, it recognized the importance of the appeal of secret fraternalism. In 1928, the Imperial Klonoconvocation instructed Evans to "revise the rituals" of the current three degrees.<sup>88</sup> Secret fraternities in general did not change their ritual, except when faced with a rapidly declining membership.<sup>89</sup> Evidently, the Klan recognized that a change in the rituals might regain members' interest and ignite an increase in applicants.

Thus, the Klan made fraternalism part of its appeal and justified its cause through fraternalism. Fraternalism provided a structure in which to propagate the Klan's beliefs and principles, and offered a viable method in which to attract members. It was also a popular and accepted outlet for outlandish behavior and dramatization. No wonder the

Klan recognized that secret fraternalism offered an easy way to achieve its goals, despite its alteration of fraternalism's traditional process.

Fraternalism was one of the drawing points in Butte, and most likely in other parts of the country as well. As a secret fraternity, the Klan offered a way in which to make friends and to do "good work" at the same time. Dramatic rituals and secret mysteries provided an escape from the daily drudgeries of living. Moreover, Kontinental Klansmen could enhance their own status within the order, a possibility perhaps not open to them in the community.

Once admitted, the new Klansman was expected to study the Kloran, to attend meetings, and to participate in the Klan's program, nothing very unusual when compared to other orders. However, the Klan differed from most in that it demanded direct action. Society was not going to heal itself from the wounds inflicted on it by Catholics, foreigners, and others of their ilk. The Klan wanted to instigate change, not sit back and hope for the best. America's army was ready to go to work.

## NOTES

1. Chapter Title is from a song in American Hymns, (Buffalo, New York: International Music Co., n.d.), Box 5 File 16, KKK, EWHS.
2. "The Mystic City," American Hymns.
3. Hiram Wesley Evans, "The Klan's Fight for Americanism," North American Review 223 (Summer 1926): 52.
4. "Constitution and Laws of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan," (Atlanta, Georgia, 1926), Box 4 File 1, KKK, EWHS, 3.
5. Marion Monteval [Edgar I. Fuller], The Klan Inside Out, Claremore, Oklahoma, 1928; Negro Universities Press, 1970), 196.
6. Evans, "The Klan's Fight for Americanism," 54.
7. Minutes from the Klorero of 1927, Box 4 File 29, KKK, EWHS.
8. In comparison, Catholics made up 49 per cent of the state's denominations. The counties with the next three largest cities were Yellowstone with 23 per cent, Missoula with 46 per cent, and Cascade with 64 per cent. Bureau of the Census, Religious Bodies: 1926, Vol 1, 639.
9. Gist, "Secret Societies: A Cultural Study of Fraternalism in the United States," University of Missouri Studies, XV (October 1940): 142. "Constitution and Laws of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan," 7.
10. This was a title for one of the Klan's educational lectures for 1924. Box 4 File 13, KKK, EWHS.
11. Lothrop Stoddard's The Rising Tide of Color (1921) and Madison Grant's The Passing of the Great Race (1916) echoed the fear and distrust many white Americans felt toward the changing ethnic and racial structure of their country, especially after World War I. Both authors stated firmly that America was becoming the breeding ground for inferior peoples, and that the eventual "mongrelization" of superior white blood with inferior colored blood could only result in an irreversible disaster. Stoddard and Grant were widely read and quoted in popular magazines and newspaper editorials. Grant's book sold approximately 16,000 copies.

Imperial Wizard Hiram W. Evans consulted both works and referred to their authority on racist ideology in his own writing. See John Higham, Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2nd edition, 1988), 271-272; David M. Chalmers, Hooded Americanism: The First Century of the Ku Klux Klan 1865-1965 (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1965), 110, and Evans, "The Klan's Fight for Americanism," 36, 48.

12. Montana News Association Insert, week of August 1, 1921, Vol. 4, 351.

13. Ibid.

14. Patriotism was still an issue for interested candidates by 1928. Ed Davis of Butte wrote to Grand Dragon Lewis Terwilliger expressing his interest in joining the Klan in order to "help to enforce the laws and uphold the constitution of the greatest country on earth." It is unclear whether or not Davis joined the Kontinental Klan; his name does not appear again in the records. Ed Davis to Lewis Terwilliger, February 23, 1928, Box 5 File 5, KKK, EWHS.

15. Charles W. Ferguson, Fifty Million Brothers, (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1937), 320.

16. Ferguson, Fifty Million Brothers, 320-323. The American Protective Association, "an offspring of Masonry," differed little from the other secret fraternities, but membership qualifications were not strict since it was open to anyone who opposed Catholicism, including blacks. The APA's ritualistic work was scanty and it did not offer degrees, which would have enhanced the order's appeal. See Donald Kinzer, An Episode in Anti-Catholicism: The American Protective Association (Seattle: The University of Washington Press, 1964), 51. Butte APAer's revealed their secret fraternal tendencies by wondering when they "will get the balance of the ritual?" Examiner, June 29, 1929, 5.

17. Gist, "Secret Societies," 145.

18. Mary Ann Clawson, Constructing Brotherhood: Class, Gender and Fraternalism, (Princeton University Press, 1989), 130.

19. Chalmers, Hooded Americanism, 118. Chalmers is correct in recognizing that secret fraternalism played a role in attracting members, but mainly limits his discussion to smaller, rural areas. Too, the Ku Klux Klan attracted members in large urban centers, as Kenneth Jackson submits in

The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1925-1930 (Oxford University Press, 1967).

20. Charles Merz, "Sweet Land of Secrecy: The Strange Spectacle of American Fraternalism," Harpers Magazine, 154 (February 1927): 329.

21. The 33 secret fraternities included four women's auxiliaries. The numbers given for the Odd Fellows, the Knights of Pythias and the Masons were for men only. Polks City Directory, Butte, 1923, 94-99.

22. Joe Vicars of Roundup, Montana, stated that "some big politicians and doctors" joined the Klan to increase their business. Interview by Laurie Mercier, September 1, 1982, Oral History 328, Tape 1, Montana Historical Society, Helena, MT.

23. Gist, "Secret Societies," 128-129.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid., 131.

26. Clawson, Constructing Brotherhood, 131-132. Also, see Gist, "Secret Societies," 129.

27. Lewis Terwilliger to Albert W. Jones, November 15, 1927. This was in response to Jones' query that a miner from Elm Orlu was suggested for membership. Box 5 File 3, KKK, EWHS. The second quote was from an unnamed Kligrapp in a letter to Albert W. Jones, November 11, 1927, Box 1 File 26, KKK, EWHS.

28. Gist, "Secret Societies," 130-131.

29. Terwilliger, Official Circular, January 3, 1925, Box 5 File 2. The Royal Riders later changed their name to the Krusaders. Terwilliger to James A. Bray, June 19, 1925, Box 5 File 2, KKK, EWHS.

30. Names from the membership list were checked with obituaries. In some cases, the obituary mentioned where the deceased came from.

31. Minutes, March 12, 1924, Box 3 File 6, KKK, EWHS.

32. Minutes, Special, March 26, 1924, Box 3 File 6, KKK, EWHS.

33. Minutes, May 26, 1925, Box 3 File 7, KKK, EWHS.



34. Proposed Amendment by the Kontinental Klan and remarks by Lewis Terwilliger, March 4, 1929, Box 1 File 35, KKK, EWHS.
35. See Herbert Blumer, "Introduction to Social Movements," The Sociology of Dissent, R. Serge Denisoff, editor, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1974), 10.
36. Ibid.
37. Lewis Terwilliger, Official Document No. 1, Box 4 File 31, KKK, EWHS.
38. Terwilliger, Official Circular, October 2, 1929, Box 5 File 6, KKK, EWHS.
39. In the larger and more anonymous Klans, members' interest might wane due to the order's more impersonal nature.
40. Blumer, "Introduction to Social Movements," 9.
41. Arthur M. Schlessinger, "Biography of a Nation of Joiners," American Historical Review 50 (October 1944): 21-23.
42. Charles W. Ferguson discusses the appeal of secret fraternities in Fifty Million Brothers, 30. See also Charles Merz, "Sweet Land of Secrecy," 329-334.
43. Charles C. Alexander, Crusade for Conformity;: The Ku Klux Klan in Texas, 1920-1930, (Texas Gulf Coast Historical Association, pub. series, Vol VI, No. 1, 1962), 37.
44. Terwilliger, Official Circular, August 3, 1924, Box 5 File 1, KKK, EWHS. On a Klan's request, Terwilliger would inform other Klans in the proximate area of an upcoming meeting or demonstration. See the Official Circular from June 30, 1925, Box 5 File 2, KKK, EWHS.
45. Terwilliger, Official Circular, April 13, 1929, Box 5 File 6, KKK, EWHS.
46. Gist, "Secret Societies," 81. For the exact application procedure, see "Constitution and Laws of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan," 27-28.
47. For example, "the Klaliff will advance to the sacred altar with the mounted flag and will stand flag directly out from corner of sacred altar, and take position No. 3 (see diagram, p. 7) facing the sacred altar." William Simmons,

Kloran, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, K-Uno, 5th edition, 1916, Box 4 File 10, KKK, EWHS, 11. Kontinental Klan members rehearsed "Kloranic work" at least once, see Minutes, August 2, 1924, Box 3 File 6, KKK, EWHS.

48. Kloran, 13.

49. Ibid., 22.

50. Ibid., 26.

51. For instance, the Masonic candidate swore that if he betrayed the oath of secrecy, his throat would be "cut across, [and his] tongue torn out by the roots, and buried in the rough sands of the sea...." The Black Legion employed what was probably the most violent of self-threats. The candidate acknowledged his punishment by praying for "an avenging God and unmerciful Devil to tear my heart out and roast it over the flames of sulphur; that my body be ripped up, my bowels be torn out and fed to carrion birds; that each of my limbs be broken with stones and then cut off by inches that they may be food for the foulest birds of the air; and lastly, my soul be given unto torment; that my body be submerged in molten steel and stifled in the flames of Hell; and that this punishment may be meted out to me through all eternity. In the name of God, our Creator, Amen--arise." See Gist, "Secret Societies," 95-96, for a brief discussion on self-threats in secret fraternities.

52. Ibid., 30.

53. Kloran, 40.

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid., 49.

56. See Gist, "Secret Societies," 70-79.

57. Even though secrecy was emphasized, some orders made no effort to conceal its members or rituals. For instance, Imperial Wizard Joseph Simmons copyrighted the Kloran on January 16, 1917 and gave two copies to the Library of Congress. Jackson, The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 6. Gist stated that "the secrecy of the rituals themselves" was a "universal characteristic of secret societies" (see "Secret Societies," 80.)

58. Kloran, 31.

59. Ceremony for Knights Kamelia, 27-28, Box 4 File 9, KKK,

EWHS.

60. Ceremony for Knights of the Great Forest, 1928, 30, Box 4 File 9, KKK, EWHS.
61. Terwilliger, Official Circular, June 13, 1924, Box 5 File 1, KKK, EWHS.
62. Gist, "Secret Societies," 115. Romans XII: verses 1-23, implores the believer to sacrifice himself to the service of God and to love "without hypocrisy... abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good." The Holy Bible, standard edition, (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1901)
63. Kloran, 12. Louise Rasmussen of Roundup, Montana, remembers as a child that the Klan burned a cross up the street. Her parents pulled her out of bed and wanted her to remember the event "with horror." Louise G. Rasmussen, Interview by Laurie Mercier. Montana Historical Society, Helena, MT. The Klan also had a "Grand Ensign," or banner, and a "Great Imperial Seal," described in great detail in the Klan's constitution and the "Klikon," the sacred picture of the Klan. "Constitution and Laws," 22-23.
64. See Gist, "Secret Societies," 112; Terwilliger, Official Circular, March 1925; Evans, Official Document, December 8, 1924; Evans, Official Document, May 1928, Box 1 File 14, KKK, EWHS.
65. Monteval [Fuller], The Klan Inside Out, 76; Chalmers, Hooded Americanism, 116-117.
66. "Laws and Constitution," 46-47. Also, see Chalmers, Hooded Americanism, 117-118.
67. Evans, Official Document, September 16, 1923, Box 1 File 14, KKK, EWHS.
68. "Laws and Constitution," 6; "The Klan in Action," Pamphlet, 1929, 31, KKK, EWHS.
69. Monteval [Fuller], The Klan Inside-Out, 121.
70. "The Klan in Action," 31. The Klavaliar was named after cavalier, "a courtly, polite, cultured and very courageous and skillful soldier of the 17th and 18th century." Kloran, 53.
71. Clawson, Constructing Brotherhood, 234-238.
72. Evans, "The Klan's Fight for Americanism," 51, 55. Also

see "Laws and Constitution, 6-7 and "Ideals of the Ku Klux Klan," 7.

73. Gist, "Secret Societies," 66-67.

74. "The Klan in Action," 32.

75. Clawson, Constructing Brotherhood, 228.

76. Ibid., 232.

77. Terwilliger, Official Circular, November 6, 1929, Box 5 File 6, KKK, EWHS.

78. Terwilliger, Official Circular, December 22, 1928, Box 5 File 5, KKK, EWHS.

79. Terwilliger, Official Circular, September 15, 1928, Box 5 File 5, KKK, EWHS. Alvin Schmidt refers to the fourth degree as the "Knights of the Midnight Mystery," which just shows that the Klan was fond making changes. Alvin J. Schmidt, Fraternal Organizations: The Greenwood Encyclopedia of American Institutions (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980), 198. As with other secret fraternities, symbolism carried over to the names of the degrees. The second degree or K-Duo, was named the Knights Kamelia after the violent and racist Knights of the White Camelia from the days of Reconstruction. The Knights of the Great Forest or K-Trio, was named after the founder of the original Klan, General Nathan Bedford Forrest. See Gist, "Secret Societies," 68-69. For instance, the Patriarchs Militant named their degrees "friendship" and "truth," while the Junior Order United American Mechanics named theirs "virtue" and "liberty." Imperial Wizard Simmons obviously wanted to retain the connection with the Ku Klux Klan of Reconstruction when he established the degrees. See Monteval [Fuller], The Klan Inside Out, 69.

80. Gist, "Secret Fraternities," 30; Clawson, Constructing Brotherhood, 232. For example, the Masons instituted the Shriners, or rather, the Ancient Arabic Order, Nobles of the Mystic Shrine. The Knights of Pythias added the Dramatic Order Knights of Khorassan to their menu. Kligrapp Albert Jones was the secretary for the D.O.K.K. in Butte. Imperial Wizard Evans never implemented the fun degree, at least while the Kontinental Klan retained its charter.

81. Monteval [Fuller], The Klan Inside Out, 46, 59.

82. Terwilliger, Official Circular, October 29, 1924, Box 5 File 1, KKK, EWHS.

83. Evans scheduled this meeting for February 22, undoubtedly timed with Washington's birthday.
84. Terwilliger, Official Circular, March 10, 1928, Box 5 File 5, KKK, EWHS. If K-Uno members wanted to attend one of the meetings, they had to prove first that they were in good standing and then they were given the K-Trio obligation of secrecy. At a later time, they would be initiated properly in the third degree.
85. Terwilliger to "Faithful and Esteemed Klansman." This letter was probably sent to all of the Klans in the state. January 18, 1928, KKK, EWHS. Terwilliger to Albert W. Jones, February 10, 1928, Box 5 File 5, KKK, EWHS.
86. K-Trio, 42-43; Membership list; Kligrapp's Quarterly Report, third quarter, 1928, Box 2 File 14, KKK, EWHS.
87. Terwilliger, Official Circular, September 15, 1928, Box 5 File 5, KKK, EWHS.
88. Ibid.
89. Clawson, Constructing Brotherhood, 230.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### "THE KLAN IS HERE TO STAY"<sup>1</sup>

"Our men have orders to shoot any Ku Kluxer who appears in Butte."

Sheriff Larry Duggin<sup>2</sup>

"We realize that Butte is the worst place in the State of Montana, so far as alienism and Catholicism are concerned."

Grand Dragon Lewis Terwilliger<sup>3</sup>

The Kontinental Klan survived in Butte for six years, from April 29, 1923 to May 22, 1929. During that time, Klansmen busily formed various committees that reflected their concerns about the community and about internal matters. On a few occasions the Kontinental Klan threw itself into the political machinery in an attempt to thwart Catholic dominance, but such instances of direct involvement flashed briefly. Klansmen spent more time discussing problems than doing anything about them. In fact, the desire to make an impact on the community all but disappeared in later years, as members increasingly turned to the fraternal aspects of their order, such as comaraderie and benevolence.

The one concern that continuously manifested itself throughout the Klan's stay in Butte, and in fact dictated its program, was secrecy. This became almost an obsession with

the Klan. Keeping the actual order hidden from the outside world while at the same time trying to nudge the community towards accepting the Klan's ideals proved to be a difficult, if not impossible, task. This was evident from the very beginning as the Klan sought to keep aliens from discovering who they were and where they met.

The most basic requirement, a room in which to meet, created more headaches for members than anyone had anticipated. Kontinental Klansmen spent much of their time skipping from one fraternal home to another, adopting a new public name with each move.

Members enthusiastically called themselves the "Protestant Men's Community Club," the "Protestant Men's Welfare Council" and the "Magian Society" (reserved for special ritualistic work) during the first year and paid rent to both the Scandinavian Brotherhood and to the Odd Fellows. During the spring of 1924, members held meetings in the Moose Hall, but in July, the Exalted Cyclops announced that hall was "indeed insecure," too costly and too small. As Klansmen moved to the Knights of Pythias Hall, "considerable discussion" concerning the new public name took place. It required a committee of seven to conclude that "The Butte Men's Literary Club" would be appropriate, and they promptly ordered matching stationery for business transactions.<sup>4</sup> For reasons that are unclear, Klansmen once again packed up their robes and Klorans and moved to the Masonic Hall in

Walkerville the next year. The public name changed accordingly, this time to the unlikely "Krishna Improvement Association."<sup>5</sup> This paranoia continued off and on for at least a year with occasional meetings being held at the Odd Fellows Hall under the alias of the "Monarch Club" or at a Klansman's home.

The frequent hopscotching about town and changes of names strongly suggests that the Kontintental Klan desired to escape the scrutiny from the other fraternities and from the community at large. In one case, they cited expensive rental rates and inadequate space in which to conduct the ritualistic work (the naturalization ceremony required three rooms), but these concerns played only a secondary role. Whether or not the more established fraternities even cared about the much smaller Klan is not so important as the fact that the Klan believed they cared. The Klan posed no real threat to other orders, though fraternalists may have been disturbed by the Klan's presence, especially since the Ku Klux Klan was fast developing an unsavory reputation across the country as a terrorist order.<sup>6</sup> If anything, the Klan had more to fear from Butte's citizenry than from the other fraternal orders. The combination of a large population of immigrant Catholics and the roughness of a mining town gave Klansmen reason to be wary.

Wary or not, the secrecy that Klansmen held so dear did not fool the mailmen of Butte. Letters would show up months



late; batches of pamphlets and membership cards failed to arrive.<sup>7</sup> As early as 1924, Kligrapp Floyd Johnson asked Terwilliger to relay a message to the Imperial Palace that it should not leave a "mark of any kind that will even suggest Atlanta or the Imperial Palace or the KKK."<sup>8</sup> Frustrated, Johnson even ran for Postmaster in Butte in 1924 to, as he put it, "stop the mysterious straying of mail" in the community. (This was in addition to the fact that Johnson believed that he was qualified for the position of Postmaster since he had "100% American qualifications...and [was] a member of one real American order.")<sup>9</sup> Johnson even assumed an alias to assure that packages from Terwilliger or the Imperial Palace were delivered safely. In one instance, he informed Terwilliger, not without a hint of pride, that he would use "Knut Karl Knuteson, a real genuine Nordic name" for his next order of robes. In another case, he requested that the Imperial Palace mail a box of supplies to the Post Office and address the package to "August Wilhelm" so that Johnson could then pick up the package without causing suspicion.<sup>10</sup>

Kligrapp Albert W. Jones also experienced his share of problems during the late 1920's after Johnson had left.<sup>11</sup> He remarked to Terwilliger in 1928, "I dont [sic] think it is necessary to mark my mail personal. The last number of letters you sent, the envelope was torn on the end."<sup>12</sup> An

anxious Jones even began to wait for the mailman each day to make sure that no one else would see the mail and steal it. The situation deteriorated so much that Terwilliger finally secured a Post Office Box for the Kontinental Klan under the name of his son. Jones could then write down the Post Office Box as the return address to insure that the mail would "come back to the right hands."<sup>13</sup>

The Klan's perception of the community's opinion also hindered the formation of the Royal Riders of the Red Robe, the alternate fraternal home for those "real Americans" born outside of the United States.<sup>14</sup> In a letter to the Kontinental Klan, "Supreme Ragon" Stephen Tighe expressed his confidence that he could establish the Riders in Butte. If the Klan would just send him a list of 25 eligible candidates, Tighe would personally travel to Butte to organize and train them. This proposal was met with considerable apprehension. Klansman J.B. Kula informed Terwilliger that Tighe's proposition would require great expense and that the money was needed for more "important work." Kula suggested that all the Kontinental Klan needed to establish the Riders in Butte were the necessary instructions. More important to Kula than expense was the issue of secrecy and the possibility that the Klan's cover would be blown. Kula added, "We do not think it advisable... for him [Tighe] to come here because in all probability some of the legal fraternity might see him, and begin to surmise

the object of his visit. Things here, as you know, are very tender."<sup>15</sup>

The Riders, or the Krusaders as the order was later called, did form in Butte, but the Kligrapp's minutes and personal correspondence rarely mentioned the Riders except for an occasional reference to the Riders' organizational problems.<sup>16</sup> In 1928, members at the Klorero admitted that the Krusaders as a group was "progressing rather slowly,...often due to small numbers of foreign born [who were] desirable as members...."<sup>17</sup> The scarcity of "desirable" candidates combined with Klansmen's concern about secrecy hampered the growth of the Riders in Butte.

The Kontinental Klan's concern for secrecy extended beyond the borders of Butte. Correspondence among Terwilliger, the Kontinental Klan, and other Montana Klansmen indicates that Klansmen from elsewhere in the state were expected to exercise great caution when dealing with Butte. Terwilliger warned in 1924 that Klansmen's identity in Butte should not be revealed, even to other Klansmen, "unless necessary."<sup>18</sup> Five years later, Jones suggested to Terwilliger that the Kontinental Klan hold a meeting and invite prospective candidates. Terwilliger cautioned Jones that the Kontinental Klan had to remain on guard and not allow any undependable men into the organization. Further, the Klan should "bind them by the most solemn oath" to insure the applicants kept the Klan's mysteries inviolate, in case they

declined to join. Kontinental Klansmen even noticed an appreciable difference between Butte and other cities. After a Klansman transferred to the Livingston Klan in 1925, he recognized immediately that something was quite different about his new home. In an enthusiastic letter, he gushed to James Bray, the Butte Kligrapp, that "Livingston is sure a real 100% town." Bray replied that he was "gratified to know there is a community where one can feel free and not as we are here."<sup>19</sup>

However, the Kontinental Klan occasionally found outside supporters. One 71 year old woman, a former writer for the American Protective Association's Examiner in Butte in the 1890's, frequently corresponded with Terwilliger and kept him posted on local conditions. Addressing her letters to the "Brothers of America," Mrs. D. Cohn moaned and groaned about the preponderance of Catholics in Butte and the "Protestants [who] are going to sleep at the switch." Often, Mrs. Cohn would send Terwilliger gifts. On one occasion, she sent a miniature replica of a little red schoolhouse; another time, she sent a small statue of Al Smith in a coffin, ("where he belongs" applauded Terwilliger). The Grand Dragon assured Cohn that the Klan was present in Butte "to give Protestants and real Americans a fair deal," but his was an optimistic sentiment.<sup>20</sup>

Although the Klan did not openly demonstrate its presence by attending funerals or marching in parades, it was

bold enough to ask the Chamber of Commerce for permission to participate in the 4th of July parade in 1928. According to the Kontinental Klan, several thousand Klansmen were ready to march in full regalia, but only if they had police protection "from the mob."<sup>21</sup> Their request was denied.

Like other Klans, the Butte Klan took an interest in politics and education. Activism ranged from assisting two aldermen in their bid for election in 1924 to backing the Peoples' School Party to elect members to the school board in 1928.<sup>22</sup> However, most of the Klan's efforts ended up with the formation of investigatory committees such as the committee which scrutinized the religious preference of school teachers. For example, one grim committee in 1924 warned that 85 per cent of teachers were Catholic.<sup>23</sup> To rectify this situation, Kligrapp Albert Jones suggested to Terwilliger in 1928 that at the next legislative assembly, the Klan should insist that "All teachers must be educated in the Free Public Schools in the US and native gorn [sic]."<sup>24</sup> It is doubtful that Jones' suggestion ever made it to the legislative floor, since the Klan played an inconsequential role in the state legislature.<sup>25</sup> However, Jones' concern does reflect the Kontinental Klan's frustration with Catholic dominance in Butte.

Even though the Klan did not have enough power to swing elections, Klansmen expressed their desire to do "good work"

in the community. In 1924, at least one Kontinental Klansman for each of the 33 precincts volunteered to keep a sharp eye peeled at polling places for any signs of wrongdoing and to "stop if possible" opponents who attempted "to steal [the] election."<sup>26</sup> Terwilliger emphasized that the Klan's presence at the polls was crucial, if only "for the moral effect," but members should also examine the registration list in order to challenge enemies who have "registered many men who are dead or who are absent from the State or who are entirely fictitious."<sup>27</sup>

The Kligrapp failed to mention whether or not patrolling Klansmen ever apprehended any culprits. Even if Klansmen did not detect any suspicious activity at the polls, the assignment would have boosted any Klansman's sense of self-importance. After all, he was responsible for protecting the voting rights of true Americans, a job he could never have done if not a trusted Knight in the Invisible Empire.

Never was the call to the Klan's sense of duty and Americanism so vital as during the presidential race of 1928. Al Smith, "the candidate of Rum and Romanism," elicited the worst fears and prejudices of Klansmen. This paranoia was aptly put by the Kligrapp in Bozeman, who warned that if Smith were elected, "in a few years we and our families will be slaves."<sup>28</sup> No doubt existed about the Kontinental Klan's point of view.irate members wrote a scathing three and a half typewritten page response to the Butte Miner's editorial

of June 27, 1928, which defended Al Smith. The Klan blasted the editorial and the Democratic Party for backing Smith, "a Tammanyite of small education, who has no knowledge of world affairs and longs for the return of the day when he can put his foot on the rail and blow the froth off." Only editors who were Catholic or Protestant "of the luke warm variety" could defend the "autocracy" of the Catholic Church. Scattered references throughout the letter jabbed at Catholics' practice of kissing the bishop's ring. Miffed Klansmen objected to the "decidedly insanitary condition of affairs in the kissing of the ring by so many different lips" and that surely the Medical Health officers were derelict in preventing this practice.<sup>29</sup> The Butte Miner elected not to print the response.

Kligrapp Albert Jones had already prepared for the battle by corresponding with several super Protestant orders such as the International Protestant Foundation and the American Publicity League. Jones even submitted his membership fee of one dollar to the Society of Protestant Americans to ensure that a Protestant would remain in America's "Highest National Office."<sup>30</sup>

More anti-Catholic propaganda was available through the Rail Splitter Press, self-proclaimed as the largest anti-papal publishing house in the country. For a fee, Kontinental Klansmen could pick up the latest literature from the Rail Splitter Catalogue like the "Dastardly Deeds of

Irish Sinn Feiners," "God's World Against Romanism," or "The Anti-Catholic Joke Book."<sup>31</sup> Other literature for the devout Knight included the Klan fronted magazine, The Fellowship Forum, which touted itself as "A National Voice for Protestant Fraternal America." General Manager James S. Vance told Albert Jones that if he wanted "a Protestant American newspaper that will bore down under the hide of alienism, boozeism and Romanism," Jones must submit his order for the November 3rd issue immediately to beat the rush. "This number will actually sizzle with facts," promised Vance, "with exposures of the attack on our system of government launched at Houston by the Roman Catholic Hierach [sic] with Al. Smith as the head of the serpent."<sup>32</sup>

No amount of propaganda however, could sway the voters of Silver Bow County. Though Herbert Hoover handily defeated Smith for the presidency, 53 per cent of voters in the county cast their ballots for Smith, making it one of two counties in Montana that did so.<sup>33</sup> The Kontinental Klan fared little better in the county ticket. Sadly responding to Terwilliger's query, Jones provided his own analysis of the local election results, "Bryon E. Cooney is a journalistic prostitute [sic] ... Mr. M.J. English is an attorney and is an Irishman with a brogue...[and] Mr. S.T. Pallard is a teller in the Metal Bank, poor Mason and wet, his soul is such as he would not call his soul his own...."<sup>34</sup> Thus were the political hopes of the Kontinental Klan dashed.



The Klan's political impotence was equalled by the Klan's failure to "clean up the community." Surprisingly, bootlegging did not capture much attention of the Kontinental Klan, considering the secret order's aggressiveness towards bootleggers in other parts of the country. The minutes revealed little discussion concerning prohibition. If, however, the Kontinental Klan had decided to take an activist role in enforcing the Volstad Act, members would have had their work cut out for them. Butte enjoyed a reputation as the leader in Montana for consumption of illicit liquor during the 1920's.<sup>35</sup> The almost daily appearance of arrests and destruction of distilleries in the city papers contributed to The Kalispell Times' assertion that Silver Bow was "probably the most open county in the state."<sup>36</sup> Klansmen likely realized that the odds were stacked against them and any attempt to dismantle a distillery would have incurred the wrath of an irate bootlegger, who could probably round up more support in a hurry than could a small contingent of Klansmen. Still, in one instance, a committee of two Klansmen set out to investigate a "moonshine joint" in the back of the First National Bank.<sup>37</sup> In another case, the Exalted Cyclops ordered a Klansman to make inquiries about a fellow member who had been arrested for handling liquor.<sup>38</sup> Unfortunately, the Kligrapp never mentioned the results of these investigations and what, if anything, they yielded.

The minutes from meetings did however reveal much about

the Kontinental Klan's internal character. Members realized, perhaps from the beginning, that Butte would remain irreconcilably wet, Catholic and alien, no matter how hard they tried to influence the status quo. Members usually met in Klonklave twice a month, more if the Exalted Cyclops thought it necessary. Meetings started promptly at 8 o'clock and lasted anywhere from 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 hours. On a typical evening, Klansmen started the proceedings by performing the opening ceremony and listening to the minutes from the previous meeting and any official documents from Realm or Imperial headquarters. Often, Klansmen suffered through two or three readings of the official dispatches if attendance was sparse or if headquarters demanded it.<sup>39</sup> After the preliminaries, Klansmen settled down to discuss the business at hand. They finished the evening with the closing ceremony and, in later years, added a banquet.

Topics of the evening varied. At times, an appointed member would read from the national Klan's lecture series on subjects such as the Christ as the Klan's role model, or the Klan's obligations in the community.<sup>40</sup> At other times, the desecration of the American flag, the oath of the Knights of Columbus, or the decoration of the graves of deceased Klansmen captured the attention of the Klavern.<sup>41</sup> Racism seeped through the minutes as members would get involved in a lively round of discussion over the Nordic race, inter-marriage between blacks and whites and "the evils existing in

this community." Almost as an afterthought, the Kligrapp dutifully noted during one meeting that "a motion [was] made and carried" for the Exalted Cyclops to tell "six nigger stories."<sup>42</sup>

That Klansmen in Butte were prejudiced is not a surprising discovery. However, the minutes revealed that there was more to the Kontinental Klan than the traditional racism and political and social activism of other Klans. Fraternalism, the emphasis on benevolence and brotherhood, occupied a good deal of Klansmen's time. Members organized sick committees to investigate and report on ill members. Some committees went even further and commented on members whose wives were sick, and once that a deceased Klansman's wife's father died in California.<sup>43</sup> Sick committees also took charge of gift-giving. For example, Klansmen sent brother Parker, who was ill at Galen, four dozen donuts, some assorted fruit, and a box of cigars over a period of time.<sup>44</sup> Parker especially appreciated the cigars and expressed his gratitude by asking Jones to "give my best regards to all the Boys."<sup>45</sup> Klansmen also sent flowers to ailing mothers or wives on more than a few occasions. Albert's "good thoughtful friends" was how Albert Jones' mother characterized the Klan who remembered her on her 77th birthday.<sup>46</sup>

Klansmen went beyond purchasing flowers for sick members. They also attempted to establish a relief fund to

provide financial assistance to needy members or to deceased Klansmen's families. In February 1924, a committee was appointed to "recommend means for the relief of needy members." This initial assembly decided that the Kontinental Klan should appoint a permanent relief committee. It would consist of three members who would assume full responsibility for relief efforts including overseeing finances (which would be kept separate from the Klan treasury). To get relief efforts rolling, Klansmen would submit an initial fee of \$2.10 for the Relief Club Membership and pay dues of \$1.00 to be levied when necessary. The accumulation of dues would render a "sufficient amount of cash to take care of two cases of need and a small amount for postage etc.." If a living Klansman's family was experiencing financial hardships, the committee would assess an appropriate amount of money. When a fellow Klansman died, members would bestow an amount "equal to 1.00 for each paid member at that time" to the bereaved family. After such a crisis occurred, members would remit their dues of \$1.00 to replenish the relief treasury.<sup>47</sup>

This was not a "burdensome" request reminded the committee. Klansmen could raise funds by giving "dances, card parties, smokers, or any other of numerous social activities." In addition, a relief box could be placed "in a conspicuous place" in each Klonklave for direct donations. The committee further recognized that a large membership would result in more money in the relief fund and therefore

would yield a greater gift. However, a steadily declining membership resulted instead in the failure of the Fraternal Assistance Fund. At the end of December 1924, the fund registered a total of \$12.66. It had increased to \$17.41 by January 3, 1925, a tiny amount considering that, at the time, ninety Klansmen were in good standing.<sup>48</sup> Although the Fund still existed by December 1927, the Kligrapp neglected to mention the amount.<sup>49</sup>

Even if the Fraternal Assistance Fund never gained acceptance as an official relief effort; unofficially, Kontinental Klansmen attended to their own. One example was the case of Klansman #10, who fell ill in late 1923 and died the following year. As soon as the sick committee reported that he was suffering financial difficulties, the Exalted Cyclops instructed it to start collecting funds. Collection efforts netted \$53.80 at the following meeting. Klansmen donated an additional \$26.00 in March when they decided to hold onto the money until the fund reached \$100.00. Members met this goal by the next meeting, boosted with a check for \$6.00 from the Klan treasury to make up the difference.<sup>50</sup>

Financial assistance was not unusual in the fraternal world.<sup>51</sup> Fraternities initiated the first life insurance plans, which became a main selling point for the fraternal benefit societies. Imperial Wizard William J. Simmons established a life insurance program at the Klan's inception, but the project failed.<sup>52</sup> Local efforts at benevolence then,

were more successful than any national effort. Surely the Kontinental Klan was not alone in its acts of benevolence, but the degree of assistance rendered probably varied among Klans. Size may have very well been a factor. Though the Kontinental Klan's small membership limited the amount of money in their fraternal fund, the small size could also have worked to their advantage. Smaller membership and attendance would naturally lend itself to a more brotherly atmosphere, where comraderie and caring were more possible than with a larger and more anonymous group.

Not only did most secret fraternities provide some assistance to members, but they also gave to charitable institutions of their choosing. Terwilliger deemed several institutions worthy of receiving Klan assistance.<sup>53</sup> In December 1924, Terwilliger mentioned to the Klans that Imperial Wizard Evans passed a law that "each local organization place in a fund for charitable purposes one-tenth of its collections." The Kontinental Klan discussed Evans' decree one evening, but decided against enacting it.<sup>54</sup>

Though the Kontinental Klan received a number of requests for charitable contributions, it could not respond to all of them.<sup>55</sup> Klansmen did agree to take up a collection to assist in the rebuilding of public schools in Manhattan and Three Forks, which were destroyed by an earthquake.<sup>56</sup> Benevolence stretched only so far, however. Klansmen opposed the allotment of state funds for the Rehabilitation of

Crippled Child's Hospital in Billings, which happened to be Catholic. Responding to the members' complaint, Terwilliger replied that he was unsure if the Klan would be able to prevent state funds for the hospital, since those funds were also earmarked for the Protestant hospital in Great Falls.<sup>57</sup>

Besides worrying about fraternal assistance for members and favored institutions in the alien world, Klansmen spent a good deal of time on rules and regulations. In late 1928, Klansmen suggested amendments to the Klan's by-laws, such as instituting new qualifications for banishment, jurisdiction and initiations. The last amendment required that any new candidate must be initiated within two months of acceptance. If the candidate failed to undergo naturalization during that time, he would have to wait six months. At the end of that period, the candidate would have to repeat the application process and hope that the Klokann would once again accept him. A puzzled Terwilliger commented that he could see no advantage to this amendment and did not recommend its passage.<sup>58</sup> Obviously, members did not realize what a self defeating proposal this was. New members, by 1928, were rare indeed.

Special committees also proposed in-house rules. Perhaps trying to halt long-winded Klansmen, the committee firmly recommended that "no members will be allowed to talk longer than 5 min. on one subject." Further, "no members will be allowed to talk more than twice on the same subject." The more esoteric details of the ritualistic work warranted

extended discussion. One evening, members deliberated at great length as to whether the Night Hawk and Kladd should wear robes and helmets while accepting candidates' applications at the beginning of the naturalization ceremony. Members decided that although the constitution required it, the formality was unnecessary.<sup>59</sup>

More revealing of the Kontinental Klan's character was the usage of shortened versions of the opening, closing and naturalization ceremonies. Just what the shorter versions omitted remains unclear, but probably, much of the ritualistic dialogue that normally occurred between Klansmen was excluded. Occasionally, traditional minded Klansmen objected to cutting short the rituals, such as the time in 1924 when the Klan naturalized two candidates in the short form. After the meeting, the Kligrapp, a bit perturbed, "commented on the manner in which the work was put on" and prompted the Exalted Cyclops to reopen the meeting for comment.<sup>60</sup> During another meeting in 1927, a Klansman made a motion to give a candidate the initiation ceremony in short form, but the other members voted against it.<sup>61</sup> Still in another instance, Klansmen repeated the initiation ceremony for one Klansman who had previously received the shortened version at Walkerville, "which was very unsatisfactory."<sup>62</sup>

The significance of the shortened versions was that Klansmen struggled to retain the traditional ceremonies just as secret fraternities everywhere were trying to cope with



slipping membership and lack of interest. Evidently, the rituals carried some significance to them, not only in the ritual itself and the specific meaning of the Klan's message but also in the general ceremonial aspects of secret fraternalism--the solemnness, the responsibility, the secrecy, and the exclusiveness.

Meetings did however, assume a more relaxed air in later years as membership dwindled. Members may have conducted the initiation ceremony in the long form, but they tended to use the short form of the closing ceremony. Often, a banquet followed the meeting, and the Kontinental Klan and the Jefferson Klan at Whitehall held joint meetings with greater regularity, so long as there was no conflict with Masonic meeting nights.<sup>63</sup> Refreshment committees began to replace political ones, as the two Kligrapps discussed the cost of hot dogs, pickles, and cigars. Even as Klansmen gathered for picnics, however, secrecy still shrouded the Klan. In making plans for an upcoming meeting, Kligrapp Jones told C.U. Brown, a Klansman from Cardwell, in 1928, that "No one is to know that the Klan is [in] back of this [outdoor meeting] except the members. I dont [sic] think it would be advisable to burn a cross."<sup>64</sup>

Thus, the Kontinental Klan's fears about its position in Butte influenced its every move from meeting places to social gatherings. For six years, Klansmen formed their secret investigatory committees and muttered darkly over the state

of affairs in Butte. Constrained by their very surroundings, Klansmen could not successfully pursue the order's traditional social and political activism. Instead, members slipped quietly to their Klaverns twice a month to ponder their situation. Klansmen undoubtedly harbored aspirations of creating an "American" mind set in Butte, but naturally they must have had little hope. They focused their energies on fraternalism, but as it turned out, fraternalism was not enough to keep Butte's Klansmen interested.

## NOTES

1. Chapter Title is from a song in American Hymns, (Buffalo, New York: International Music Co., n.d.), Box 5 File 16, KKK, EWHS.
2. Spokesman Review, October 23, 1923, 6. Box 1 File 1. KKK, EWHS. Sheriff Duggin also stated in the Butte Miner that his "official greeting" to any Klan activities was that Klansmen would be "shot down like wolves." Butte Miner, July 22, 1921.
3. Lewis Terwilliger to Mrs. D. Cohn, January 23, 1929, Box 5 File 5, KKK, EWHS.
4. Minutes from meetings, May 7, 1923, November 21, 1923, Box 3 File 4; March 26, 1924, July 15, 1924, July 19, 1924, Box 3 File 6; February 14, 1925 (Regular and Special meetings); March 9, 1926, Box 3 File 7; May 22, 1929, Box 3 File 11. Rental receipts in Box 1, Files 38 and 39, and Box 2, Files 1 and 2. Also see J.S. Kula to Charles Steele, April 30, 1925, Box 4 File 40, KKK, EWHS.
5. Members probably did not realize that "Krishna" was one of the primary deities in Hindu.
6. The Butte Miner printed many stories about the Ku Klux Klan and the violence that was associated with it, from its escapades in Oklahoma to the murders in Mer Rouge, Louisiana.
7. Albert Jones informed The Rail Splitter that he had not received the October shipment and wondered "if someone have [sic] destroyed them." The Railsplitter replied saying that they "sent 100 papers with the Oct. Mailing and they must have gone astray if you have not received them..." Jones to The Rail Splitter and reply by Mrs. W.L. Clark, October 17, 1927, Box 1 File 26, KKK, EWHS.
8. Floyd Johnson to Lewis Terwilliger, October 10, 1924, Box 1 File 24, KKK, EWHS.
9. Floyd Johnson to Dr. L.D. Johnson, Grand Dragon of Wyoming, March 29, 1924, Box 1 File 24, KKK, EWHS.
10. Kligrapp to Imperial Palace, Form K-114, January 10, 1925. KKK, EWHS.
11. Johnson was banished "for conspiracy to upset the harmony within the Klan and against its best interests and

for marked insubordination against its lawful authority." For reasons that are unclear, the Klan lifted the banishment two years later. Minutes, January 20, 1925, Box 3 File 7 and February 9, 1927, Box 3 File 9, KKK, EWHS.

12. Albert Jones to Lewis Terwilliger, February 13, 1928, Box 1 File 27, KKK, EWHS.

13. Lewis Terwilliger to Albert Jones, December 9, 1927 and January 6, 1928, Box 5 Files 3 and 5, KKK, EWHS.

14. The Riders even used oil on their cross instead of gasoline for a more reddish glow. C. Oliver, interview by author, notes in possession of author, August 2, 1990.

15. J.B. Kula to Lewis Terwilliger, April 27, 1924, Box 5 File 1, KKK, EWHS.

16. The Royal Riders of the Red Robe was replaced in late 1924 by the American Crusaders. Terwilliger generously stated that all Riders would "be given the privilege of transferring their membership to this new order without cost." Lewis Terwilliger, Official Circular, October 24, 1924, Box 5 File 1. Also, see Albert Jones to Lewis Terwilliger, July 14, 1927, Box 5 File 3, KKK, EWHS.

17. Minutes, Klorero, 1928, Box 4 File 29, KKK, EWHS.

18. "Considering the situation in Butte...all correspondence with Butte should go through your hands and that none of the membership in Butte be revealed to other Klansmen unless necessary." Lewis Terwilliger to W.C. Husband, July 22, 1924, Box 1 File 24, KKK, EWHS.

19. Floyd S. Cofer to James Bray, March 30, 1925, Box 1, File 5; Bray to Cofer, March 31, 1925, Box 1 File 5. KKK, EWHS.

20. Lewis Terwilliger to Mrs. D. Cohen, January 23, 1929, Box 5 File 5, KKK, EWHS.

21. Kontinental Klan to W.J. Sullivan, Chairman of Parade, Chamber of Commerce, June 21, 1928, Box 1 File 27, KKK, EWHS. The estimate of several thousand Klansmen was a very optimistic one. Extrapolating Klansmen's numbers in Montana from the Realm tax data, there were approximately 1,500 Klansmen in Montana. See the Realm Financial Report, 1928, Box 5 File 5, KKK, EWHS.

22. This most certainly was the case with John Lindquist, since he was a member of the Royal Riders of the Red Robe in

Butte. Members did vote to appoint Lindquist as the organizer for the Riders, but it is unclear whether or not he assumed that position. Minutes, Special meeting, February 22, 1924, Box 3 File 6. Minutes, April 9; May 6, 1924, Box 3 File 6. Information is lacking for 1926, but the Kontinental Klan established a political committee "for the purpose of putting certain politicians in the running at next election...." Minutes, August 13, 1926, Box 3 File 8. The platform committee for the People's School Party, seven of nine who were Klansmen or former Klansmen, emphasized that the candidates would "prevent...all political and religious considerations from entering into the deliberations or decisions of the school board." Platform of Peoples School Party, March 27, 1928, Box 3 File 19, KKK, EWHS.

23. Minutes, May 6, 1924, Box 3 File 6, KKK, EWHS.

24. Albert Jones to Lewis Terwilliger, November 20, 1928, KKK, EWHS.

25. Terwilliger explained that the Klan opted for a "defensive" position rather than an offensive position because of the Klan's small numbers in the legislature. Official Circular, March 1925, Box 5 File 2, KKK, EWHS.

26. Minutes, April 24, 1924, Box 3 File 6, KKK, EWHS.

27. Lewis Terwilliger, Official Circular, October 30, 1924, Box 5 File 1, KKK, EWHS.

28. Bozeman Kligrapp, July 18, 1928, Box 1 File 27, KKK, EWHS.

29. Letter, "A few objections to an editorial appearing in the Butte Miner of June 27, 1928," Kontinental Klan, July 3, 1928, Box 1 File 27, KKK, EWHS.

30. The American Publicity League, Robert. J. Warren, 1928, Box 1 File 27. Solicitation for membership, International Protestant Foundation, Inc., New York, October 20, 1927, Box 1 File 23. Membership card, Box 1 File 28, KKK, EWHS.

31. The Rail Splitter even offered a book that blamed the assassination of Abraham Lincoln on the Pope. The author had "compiled and published a mass of evidence" showing the Roman Catholic Church had conspired to assassinate Lincoln, General Grant and members of the cabinet." The Rail Splitter Catalogue, The Rail Splitter Press, Milan, Illinois. Box 1 File 10. KKK, EWHS.

32. James S. Vance to Albert Jones, October 18, 1928, Box 1 File 27. KKK, EWHS.
33. Ellis Waldron and Paul B. Wilson, Atlas of Montana Elections 1889-1976, (Missoula: University of Montana: 1978), 115.
34. Albert Jones to Lewis Terwilliger, November 13, 1928, KKK, EWHS.
35. Butte was quick to violate the Volstad Act. The Butte Evening News reported on January 1, 1919 that two saloons were raided, one where over thirty men were drinking. The Butte Miner noted in 1924 that Butte wanted "a cleanup of the bootleggers for it is heartily tired of the way bootleggers have been cleaning up here." April 11, 1924.
36. Kalispell Times, September 7, 1922, 4. Also, see Michael P. Malone, The Battle for Butte (Seattle: The University of Washington Press, 1981), 74 and Work Project Administration, Copper Camp (New York: Hasting House, 1943), 10. Montana had enacted its prohibition law in January 1919, and just a few hours later, officers arrested a liquor dealer. 6
37. Minutes, November 9, 1927, Box 3 File 9, KKK, EWHS.
38. Minutes September 16, 1925, Box 3 File 7, KKK, EWHS.
39. For example, Lewis Terwilliger demanded that his official circular on secrecy be read four consecutive times in Klonklave.
40. See the "National Klan Educational Program" for 1923, Box 4 File 13, KKK, EWHS. Lectures were divided into spiritual, governmental, civic, educational and patriotic categories.
41. Minutes, January 20, 1925, April 14, 1925, Box 3 File 7. KKK, EWHS. Members recommended that the Kligrapp obtain 10,000 copies of oath for distribution, if Terwilliger allowed it. Terwilliger later denounced the oath, stating that the Klan had enough ammunition against the Catholics without resorting to a false paper. Minutes April 14, 1925, Box 3 File 7; Terwilliger, Official Circular, October 31, 1928, Box 5 File 5, KKK, EWHS.
42. Minutes, November 24, 1925, Box 3 File 7, KKK, EWHS. Klansmen "motioned" and "seconded" almost everything, including paying the monthly bills. Minutes, November 17, 1923, Box 3 File 4, KKK, EWHS.

43. Minutes, November 28, 1928, Box 3 File 10, KKK, EWHS.
44. Minutes, December 14, 1927, Box 3 File 9, KKK, EWHS.
45. James L. Parker to Albert Jones, January 10, 1929, Box 1 File 27, KKK, EWHS.
46. Minutes, June 9, 1925 and July 1, 1927, February 22, 1924, are just three examples. Mrs. Jones to "Albert's friends," January 9, 1929, Box 1 File 27, KKK, EWHS.
47. Relief Committee Report, February 24, 1924, KKK, EWHS.
48. Kligrapp's First Quarter Report, 1925, Box 2 File 14, KKK, EWHS.
49. Ibid. and Minutes, December 6, 1924, December 16, 1924, Box 3 File 6. Minutes, January 3, 1925, Box 3 File 7, Minutes, December 28, 1927, Box 3 File 9, KKK, EWHS.
50. Minutes, February 13, 1924; February 22, 1924; March 12, 1924; Special, March 26, 1924; Box 3 File 6, KKK, EWHS.
51. See Alvin J. Schmidt, Fraternal Organizations (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980), 3-19 and Charles Merz, "Sweet Land of Secrecy," Harpers Magazine 154 (1927): 332.
52. See Charles Alexander, "Kleagles and Cash," 350. Though Alexander never gave the cause for the failure of the insurance program, it was probably due to financial reasons and that most Klansmen were covered by other fraternal insurance programs.
53. In particular Terwilliger noted that the Billings Deaconess Hospital was worthy of support, especially since "the enemies of Protestantism" were attempting to dismantle it. Terwilliger, Official Circular, December 6, 1924, Box 5 File 1, KKK, EWHS.
54. Minutes, December 6, 1924, Box 3 File 6, KKK, EWHS.
55. The Butte Kligrapp expressed "regrets" to the Intermountain Union College in Helena that the Klan could not afford to help them. Minutes, December 22, 1925, Box 3 File 7, KKK, EWHS.
56. Minutes, July 28, 1925, Box 3 File 7, KKK, EWHS.

57. Jones to Terwilliger, November 20, 1928 and Terwilliger to Jones, November 28, 1928, Box 5 File 5, KKK, EWHS.
58. The Kligrapp failed to indicate whether his amendment passed. Amendments by Kontinental Klan and remarks by Terwilliger, March 4, 1929, Box 1 File 35, KKK, EWHS.
59. Minutes, March 10, 1925, Box 3 File 7, KKK, EWHS.
60. Minutes, October 21, 1924, Box 3 File 6, KKK, EWHS.
61. Minutes, March 23, 1927, Box 3 File 9, KKK, EWHS.
62. Minutes, March 23, 1927, Box 3 File 8, KKK, EWHS.
63. Minutes, July 1, 1928, Box 3 File 10; C. U. Brown to Albert Jones, August 3, 1928, Box 1 File 27, KKK, EWHS.
64. Albert W. Jones to C. U. Brown, July 28, 1928, Box 1 File 27, KKK, EWHS.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### "KLUXER BLUES"<sup>1</sup>

"An army is not continuously engaged in fighting. There are sometimes lengthy periods of watching and training."

Grand Dragon Lewis Terwilliger<sup>2</sup>

The decline started almost immediately. Despite a slow yet steady increase in membership that netted 101 Klansmen by the beginning of the first quarter of 1924, the Kontinental Klan naturalized only 81 men over the next five years. Any gain the Klan made was nullified because the number of Klansmen suspended far surpassed the number reinstated in any given quarter (except for a brief surge at the end of 1927 in response to Al Smith's presidential campaign).

Many factors contributed to the Kontinental Klan's collapse, among which was the Klan's fall from power at the national and state levels. Klansmen in Butte also had to contend with their own unique set of problems that dictated their strength in the community. These conditions undoubtedly contributed to the Klan's demise in Butte. In addition, a gradual yet growing discontent with the ability of secret fraternities to meet changing needs influenced the order's ability to attract members.

All of this combined to erode an already small

membership and affected attendance at the twice monthly meetings. During 1924, the Kontinental Klan recorded an average of just 24 members at each meeting, while the average net members in good standing (those who had paid their dues), numbered 90. In 1925 the numbers were essentially the same. An average of 19 members attended the meetings in 1926 though only 38 members remained in good standing--a significant decrease from the previous year. In 1927, 1928 and 1929, less than half of the members in good standing attended meetings.<sup>3</sup> Whether a core of Klansmen attended the meetings or if attendance was more evenly distributed, is unclear.<sup>4</sup> What is clear was that, for various reasons, Klansmen sporadically attended the meetings even if they had already paid their quarterly dues.

Further, most of the charter members abandoned the Klan within a year; only two remained for the entire six years.<sup>5</sup> This may have been the result of inflated expectations on the part of the new Klansmen, of whom a disproportionate share were businessmen. If they had entertained thoughts of increasing business contacts, they mostly likely became disappointed before long with the small membership and the stagnant rate of growth of the order. But there were other reasons.

In part, the apparent apathy of Klansmen arose as a result of the organization's impotence in Butte. Continual urging by Imperial and Realm headquarters to increase

membership by recruiting new Knights and reinstating old ones, in addition to planting 100 per cent Americanism in society and politics placed heavy demands on local orders. The Kontinental Klan missed on all counts. Success in the community and a steady flow of cash into the Imperial treasury was what determined the worthiness of local orders in the eyes of Klan officials, not that local orders instituted fraternal funds or threw festive banquets. Since the Kontinental Klan failed to make an impact in the largely immigrant and Catholic community of Butte, those Klansmen who had desired to play a more activist role as agents of real change would likely have felt discouraged about the Klan's lack of progress.

Some Klansmen may have questioned the wisdom of belonging to an organization that was clearly not welcome in Butte. Membership in the Kontinental Klan did not offer a viable avenue for furthering one's contacts, insurance benefits, or prestige; indeed, it was probably a disadvantage. Secret fraternities such as the Masons and the Knights of Pythias were well-established--and accepted, while the Klan was relatively new on the fraternal scene. This might have been advantageous in terms of offering novel rituals, ceremonies, and costumes, but the Klan depended on igniting and maintaining members' emotional fears about Catholics, blacks, Jews, and others who "threatened" white Protestant America. Although Klansmen would not find in the

other secret fraternities the vehemently anti-Catholic and racist position of the Klan, or the political aspirations, most secret fraternities harbored enough nativist sentiment to satisfy at least some.<sup>6</sup> Other orders provided camaraderie, entertainment, and fraternal insurance, along with a generous dose of secret mysteries and dramatic ceremonies. True, the Klan incorporated the essence of secret fraternalism, the solemn rituals, binding oaths and the appeal of escaping the ordinary, but secret fraternalism was one thing; having to hide its very existence from the community was another.

Besides worrying about exposure, Klansmen had to reckon with the order's economic demands. The toll on Klansmen's pocketbooks began with the ten dollar Klecktoken. The robe and helmet cost an additional five dollars, which the member forfeited if he left the order.<sup>7</sup> Klansmen submitted quarterly taxes to both Imperial and Realm headquarters which charged 45 cents and 25 cents per quarter respectively. On top of the taxes, Klansmen also had to pay local dues -- \$1.50 per quarter -- for rent, ritualistic equipment, office supplies, stationary, and the sixteen required "K" forms, such as "Form K-110 (Membership Dues Cards) and "Form K-106" (Klode Cards).<sup>8</sup> In addition, members were expected to contribute to political funds and fraternal funds, and to subscribe to the Kourier and other Klan operated or Klan endorsed publications.<sup>9</sup>

The Klan also extracted money for degrees. The Klecktoken covered the price of K-Uno, but both K-Duo and K-

Trio cost five dollars (except when the national organization ran special offers).<sup>10</sup> The extra cost did not go unnoticed by Kontinental Klansmen. Members expressed their displeasure over the price of the K-Duo degree, likely because they were also expected to pitch in an additional sum for renting a meeting hall once a month.<sup>11</sup>

In other words, the cost of belonging added up in a hurry. Piling this expense on top of demands made by other fraternities would force any financially strapped Klansman to reconsider his membership and to question whether belonging was worth the price. At least two Kontinental Klansmen decided that it was not. Klabee C. Steele informed Albert Jones in October 1927 that Klansman O.C. Kirkwald wanted to reinstate, but "economic reasons interfere with his plans."<sup>12</sup> The most telling letter came from J.A. Orrell in December 1927. Orrell stated firmly,

Now Mr. Jones I do not want the boys to think I am trying to side step my duties or obligations, but I am not in a position to keep up my payments...I have had to drop all but my Masonic order and I am not paid up with them so you see my financial condition is not in a position to carry on the dues. So if the Boys will grant me a withdrawal card I certainly appreciate it then when I feel able to go on I will join again.<sup>13</sup>

He never did. Besides revealing that he could no longer afford membership in the Klan, Orrell's choice of fraternities indicated the relative appeal of the Klan and the Masons, at least by the late 1920's. Clearly, membership in the Masons registered a notch higher on the fraternal

hierarchy than membership in the Klan. Orrell was probably not alone in his decision. Judging from scattered obituaries of Kontinental Klansmen, many had remained faithful Masons up until their death. Meanwhile, Klan membership continued to tumble. By the time Jones read Orrell's letter, total net membership in the Kontinental Klan had slipped to 55.

Personal economic difficulties then, played a major role in declining membership. Financial obligations also affected the local order as a whole. Though local Klans were allowed to keep a percentage of Klectokens and fees from degrees, most of the money members remitted disappeared into the bottomless Imperial Treasury. Concerned Klansmen at the Montana Klorero of 1929 discussed the financial burden that had crippled many local organizations such as the Kontinental Klan. The committee adopted a resolution affirming that the serious financial condition of Klans in Montana was "due primarily to the fact that the Realm and Imperial taxes are excessive in proportion to the dues that can be levied...." It urged Imperial and Realm officials to "reduce the assessments" in order to revive the remaining, floundering Klans.<sup>14</sup> Their pleas went unanswered.

Economic matters notwithstanding, Kontinental Klansmen also had to contend with negative publicity about the Ku Klux Klan in their home newspaper.<sup>15</sup> The editors of the Butte Miner described the Klan as a "farce comedy," "a consummate sham," and that the secret order's "conception of 100 per

cent Americanism...appear[ed] to be largely based on hate."<sup>16</sup> On a sarcastic note, the editors remarked, "How much better the title of American Citizen sounds than 'kleagle,' grand wizard,' 'cyclops' and all such stuff."<sup>17</sup> They also reminded their readers that religious liberty and religious tolerance played a crucial role in the nation's political integrity and that the Klan threatened to violate that integrity. If the secret order was allowed to germinate in the political area, then, the editor warned gravely, "the nation will be facing a great peril."<sup>18</sup>

Locally, citizens of Butte discovered that the Klan was the butt of mischievous pranks. In one instance, two boys, 12 and 13 years old, conned one woman by handing her a note that curtly stated the Klan would kill her if she refused to give them \$150.00.<sup>19</sup> Several months later, the Butte Miner reported that "Fiery Crosses" were seen blazing on two sides of Butte on the eve of St. Patrick's day. Investigating officers believed that "practical jokers who are possessed of a perverted sense of humor" were responsible for the cross burnings.<sup>20</sup> The Butte Miner made no further mention of the incident.

Such advertisement only reinforced any negative opinions of the Klan held by Butte citizens. It also may have deterred possible candidates from joining, simply because of the stigma attached to belonging. Klansmen at the Montana

Klorero of 1928 indirectly assigned the blame for declining membership to unfavorable publicity, stating that Klansmen faced huge obstacles when recruiting "since as a rule the non-member is imbued with false prejudice to start with...."<sup>21</sup>

But besides "false prejudices" and negative press, the Kontinental Klan, like other secret fraternities, competed in a losing battle with mass media entertainment. By the mid to late 1920's, Americans were ready to sample new and modern forms of recreation like cars, radio, sports, and movies. Such rapidly growing activities beckoned to those who wanted to keep in time with a changing American society. In particular, the Klan's "crusading spirit...seemed out of place" in this atmosphere where Americans were ready for "a long, prosperous, happy weekend."<sup>22</sup>

Dues paying fraternalists in Butte could skip lodge night and see a show at one of the five movie theatres. Ten to fifty cents paid for a night of escape, without the demands of belonging to a secret fraternity. Comedies replaced solemn rituals ("Laughter is a cure for many ills" reminded the Butte Miner), but movie goers could be assured of a wide variety of films on any given evening since theatres changed selections every two or three days.<sup>23</sup>

Increased availability of cars also influenced people's lives by expanding their opportunities to socialize with friends or family in other communities. The Butte Miner realized the appeal and devoted a separate section of the



Sunday edition to cars. Readers could envy photographs of the latest models and peruse travel tips and vacation ideas while sipping their morning coffee.

When they had finished the section on cars, perhaps they flipped to the sports page. Fans in Butte could follow the careers of national heroes like Babe Ruth and Jack Dempsey, who shared the headlines with local athletes. An amateur baseball league that boasted ten teams lured baseball enthusiasts to the parks to cheer home runs, stolen bases, and strike-outs. Even the "eskimo weather" on opening day in 1928 failed to deter 2,500 eager fans from witnessing the first games of the season.<sup>24</sup>

Besides baseball, other events attracted potential and current fraternalists. Frequent dance parties at Columbia Gardens and Gregson Springs provided plenty of live entertainment and a change of pace from the strictly all-male secret fraternities. Additional participatory activities included recreational and sports clubs, such as tennis and trapshooting. Such clubs were cheaper than fraternities. For instance, the Butte Anglers Club charged one dollar a year for dues. Residents could also take in an amateur boxing match at the YMCA or bet on the greyhound races sponsored by the Highland Kennel Club.<sup>25</sup>

In addition, the rapidly growing network of service clubs offered another option for businessmen or for those who simply desired some of secret fraternalism's benefits such as

comraderie, doing "good work," and business contacts. The Lions, Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs catered to people who desired membership in an organization with a set program, but who wanted to dispense with the traditional and time consuming rituals of secret fraternalism.<sup>26</sup>

How could secret fraternities possibly keep up with such a wide variety of entertainment, where each week and each season would bring forth different activities? Men simply became too busy to give the same kind of attention to secret fraternities as they, or their fathers, once had in the past. This trend was most notable among younger men. Since secret fraternities depended on a steady supply of young people to replenish the ranks, the decreased interest on the part of the young in the whole structure of fraternalism spelled eminent disaster.<sup>27</sup> Secret fraternities, among their other attributes, had once provided a traditional rite of passage from youth to manhood. Now, instead of learning "the masculine message of the rituals," rituals that glorified and emphasized conventional values, young men looked to their peers for approval and for guidance.<sup>28</sup> As Mark Carnes remarked in his study of secret fraternalism, "the movement was dying of old age."<sup>29</sup>

The Ku Klux Klan had to face these concerns just as much as other secret fraternities, even its membership reflected this trend--the average age of Kontinental Klansmen in 1925 was 39 years.<sup>30</sup> Unlike other fraternities, however, the Klan

experienced additional problems. In general, the Klan's attempts to purge communities once and for all of bootlegging, immoral activities, corruption, and especially, of Catholics in political and educational arenas, failed. The Klan could not prevent Al Smith's nomination as standard bearer for the Democratic party in 1928. People still drank. Gambling and prostitution still existed. And Catholics, along with an increasing number of second generation immigrants, were settling down nicely, adjusting to American society and Americans were adjusting to them.

Likely, Kontinental Klansmen shifted uncomfortably in their robes as they became aware of this situation. Just because members had turned more toward the secret fraternal aspects of the order, did not mean that they closed their eyes to the perceived problems, nor did it mean that they were any less anti-Catholic because of their impotence in the community. It simply meant that the Kontinental Klan faced a no-win situation. Not accepted by the community at large, it could not successfully pursue an activist program. Emphasis on the more fraternal aspects of the order only wound up in a competition with other fraternities and with new forms of entertainment.

The Kontinental Klan's demise signalled more than an end to another local chapter in the diminishing Klan network. It also meant that the religious tension that had reached its stormy heights in the 1880's between the American Protective

Association and the Irish Catholics was slowly diminishing. In short, people were simply adjusting; and, while prejudices certainly existed, activist organizations that catered to religious intolerance and white supremacy failed to interest the majority of the American public.

The nine Kontinental Klansmen who remained by the end of 1929 reflected this disinterest. If they wanted to continue their ties with the Klan, they could have linked up with the remaining members, if any, of the Jefferson Klan in Whitehall, with whom they shared so many evenings. If they desired to keep in touch with national activities, they could join the Grand Klan of Montana, still led by Grand Dragon Lewis Terwilliger. Certainly, the appeal of belonging to the Klan did not diminish for Albert W. Jones. In 1931, two years after the Kontinental Klan had disbanded, he wrote a letter to Terwilliger hoping for a bit of fraternal benevolence in finding Jones' brother a job. He also wanted to purchase the January Kourier. Ever cautious, Jones requested that the Imperial Palace send the "under a plain cover" and without the "letter K 30" after his name.<sup>31</sup> Butte may have forgotten about the Ku Klux Klan but for the former Kligrapp, fear of exposure still gnawed at his soul.

## NOTES

1. Chapter title is from a song in American Hymns, (Buffalo, New York: International Music Co., n.d.), Box 5 File 16, KKK, EWHS.
2. Lewis Terwilliger, Official Circular, December 3, 1928, Box 5 File 5, KKK, EWHS.
3. Percentages and averages for both attendance and members in good standing were taken from the Kligrapp's quarterly reports.
4. The Kligrapp usually noted the attendance at each meeting, but only by the number attending and not a specific list.
5. Charter membership list, 1924; Transfer membership list, 1929. Box 1 File 24, KKK, EWHS.
6. See Noel P. Gist, "Secret Societies: A Cultural Study of Fraternalism in the United States," University of Missouri Studies, XV (October 1940): 129-131; Mary Ann Clawson, Constructing Brotherhood: Class, Gender and Fraternalism, (Princeton University Press, 1989), 131-132.
7. For a few months in late summer, the cost of a robe was added on to the Klectoken totalling fifteen dollars. The Imperial Palace may have decreed this new law with Montana in mind considering that only 11.2 percent of all new citizens purchased robes for third quarter 1924. Lewis Terwilliger, Official Circular, November 11, 1924, Box 5 File 1; June 24, 1927, Box 5 File 3, KKK, EWHS. See By-Laws of Kontinental Klan No. 30, December 26, 1923, Box 1 File 35. See "Constitution and Laws of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan," (Atlanta, Georgia, 1926), Box 4 File 1, KKK, EWHS, Article XVIII, Section 19, p. 34.
8. See Charles C. Alexander, "Kleagles and Cash: The Ku Klux Klan As a Business Organization, 1915-1930," Bus Hist Rev 39 (1965): 360-361. By-Laws of Kontinental Klan No. 30, December 26, 1923, KKK, EWHS.
9. Ibid.; Minutes, March 21, 1924, Box 3 File 6, KKK, EWHS.

10. See Chapter three, p. 67 for examples.
11. K-Duo minutes, April 8, 1925, Box 3 File 5, KKK, EWHS. At a later meeting however, Kontinental Klansmen did not shirk from paying a fellow member's K-Duo fee. K-Duo minutes, May 14, 1925, Box 3 File 5, KKK, EWHS.
12. Charles Steele to Albert Jones, October 17, 1927, Box 2 File 15, KKK, EWHS.
13. J.A. Orrell to Albert Jones, December 17, 1927, Box 1 File 26, KKK, EWHS. At the time, Orrell was on a business trip in California.
14. Minutes of Klorero, October 20, 1929, Box 4 File 29, KKK, EWHS.
15. Publicity may have helped the Klan in its beginning when Simmons, Clark, and Tyler were trying to branch out from the South, particularly when the New York World came out with its series of expose's in 1921. Simmons stated that the added publicity greatly aided the Klan's growth, especially when Congress reacted by launching an investigation of the Klan that resulted in nothing more than added exposure. Simmons recognized this. "Certain newspapers also aided us by inducing Congress to investigate us. The result was that Congress gave us the best advertising we ever got. Congress made us." Quoted in David M. Chalmers, Hooded Americanism: The First Century of the Ku Klux Klan 1865-1965, (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1965), 38.
16. Butte Miner, December 2, 1923; January 13, 1924.
17. Butte Miner, November 23, 1923.
18. Butte Miner, September 7, 1922.
19. Billings Gazette, 9-2-23, 10. The boys were discovered after purchasing a motorcycle at a local dealership. Both pleaded guilty and the money was returned to a relieved Mrs. Bennets.
20. Butte Miner, March 18, 1924.
21. Minutes, Korero, 1928, Box 4 File 29, KKK, EWHS.
22. Charles C. Alexander, Crusade for Conformity: The Ku Klux Klan in Texas, 1920-1930 (Texas Gulf Coast Historical

Association, pub. series, Vol VI, No. 1, 1962), 79; Gist, "Secret Societies," 41-43.

23. Butte Miner, May 13, 1928.

24. Butte Miner, May 15, 1928.

25. For examples, see the Butte Miner for May, 1928.

26. Most secret fraternities realized they were losing current and potential members to the temptations of modernity. The Nebraska Fraternal Congress considered modernizing and shortening the rituals in 1932 in an effort to boost sagging membership. By 1940, the Knights of Pythias admitted that the days of secret drama, symbolism and mystery no longer served a purpose--autos, movies, and service organizations had taken their place. Noel P. Gist, "Secret Societies: A Cultural Study of Fraternalism in the United States," University of Missouri Studies XV (October 1940): 43. The International Order of Odd Fellows also pondered the effects of modernity as a cause of slipping membership. See Charles W. Ferguson, Fifty Million Brothers, (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1937), 232-233.

27. Most secret orders established boys orders for the very purpose of grooming young people to carry on the traditional ceremonies--witness the De Molays for the Masons and the Junior Ku Klux Klan. See Mark C. Carnes, Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 151-156 for secret fraternalism's decline.

28. See Carnes, Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America, 151 and Clawson, Constructing Brotherhood, 260.

29. Ibid., 151-155.

30. Ages for Klansmen were derived from cemetery records from the Butte Silver Bow Archives (N=37) and membership receipts from the Ku Klux Klan Files in Spokane, Washington, Box 2, (N=28). Ages were available for 65 members. For ages from the cemetery figures the year of birth was subtracted from the arbitrary year of 1925. Average age = 39.2; median = 37.5; range = 23-77.

31. Jones to Terwilliger, February 14, 1931, Box 1 File 27, KKK, EWHS.

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