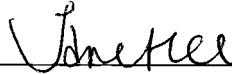


AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Wendy P. Rielly Thorson for the degree of Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies in Women Studies and History presented on May 8, 1997. Title: Oregon Klanswomen of the 1920s: A Study of Tribalism, Gender, and Women's Power.

Abstract Approved: _____



Janet Lee

The fraternal order of the KKK, originally founded in the 1860s, reemerged in 1915, to present itself as an organization committed to the Cause - a dangerous reactionary political ideology to protect white, native born, Protestant, middle class values from all outsiders. Concomitantly, the Ladies of the Invisible Empire (LOTIEs) and the Women's Ku Klux Klan (WKKK) were women who rallied to the Cause, by oppressing outsiders who were considered the real enemy that generated lies in order to bring the Klan down. Klan loyalty required patriotic pledges to America, religious pledges to Protestantism, and, importantly, moral pledges to protect the purity of manhood and womanhood. As the 1920s Ku Klux Klan struggled with its own masculine ideology concerning the 'woman question' to determine Klanswomen's place within Klan culture, Oregon Klanswomen themselves redefined gender norms, challenged male hegemony, and acted in accordance with their own interpretation of their feminine roles as mothers and as citizens within the Klan. The focus of this thesis, then, is to understand how Oregon Klanswomen stretched normative gender boundaries within the patriarchal dominion of

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF (Continued)

the Klan itself, and to understand their participation in the Ku Klux Klan in terms of their access to power and authority.

As Klansmen defined women's power within the confines of gender normative boundaries, women took advantage of the power and authority given to them to create and self define themselves as a group. The emergence of Klanswomen forming identifiable tribal groups such as the LOTIEs and the WKKK emanated from the highly masculinized fraternal group of the KKK. These women led other white Protestant women into a campaign against outsiders including other women. Klansmen may have set the gender boundaries to restrict Klanswomen under their power, only to have the women undermine male Klan authority and redefine the gender norms themselves. Women do not always agree with societal dictation of their roles as women, and when a tribal group such as the Oregon LOTIEs grew in political autonomy, male hegemony was militantly challenged. Hence, Oregon Klanswomen were not invisible, nor were they influencing politics from their homes, instead they played several important political roles within the Klan. Whether women hid KKK terrorism by bringing normalcy to the campaign, acted as hostesses at events, or contributed financially, they exemplified autonomy and fierce tribalism as women within the Ku Klux Klan.

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Oregon Klanswomen of the 1920s:
A Study of Tribalism, Gender, and Women's Power

By

Wendy P. Rielly Thorson

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This thesis is dedicated to my loving mother, Eunice Rielly,
my sister Jeri Wyatt, my forever friends Patty, Cyndi, and Shirley,
my children who had to put up with mom being in school,
Leslie, Devon, Kristen, and
to my soul mate Steven.

Oregon Klanswomen of the 1920s: A Study of Tribalism, Gender, and Women's Power

Chapter One- Introduction

We all believe in organization. The Protestant women's patriotic societies, though still in their infancy, already are offering vast opportunities to women who long for self-improvement, local improvement, and national improvement. Let us learn the meanings of the words, Charity, Fraternity, Unity, and Strength.¹

The invitation to Oregon's Protestant women to come out of their homes and join the Ladies of the Invisible Empire (LOTIEs) appeared in the *Western American*, a Ku Klux Klan (KKK) newspaper. Not only were white Protestant women invited to improve the conditions of their lives, but also to protect their homes, communities and the nation in a crusade against Catholics, Jews, immigrants, and African Americans. Within the LOTIEs, women not only found friendship and a social circle, but also some found financial and political power. As the Ku Klux Klan struggled with its own ideology concerning the 'woman question' to determine Klanswomen's place within Klan culture, Oregon Klanswomen themselves redefined gender norms, challenged male hegemony, and acted in accordance with their own interpretation of their feminine roles as mothers and as citizens within the Klan. The focus of this thesis, then, is to understand how Oregon Klanswomen stretched normative gender boundaries within the patriarchal dominion of the Klan itself, and to understand their participation in the Ku Klux Klan in terms of their access to power and authority.

The fraternal order of the KKK, originally founded in the 1860s, reemerged in 1915, to present itself as an organization committed to maintaining white native born Protestant privileges and values. This included patriotic pledges to America, religious pledges to Protestantism, and, importantly, moral pledges to protect the purity of manhood and womanhood. For the Klanswomen, the latter involved a mother's pledge to protect the sanctity of the family. These seemingly harmless values masked the fact that the KKK persecuted anyone who did not qualify for their order, as outsiders, enemies and aliens.

In the 1920s, the Klan's tribalistic culture worked within and as a part of mainstream white Protestant culture. Rather than an aberration, the Klan mirrored other fraternal groups, which were also racist and nativist. Klan members identified their enemies on the basis of religion, nationality and race, and although racism, nativism or Protestantism, did not originate with the Klan, members reflected white-Protestant cultural reactions to the uncertainties involved with industrialization, massive immigration, (foreign and internal), urbanization, and post war traumas.

A rise in patriotism occurred in the aftermath of WWI and as a result of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia. American society was fearful of the changes effected by massive immigration into the country; many poor and uneducated people were arriving to the larger cities for work, and the result was a growing prejudice against foreigners.² Catholics were targeted for their allegiance to a foreign religious ruler, and at the same time morality issues were spearheaded by right-wing Protestants.³ The economy was in flux; rural areas were affected financially by a drop in prices for agricultural goods,⁴ and Klan propaganda cast suspicion upon Jewish bankers. Racism arose in the North with the internal migration of Southern African Americans who were seeking work.⁵

During this time, it became increasingly difficult for privileged white families to maintain the cult of domesticity, and women began to work outside of the home.⁶ As women joined the public sphere the gender restrictions created by the cult of domesticity were shaken, spurring laments by conservatives over the loss of Victorian values. As women proved their ability as social reformers in temperance and suffrage movements, their role in public life gained respect.

The Role of Women in the Klan

While the decision to recognize a women's group within the KKK was not to be determined nationally until June 1923 with the emergence of the Women's Ku Klux Klan (WKKK), in Oregon and other states, supportive male Klan leaders chartered state organizations like the LOTIEs. And they did so **without** the official approval of the Imperial Klanvocation, the KKK national legislative body, and in order to benefit themselves financially. Hence, the LOTIEs legitimacy as a Klan organization could be hidden from the public eye even while Klanswomen held large gatherings and openly recruited new members. Women themselves gained political and financial power regardless of the male hegemony over the Klan.

The Klan promoted masculinity as a necessary criterion for admission in order to set its own members apart as superior to all non- Klan males. Eventually, a contention arose about allowing women into the Klan: should they be allowed in at all? And if so, what part would they play?

Klansmen who struggled with the "woman question" and opposed women's involvement with the Klan insisted that women were merely helpmates and that the KKK

was ultimately a masculine organization. They were ambivalent about gender roles changing with the admission of women, and, according to historian Kathleen Blee, some Klansmen thought that allowing women to join the KKK would masculinize women. Ultimately, it was decided that Klanswomen could fulfill two critical roles in the fraternal movement. First, women were potentially another income source through membership dues and the possibility of increased financial donations. The *Capital Journal*, a Salem newspaper was critical of the financial exploitation of women as a gender by the KKK. The paper sarcastically remarked that the LOTIEs became a “profitable enterprise” for the KKK collecting \$10.00 initiation fees, \$5.00 dues and selling “50 cent nightgowns for \$6.50.”⁷ Here anti-Klan journalists criticized the way Klansmen exploited their own members, and, at the same time, poked fun at the garments worn by Klan individuals.

Second, the presence of Klanswomen could cloak Klan terrorism, criticized by non-Klan members as immoral. American culture continually complimented women for their higher morals, and, subsequently, “The Klan saw women’s inherently moral natures as key to campaigns for clean government and control to vice since women would vote for candidates promising to rid the country of liquor, prostitution and gambling.”⁸ Klan advertisements emphasized tradition by entrusting power to the “right men” by any “justifiable means.” The “right men” acknowledged male hegemony in the political arena, and implied that Klansmen should obtain positions of power in the government, supported by the newly enfranchised Klanswomen.⁹ The emphasis was on a clean campaign, which insinuated that the LOTIEs could end the existing “dirty politics.” This morality argument was used to counter the arguments of Klansmen who were averse to women becoming a part of the KKK politics, proposing that women could free the

country from “greed and graft.”¹⁰ As the Klan grew rapidly across the country, the Klan reveled in its size and popularity, acknowledging the benefits of women’s membership in providing “normalcy” to the movement.

Ironically, despite their conservative agenda, the Klan allowed some women access to positions of power and authority, and encouraged changes in traditional gender roles. Even though there was conflict among Klansmen over the issues of women’s roles in both the public and private spheres, the leaders perceived that more could be gained by women’s contributions as members of the KKK. Thus, the Klan began expanding gender boundaries, allowing women more recognition in the private sphere, and, encouraging women to work in the public sphere. As an example of male tolerance, it was argued that women should gain economic independence. “Women’s economic freedom,” according to the Klan press, “which has slumbered for ages, awakes.”¹¹ Klansmen asserted that this economic freedom would transform women in their Christian lives as well. “Only when women gained a measure of economic independence could the Christian message of gender equality be heard.”¹² Toward this end, Klansmen began to help women earn a better living. For example, the Oregon members of the KKK and LOTIEs were warned to boycott a department store named Meier and Frank. The Klan accused the store of paying slave wages to the women and girls who worked there, stating that women workers were not making a sustainable living for a big city like Portland, and that Meier and Frank was using the women unfairly.¹³ By insisting on better salaries, the Klan was endorsing women’s move into the public sphere on a more equal footing.

The **true** motivations and goals of the LOTIE’s promoters, however, were highly suspicious to those who opposed the Klan, as anti-Klan papers charged the Klan as

essentially exploitive of women. The Klan countered such accusations with a promise to broaden women's political power. Sanctioning women and supporting women's rights publicly became a powerful propaganda tool to attract new female membership. As we will see, the women took advantage of this tolerance of women working politically in the public sphere and challenged male hegemony by assuming power for themselves.

Women did not wait for the debate about admitting them and defining their roles to be settled before beginning their work as a group in conjunction with the Klan. Without invitation -- and regardless of arguments whether or not these Klanswomen were really affiliates of the Klan -- they identified themselves as such and took up the Klan's campaign to maintain white supremacy and promote nationalism.

Klan hatred and bigotry mixed well with the culture of intolerance in society during this period. As a result the KKK added legitimacy to their campaign by reflecting many mainstream concerns of the early 1920s. However, the Klan might have lasted much longer within American culture had they not contradicted their own morality crusade. Once the Klan was publicly denounced and exposed for its terror, crimes and graft, it stood alone as a blemish on society, and as a historical aberration of American culture.

Methodology

The majority of Klan historians themselves gave very little attention to Klanswomen's contributions to the Klan, and the underlying assumption was that Klanswomen were inconsequential. Feminist historians have challenged the historical precedence of women being left out because of their reportedly political insignificance, and instead, have uncovered a legacy of women's involvement in the growth of the

country.¹⁴ With the movement in historical research to include diverse groups, my motivation as a feminist has been to glean any information I can about Klanswomen in Oregon. A background in feminist theory has helped me understand how Klanswomen gathered together as a group to gain power as women, even though they willingly oppressed other women to maintain their own privilege. It is equally important to understand women's participation in a right wing movement like the Klan, which practiced terrorism to control outsiders.

The difficulty in researching information about women's participation in a secretive organization such as the Klan creates a methodological challenge. Fortunately, historian Kathleen Blee wrote *Women of the Klan, Racism and Gender in the 1920s*, which was published in 1991. After consulting with Dr. Blee, I discovered that her study took over six years to complete, that she had extensive financial research grants to help her find informants, and that many of her informants were quite elderly in 1985. She advised me to look for newspaper articles to help me uncover information about the Oregon LOTIEs.

I also approached the Archdiocesan Historical Commission in Portland and contacted Reverend Lawrence J. Saalfeld, author of *Forces of Prejudice in Oregon, 1920-1925*, which was published in 1984. Father Saalfeld had conducted most of his research for his Masters degree in 1950, and said that many of the sources that he used had been stolen or destroyed, although he too relied heavily on newspaper articles.

Methodologically it is important to acknowledge that many of the newspapers in the 1920s to 1930s over simplified and misrepresented women's participation in the Klan as subservient to the KKK. Anti-Klan papers used women's participation to effeminate the Klan, or to accuse the Klan of exploiting innocent and naïve women. Subsequently, the

major difficulty in researching the LOTIEs and the WKKK in Oregon was the lack of reliable public information about their work.

My primary source, then, was a newspaper published weekly by the Klan called the *Western American*. Its editor, Lem Dever, began the paper in Astoria in July 1922, and eventually published it in Portland, Oregon.¹⁵ The paper claimed to be the mouth piece for “The Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan” of Oregon, “The Official Paper of the Ladies of the Invisible Empire,” whose “Imperial Headquarters” were in Portland, Oregon, and “The Official Paper of the Royal Riders of the Red Robe,” whose “Imperial Headquarters” were also in Portland.¹⁶

The problems with relying heavily on the newspaper for information are threefold. First, the Klan received bad press from other newspapers and used the *Western American* for rebuttal against accusations of wrong doing on the part of the KKK. As a result, many of the articles were defensive and repetitive. For example, the January 18, 1923 edition of the *Western American* had an article entitled “Lookout for this!” The article stated that while the Klan had been accused of branding a woman with a fiery cross on her breast, they had nothing to do with the incident in Tillamook. The article responded to the fact that other Oregon newspapers implicated the KKK with the following: “The Klan was accused by the Portland Telegram and other unreliable newspapers owned or controlled by Catholics and Jews.”¹⁷ While one of the *Western American*’s maxims was “Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free,” it was very clear in reading the paper that the “truth” was always constructed to defend the Klan.

The second problem is the Klan’s use of rhetoric as propaganda. Klan lecturers made defensive assertions about Klan bigotry to their critics and then revoked what they had

just stated to appeal to general citizens. “Grand Lecturer, R.H. Sawyer, once claimed that the LOTIEs were not anti-Catholic, but merely opposed to any un-American groups. Moments later in the same lecture he claimed all Catholics were un-American.”¹⁸

Sawyer condemned the local press for the misrepresentation of the KKK and the LOTIEs by taking statements out of context. Other propaganda included the way a maxim “Not for Self, but for Others,” or “non silba sed anthar” was frequently published in the *Western American*. While outsiders may interpret this aphorism as an altruistic ideology, within the tribalistic rhetoric for the Klan the quotation meant to support other Klan members. This “other” would never include non-Klan members.



Figure 1 Reverend R.H. Sawyer

The third problem area was the secrecy of overt violence and militancy concerning Oregon KKK activities (Appendix 4 details reported Klan violence in Oregon in the early 1920s). The *Western American* continually denied any claims of violence by the Klan,

and even when two men were murdered in Shreveport, LA, the *Western American* went to great length to minimize Klan connections. Consequently, in the process of denying the existence of any Klan violence, the *Western American* made it even more difficult to obtain any information about women's participation in the Klan's militant activities. There is, however, evidence that the Oregon LOTIEs were at times a militant group, for instance becoming physically violent in order to protect their Mother Counselor. The *Western American* upheld KKK values at any cost, yet it did so in such a way as to promote an image of unquestionable integrity and to encourage the readers to support KKK efforts through voting, boycotting, or through the contribution of funds. Nevertheless, the *Western American's* religious justification for openly racist-nativist-classist attacks on people other than white Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASPs) is based upon righteous convictions and propagandized lies. The purpose of these public displays in the *Western American* were to provide opportunities for KKK members to assert their own perceived righteousness and place within 1920s culture.

The following chapter, "The Tribal Culture of the Klan," will explore the reemergence of the Klan as a fraternal tribal group promoting chivalry as protectors of women, and nationalism to protect the country and the position of the 1920s white Protestant culture. This righteous defense of Klan values, also referred to as the Cause or Klancraft, justified any unlawful actions such as terrorism, as the right of the tribe to protect its members. Women, then, created their own tribal group within the fraternal Klan in order to gain power, and through their social work enhanced the Klan's political culture as wholesome, subsequently attracting thousands of members.

Chapter Three, “Stretching Gender Boundaries” explores the history of women influencing the political sphere from their homes as mothers. Klanswomen worked within the confines of gender normative boundaries, only to push forward as individuals by gaining political independence and power. At times the Klan used women’s rights as a propaganda tool to attract new women members, and eventually glorified women as mothers to protect the sanctity of marriage and the family in an attempt to regain political power.

The fourth chapter will examine the leaders of the LOTIEs and the WKKK, and their struggles with male hegemony. In “Klanswomen Challenge Male Authority,” I emphasize that while most Klanswomen did not accept secondary status to the Klansmen, they asserted their authority to defy Klan leaders. As the national male leaders struggled for power, they attempted to start new women’s organizations, hence ignoring the already established women’s groups. This political move to merge the LOTIEs into the WKKK was directly defied as the women attempted to keep their established group in power.

Notes For Chapter One

¹ *Western American* December 28, 1922

² Dorothy M Brown. *Setting A Course, American Women in the 1920s*. Twayne Publishers, 1987), 2-6.

The KKK emerged during a time of rapid social change and uncertainty of maintaining the white middle class. Sociologists Robert and Helen Lynd claimed that 1840 to 1920 was “one of the eras of greatest rapidity of change in the history of human institutions” (Brown 2). American culture was facing issues dealing with new technology and industry, work issues, political issues, and a challenge to the heart of American Protestantism - moral issues (Brown 168).

³ Brown, *Setting A Course*, 168-184.

Science became the new authority as Darwin introduced concepts of evolution, thus challenging the inerrant Bible. Scholars debated religion and a schism formed between

the liberal theologians reinterpreting the Bible and the conservatives supporting fundamentalism. Freud was also introducing new concepts about sexuality and humanists and naturalists were formulating theories supporting modernism. In the Lynds' research in Middletown they found a weakening religious commitment. "Religion was little debated and little discussed by the business class. Ministers were more highly esteemed by women than by men; religious services were more valued by the working class than by the business class"(Brown 169). The Lynds speculated that people were more interested in gaining wealth and had discovered leisure time. This was enhanced by the ability to travel by car, and popular interest in outdoor recreation. Communication and the media were a new influence on society through radio and film. However, the decline in Protestantism was not minimized by the whole society. "To many, being a Christian was synonymous with being civilized or being a good citizen. Decline in Protestantism signaled the decline of the Republic"(Brown 169-170). Thus the combining of religion with civic duty would be one of the major paradigms that the Klan would use to recruit good citizens and faithful Christians, in an attempt to save a society that was spinning out of control.

⁴ Brown, *Setting A Course*, 3.

Economic tension was growing as the cost of living rose dramatically. "Food prices soared 84 percent, clothing 114.5 percent, and furniture 125 percent. By December 1919, the \$5 dollar weekly wage instituted by Henry Ford in 1914 was worth only \$2.40."

⁵ Brown, *Setting A Course*, 11.

⁶ Brown, *Setting A Course*, 132-134.

Women also strove for an education even though such education tended to be interpreted as making them better homemakers, nurses or teachers. "In 1900, 85,000 women were in college; in 1920 the number increased to 283,000; by 1930, 481,000 were enrolled, 43.7 percent of the total college population" (Brown 133). As women like Margaret Mead and Madame Curie made scientific break-throughs, Amelia Earhart took to the skies. Women proved their athletic as well as their academic abilities, and a new brazenness in sexuality occurred. This was exemplified by Margaret Sanger who worked for birth control, and by the "flappers" with their bobbed hair and shorter dresses. Women's new found freedom was criticized by anti-suffragists, fundamentalists, and conservatives. While the critics based their arguments in issues of lost morality, the real fear may have been the loss of control over women.

⁷ *Capital Journal* July 7, 1922

⁸ Blee Kathleen. *Women Of The Klan, Racism and Gender in the 1920s*, (Berkeley University of California Press, 1991) 50.

⁹ The advisor of the LOTIEs was KKK lecturer and kleagle (a Klan recruiter), Reverend R.H. Sawyer (Figure 1). While many Klan leaders took titles such as "judge" or "reverend," Sawyer was actually an ordained pastor of the East Side Christian Church in Portland (Saalfeld, *Forces of Prejudice* 45). In addition, he served as the advisor of the LOTIEs for several months, promoting the group across the state. (*Western American* Jan 18, 1923) However, since men were not in attendance at the weekly LOTIE meetings held at Redmen's Hall in Portland every Friday night, the women were somewhat self governed. As the LOTIE's membership reportedly rose to several hundred members, and

had organized in 35 states across the country, Sawyer addressed the powerful voting block that could be created by these women on behalf the Klan, thus enhancing its political influence (Saalfeld, *Forces of Prejudice* 45). “Thus the speaker left little doubt on the purpose of the Klan in organizing a women’s auxiliary. The newly enfranchised women formed a huge block of votes which would be valuable to the Klan. (Saalfeld, *Forces of Prejudice* 45)” Here, then, is a supposition that the reason Grand Dragon Fred Gifford began the women’s group was to utilize their new found voting power, not solely for money, as Gifford was earlier accused of by the *Capital Journal* and other anti-Klan newspapers. Nevertheless, the combination of money and political clout the women’s groups provided the Klan, definitely enhanced Gifford’s power.

¹⁰ Blee, *Women Of The Klan*, 50.

¹¹ Blee, *Women Of The Klan*, 50-51.

¹² Blee, *Women Of The Klan*, 51.

¹³ *Western American*, March 29, 1923.

¹⁴ Blee, *Women Of The Klan*, 2-4

¹⁵ Lem Dever. *Confessions of an Imperial Klansman*, (Portland: Pamphlet, 1924) 9-17.

¹⁶ The December 28, 1922 edition of the *Western American* was the first copy that I found in the collection held by the University of Oregon, and the last copy was dated September 28, 1923, although the paper was in circulation before and after these dates.

¹⁷ *Western American* January 18, 1923.

¹⁸ Reverend Lawrence J. Saalfeld, *Forces of Prejudice in Oregon 1920-1925*, (University of Portland Press, 1984), 45.

Chapter Two- The Tribal Culture of the Klan

Tribalism

Tribalism occurs when a group perceives itself -- and is perceived by the outside world -- as a distinct order.¹ What separates a tribe from other organizations is a separate code of behavior for those within the tribe than for those outside. Rampant racism and nativism in the early 1900s led to the tribalistic restoration of the Ku Klux Klan. Members perceived the organization as separate and superior to those it considered "outsiders." The very word Klan [clan] refers to an extended family. In addition, it encompasses the organization's facade of family values. And although they intentionally misspelled words to claim them as their own, members adhered to traditional definitions. United through a familial foundation, Klansmen and Klanswomen were thus united in the "Cause" - a dangerous reactionary political ideology to protect white, native born, Protestant, middle class values from all outsiders. Concomitantly, the LOTIEs and the WKKK were women who rallied to the Cause. The Cause became a tribal code within the Klan (like many other secret codes used to exclude outsiders and distinguish themselves from other groups), and the phrase was used in correspondence, media, and among friends.

The importance of recognizing the Klan as tribalistic lies in understanding how it developed its own political culture that it would defend with violence. In this chapter I explore women's participation in protecting their tribal group of the KKK, discussing how separate tribal groups, such as the LOTIEs and the WKKK, formed within the Klan on the basis of gender.

The Right to Defend

The Klan blended into the mainstream of American culture by claiming they could defend the country against foreign influence and corruption. While the organization reveled in its own religious, racial, and political freedom, it (self) righteously oppressed those whom it perceived as outside of the mainstream. Outsiders included non-Protestants (especially Catholics and Jews), people of color, and foreign-born people -- people the Klan considered an unruly minority and a threat to Klan morality. Thus, Klan members had the right to defend themselves, their families, their communities and ultimately their country against these non-members.

The *Western American*, for instance, printed anti-Catholic propoganda from Rail Splitter publications, asserting that Catholicism threatens the sexual virtue of every woman.² The paper ran this excerpt from the book *Priest and Woman*, by Mrs. William Lloyd Clark:

A book for women only. It is a companion to the Devil's Prayer Book for men only. It is a book skillfully compiled by an American woman for wives, mothers and daughters. It should be kept out of the hands of children, but placed in the hands of every adult woman in the nation. The article implies that priests and the confessional are a threat to women's virtues. That priests have been charged as little as six cents for steeling virginity from young women. Babies murdered, ears cut off little girls, women buried alive and more. These are all actual accounts and could be proven. This is a book for real red-blooded American women who are willing to read and do their own thinking.³

Even without the book itself, this graphic advertisement would be enough for most readers to become angry and suspicious of Catholics. Yet these books were sold in bulk and widely distributed. If a woman did not read the book, let alone understand it, her

patriotism was challenged: she may not be a “red-blooded American woman.”

Klanswomen, however, were neither as squeamish nor as delicate as one might have thought. According to Blee, as men’s political activities were increasingly criticized as terrorist intimidation, women’s responsibility was to “legitimate the violence and terrorism of the men’s order.”⁴ As a tribal group, it was the Klan’s moral right and patriotic duty to protect itself, and propaganda from Rail Splitter publications would rally women to the Cause.

Rituals, Symbols and Secrecy

According to historian Kathleen Blee, Klanswomen’s use of rituals paralleled the intent of the KKK to distinguish themselves from outsiders and ensure their members’ loyalty. Secrecy was expected, and some of the ceremonies instilled fears of reprisal into new members should they transgress. Ritual symbols in the WKKK included: the Bible (God), fiery cross (sacrifice and service), flag (U.S. Constitution), sword (law enforcement and national defense), water (purity of life and unity of purpose), mask (secrecy, unselfishness, and banishment of individuality) and robe (purity and equality).⁵ The women’s rituals resembled those of the KKK, in that all of the women were masked and garbed in white robes. WKKK members unmasked at their meetings, however, to promote a sisterly affiliation and friendliness. While ritual robes served to make one woman indistinguishable from the next, according to Blee, sashes were worn by the WKKK in order to distinguish the leaders within the organization. “They were particularly solicitous about the purity of the race, which they symbolized with white robes set off by red, white and blue sashes.”⁶ Klanswomen worked hard to reduce class

differences among them, and the wearing of white robes was one way to do so; they hid the clothing and jewelry that might reveal wealth. LOTIEs sought to maintain “[a]bsolute equality of members educated or non rich or poor. All know each other within the Klavern.”⁷ This aspect may have attracted members who would otherwise be excluded from other more classist, hierarchical women’s groups.

Membership: Alliances and Affiliations

Along with the Klan’s attempts to augment in size and financial stability came new affiliations with interested parties who did not meet the initial KKK criteria for membership. As these groups desired to join the Klan to promote the Cause of white Protestantism, adjustments were made within Klan ideology to accommodate those who were previously excluded. In order to gain more power as an organization, Klan leaders reconsidered their stance on excluding naturalized immigrants and women; as long as they stayed in subordinate ranks, the Klan was willing to admit non-qualifying applicants into the tribe. They reluctantly permitted naturalized immigrants and women to act as an auxiliary group, and these new recruits were willing to accept, initially, their secondary status. Acculturating these outsiders would also help the organization remain homogenous. However, allowing women into their fraternal organization, even as a separate group, actually challenged Klan precepts of women in the home and in their ranks.

Subsequently, the Klan embarked on creating alliances with men who were white Protestants, but who were not native born. This group became the Royal Riders of the Red Robe (RRRR). Like the KKK, the RRRR also had ceremonials, including wearing

Klan regalia. However, the RRRR uniforms were red robes and hoods rather than white, since white was the emblem of purity for the KKK, thus differentiating the RRRR as a subordinate group. The RRRR operated directly under the auspices of the KKK, and often officiated as the honor guard at KKK, LOTIEs and WKKK events. The only contingency to separate the two men's groups was the mischance of the RRRR members to have been born outside the country; hence they willingly acted as a secondary adjunct. Notwithstanding, the RRRR was a highly praised auxiliary for their steadfast work and contribution to the Cause, also known as Klancraft, and remained as such throughout the 1920s.

Klan affiliations for women, and eventually, for white, Protestant, native-born children was a natural move for the Klan considering their emphasis in the 1920's on the American family. Bringing the entire family into the tribal culture as members, rather than non-members merely under the Klan's protection, gave the group as a whole an air of normalcy.⁸ The Klan held huge rallies at fairgrounds, provided entertainment, and marched in parades, celebrating their wholesomeness in American culture.⁹

Increasing popularity nationwide served as a cover for the more insidious work of the Klan.¹⁰ Members of the Klan, both men and women, clearly understood the underlying hatred of outsiders. LOTIEs founder, R.H Sawyer, preached lectures of hatred; his racism was evident when he stated that "the Negro is more dangerous than a maddened wild beast."¹¹ In addition, Sawyer's tribalism emphasized the need to recognize "aliens" (all non-Klan members) as "the most dangerous of all invaders."¹² Protecting their tribal group through any means justified and enhanced the sometimes threatening posture of hooded Klansmen and Klanswomen.

Tribalism and Social Control

From 1923 to 1926, many of the Klan's terrorist acts were against other Protestants as a means of controlling normative behavior for men and women. In Oklahoma, during 1923 alone, 2300 men and women were whipped by the Klan for inappropriate behavior.¹³ In Georgia, women were whipped for not attending church, immorality and abortion.¹⁴ In Portland Oregon, it was reported that two Klansmen branded a woman on the chest and announced "she won't wear any more low necked dresses."¹⁵ In Alabama, a divorced couple was whipped in front of their children; the clergyman who ordered the whipping stated it was to show the children how a mother should act.¹⁶ By terrorizing outsiders, the Klan asserted its own morality as an example of goodness that all must emulate. Methods to maintain the purity of the Klan as a group and to promote their public image also included forcing its members into normative gender roles.

In part, women joined the Klan because they believed that the organization would protect them from the dangers of relationships with abusive men. "The Klan promoted its ability to protect women from sexual harassment on the job and from abuse by husbands."¹⁷ According to Blee, many of the WKKK members were related to Klansmen. Although some women joined on their own, those who were married often encouraged their husbands to join the KKK.¹⁸ Some husbands were intimidated by their wives' membership in the Klan, and many divorced over the issue.¹⁹ Both the KKK and the WKKK issued warnings to men who cheated on their wives, owed child support, or neglected their families.²⁰ Klanswomen themselves would target men who were not faithful to their wives, and Klansmen would actually track the man down if a warning proved insufficient.²¹

In addition, non-members were at risk of harassment. "Women and men who were hostile to the aims of the Klan or who were not native- born white Protestants were the most likely targets."²² However, if a Klansman or Klanswoman was not meeting the standards of the Klan's moral codes and were accused by other Klan members, they too could be punished for inappropriate behavior. Women had the power to name offenders, and to ask for protection within their own relationships, which was not necessarily available to them in non-Klan culture. Again, these proclamations set Klansmen on a higher moral ground than non-affiliates, as chivalrous champions of women and protectors of the tribe.

Since the sanctity of the family and marriage was so important to KKK ideology, it is natural that divorce was another issue the Klan opposed. They were outraged by the ability to become divorced by mail in Oregon, since they believed that marriage was a sacred vow to God. In response, they encouraged that the judge signing the decrees be removed from office.²³ For those parents who did divorce, the Klan expected the father to remain financially responsible for his family. When a bill was introduced in Texas forcing fathers to pay for child support, the Klan supported this legislation, as well as the proposed mother's pension.²⁴

The Klan wanted to see that the husband and/or father, or the government would take care of women (and their children) who became widowed, divorced, or abandoned. They asserted that the state should immediately become the parent of children who were not being raised correctly, yet the standard of good parenting was not specified.²⁵ In this way it is obvious why men and women were attracted to Klan ideology. While the Klan

promoted keeping families safe their true intent was one of bigotry and hatred, the families they promoted included white Protestants only.

Klan Commerce

Bigotry and hatred also entered the business world as the Klan used covert strategies to put non-Klan proprietors out of business. The Klan systematically patronized each other's businesses and boycotted those run by "outsiders." This strategy enhanced the financial well being of Klan families while sending others into poverty. The decimation of non-members' livelihoods potentially forced them to move out of their established community.²⁶ According to Blee, the Klanswomen's participation in spreading rumors and boycotting was a formidable tactic used against Klan enemies.²⁷

By sticking together in Klancraft, Klan businesses were successful while competitors were boycotted. Directories were published in Portland and around the country for "100 percent businessmen." Even the Klan newspapers promoted Klan businesses and advertised employment opportunities; the *Western American* began a space in the paper telling members where to shop. To advertise a Klan business, the member would place a "100 percent" or "TWK" (Trade With Klan) sign in his/her window.²⁸

The LOTIEs showed support for each other by promoting Klanswomen proprietors. In one case, an article in the *Western American* encouraged women to purchase artificial flowers from a widowed woman.²⁹ "If she could sell twenty dozen roses a week, it would mean an independent living for herself and the three little ones."³⁰ By the end of February her business was going well, and she was advertising her business in the

Western American classifieds. As a result of these practices, Klanswomen worked to extinguish non-Klan businesses.

Both Klanswomen and Klansmen were mandated to boycott certain businesses or suffer negative consequences. In the following excerpt, notice the Klan's denial of boycotting as a practice and their contradictory threat of both their male and female members if they do not boycott certain businesses.

The Klansmen do not boycott, as a matter of principle, but they are concentrating patronage with their friends. Their buying power is enormous. Needless to say, the persons and firms whose names appear in the appended list are not regarded as friends... Any Klansman, or Klanswoman, who in any way patronizes an enemy of our righteous cause will have to answer for it when the fact is known, and any person of firm, outside the Klan, who knowingly supports and patronizes a known enemy of our cause, will be placed in the above list, so that our members and friends may know who's who. Some persons and firms who are hostile to us are too insignificant to merit in the above list, but they are well known to all concerned. The list included The Portland Telegram, Armour and Company, Meir and Frank, none of the large department stores, so shop at small stores and none of the Portland Banks.³¹

The article continued by acknowledging that Klansmembers would have to do some business at the banks, but the banks were to be suspected. The list was updated weekly, and eventually the *Portland Telegram* was run out of business by the Klan's hostility toward and incessant harassment of the paper's advertisers.³² "In one month its white, Protestant owners lost five thousand subscribers and its advertisers were threatened with boycott."³³ Additionally, if anyone from another business did business with a known Klan enemy, they too would be added to the list. The KKK not only threatened non-Klan members this way, but Klanswomen and Klansmen as well. "If they shopped with an enemy they would have to answer for it."³⁴ The *Western American* was written mainly

for the KKK and its affiliates, so good neighbor and family values are emphasized; they make the Klan look morally upright and less threatening, and reinforce the tribal Klannish culture.

Promoting the Cause

Women were expected to promote the Klan and businesses such as the *Western American*. The newspaper was reportedly a propaganda tool for the Grand Dragon of Oregon, although the editor, Lem Dever, repeatedly denied this claim. The paper endorsed the LOTIEs and publicized their activities, and in turn, began a sales contest to boost subscriptions. It began January 8, 1923, and ended March 10, 1923, and was open to men, women, and children. "The prize was a Reo Touring car valued at \$1895, for the purpose of selling subscriptions to the paper and to spread the truth of the Klan."³⁵

In addition to promoting the WKKK in the papers, women also organized big publicity events in collaboration with KKK recruiters. A huge ceremony in Forest Park Indiana, for example, supposedly initiated 1000 new members. The highlight of the day was a marriage between a Klansman and a WKKK member, and it was reported that approximately 6,000 Klan and WKKK members paraded that night.³⁶ Ironically, the Lewiston, Idaho Klansmen held what they also claimed to be the first Klan wedding in the United States. On September 11, 1923, a Klansman and a Klanswoman were married in front of a burning cross at a sacred altar, while their attending guests were dressed in full Klan regalia.³⁷ In order to grab power back from Gifford, Luther Powell, an ally of Colonel Simmons, held a "Klan Frolic in the Portland Auditorium with prizes, speakers, parades, Christmas trees, and Klan marriages."³⁸ These publicized grand stand weddings

were a good way to emphasize the importance of marriage and the family.

Acknowledging both the men and women's groups in this public ceremony is also evidence of the companionate relationship growing between the two groups.

Not only did the *Western American* make Klan connections within the state of Oregon, they encouraged national solidarity as well. They advertised both LOTIEs and RRRR events across the nation by sharing events and invitations to come East.

Articles would appear in the *Western American* to cheer newcomers on in Oregon, and to encourage them to join the LOTIEs. It was reported, for instance, that The Dalles Council of the Ladies of the Invisible Empire held a special meeting and program on April 13, 1923 "that would have been a credit to a much older organization."³⁹ These women participated in a common performance by the LOTIEs, which was similar to a drill team exercise.⁴⁰ "The program included an hour of music and singing and then the Rev J. T. Keating gave a short talk on the subject of our National Trinity."⁴¹ These programs were used to promote unity of the three organizations to the common Cause of the Klan. And although local Klan chapters and events definitely took precedence over national political issues, the notion was enforced that their tribal culture existed not just within local chapters, but nationwide.

Sisterhood and Women's Work

Klanswomen worked to unify themselves as women, encouraging friendships and mutual support. In times of need, the LOTIEs supported their members. A LOTIE funeral announcement mourned the passing of a McMinnville woman:

Ladies Mourning Loss Of A Sister. The members of McMinnville Council of the Ladies of the Invisible Empire and their brethren, the Klansmen, are mourning over the loss of one of the first active members of the Order in this city, Mrs. Mary E. B. Washburn, who was the beloved Junior Counselor and had lots of friends. She was an active member for the common good and long will be remembered for her unfailing charity and kindness.⁴²

The connection with the LOTIEs and the KKK is quite clear: the passing of this woman is not only a personal loss, but also a loss from the Klan family. The deceased is remembered for her charitable deeds as a LOTIE who worked for the “common good.”

The LOTIEs were not the only women’s group affiliated with the Portland Klan, however. The Camaretta Club, for example, was a group that focused on holding dances to raise funds for charities. They were described as “a new entertainment group composed of prominent young women.”⁴³ Although their dances were listed separately in the newspaper from the LOTIEs’ dances, they were affiliates of the LOTIEs and complemented each other’s causes.

The LOTIEs were involved in the formation of other auxiliaries as well. They took a keen interest in Gifford’s proposal for implementing an official ‘Junior Klan’ for boys. “The Supreme Grand Council of the Lotie has endorsed enthusiastically the proposal of Fred Gifford, Grand Dragon of the Klan in Oregon, to organize the Junior Knights of the Invisible Empire. It is possible that soon the LOTIEs will establish an auxiliary of its own for the Junior Ladies of the Invisible Empire. The best interests of the Protestant boys and girls thus will be conserved and safe guarded.”⁴⁴ The LOTIEs would continue in this motherly role not only by supporting a boy’s group, but by initiating one for girls as well. Although including girls was not part of Gifford’s proposal, the women worked to include girls before gender boundaries were set to keep them out, which will be

discussed in the following chapter. This implies that the LOTIEs were willing collaborate in promoting the project, but not to the exclusion of females. Again, the Klan moved toward a family organization that would include women and children in order to strengthen their position within the community.

Notes For Chapter Two

¹ Garret Hardin, biologist, defines tribalism as a process of humans marking their territory and forming tribes. Tribes are not just based in ethnicity, but may also be formed for a religious, political, or an occupational group.

² The Rail Splitter was a Klan publisher in Milan Illinois, which produced books, pamphlets, stickers and a monthly newsletter based in Klan bigotry. One book written by Mrs. William Lloyd Clark, was promoted specifically for women to protect themselves and their daughters. The propagandist pamphlet was written as an exposé about the mistreatment of women and girls by Catholic priests.

³ *Western American* March 29, 1923.

⁴ Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 39.

⁵ Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 38.

⁶ Kenneth T. Jackson. *The Ku Klux Klan In The City, 1915-1930*. (Oxford University Press, 1967), 208.

⁷ *Western American* August 31, 1923.

⁸ To further understand the issues of normalcy I wanted to discuss a *Western American* article that featured Maybelle Jette, as the leader of the LOTIEs on April 12, 1923. The LOTIEs Portland Council No.1 established their headquarters at 407 Pittock block under the leadership of Jette as the Mother Counselor (figure 3). Jette lived alone in Portland, although it was unclear if she was a widow or if she was divorced. As of 1923, Jette was Oregon's youngest grandmother at the age of 33. The article goes on to discuss Jette's popularity, "Mrs. Jette is loved by hosts of friends among the fraternity of women of Portland. She is a little lady of distinctive personality, and the youngest looking grandmother in seventeen states."⁸ The use of the term fraternity for women implicated the bond of this women's organization to the fraternal organization to the Klan. The LOTIE members were women working together under the hegemonious brotherhood of the KKK.

Even though Jette worked full time and paid as the Mother Counselor, the *Western American* focused on her maternalism in her public rank and just as importantly in her private life. For example, in June of 1923, Jette's grandson came for a visit to the LOTIEs headquarters in Portland, and again, the newspaper was pleased to cover the visit. Jette claimed that he was born a Klansman, and defender of the "Protestant Cause." "The youngster smiled and Kooed kooed in a manner indicative of his pride of rank. His youthful parents declare the young Klansman is the champion of his age in the realm of Oregon, a real Hundred Percenter. They are ardent advocates of the idea, for an

Order of Babies of the Invisible Empire, and more of them.” Propagandizing for the wholeness of the Klan movement, as a family movement, even to the extreme of including babies into the order, adds to the innocent wholesomeness that the KKK strove for in their attempt to fool the public and possibly their own members. This normalizes the Klan through babies and mothers and grandmothers, as a curtain to the hatefulness of the Cause. Jette, then, was a motherly (and grandmotherly) leader of the women. She held some position within the community as a matron, and yet the photographs of her are representative of a beautiful young woman.

⁹ Local events often addressed community needs and issues. For example, the Albany, Corvallis and Lebanon LOTIEs applied for a charter on April 4, 1923, at a huge Klavern meeting, which was scheduled to discuss the need for a better road from Eugene to Corvallis. Thousand were reported in attendance. Another sensationalized gathering was planned for the celebration of the Klan chartering in the four cities: Corvallis, Albany and Lebanon, and Mill City, which was held on May 15, 1923, at the aviation field. Thousands came to attend the ceremony and show their support, while the parade was reported to be more than one mile long. The KKK, RRRR, and LOTIE were all present.

¹⁰ Women were grafting like the men. Even though Jette was in charge of the Portland LOTIEs, her influence reached into other areas of the state, as exemplified by her commitment to the Children’s Farm Home in Corvallis, Oregon. Jette pledged the LOTIEs to raise \$5,000 of the funds needed for the WCTU home for children. One hundred and forty women of the LOTIEs also pledged to fund raise the money under Mrs. Jette’s direct supervision, and “all report good results.”

The celebrations of families and neighbors at picnics, fairs, dances and entertainment productions were all a curtain to the more heinous work being done by the KKK. While the Klan spread its membership to look like a family affair, it created a sense of normalcy to the tribal group to attract new members and to augment its power. At the same time the Klan never relented from its Cause which politically and religiously justified their actions against outsiders.

¹¹ William Loren Katz. *The Invisible Empire, The Ku Klux Klan Impact on History*. (Open Hand Publishing, 1986) 83.

¹² Katz, *The Invisible Empire*, 83.

¹³ Katz, *The Invisible Empire*, 90.

¹⁴ Katz, *The Invisible Empire*, 90.

¹⁵ Katz, *The Invisible Empire*, 85.

¹⁶ Katz, *The Invisible Empire*, 90.

¹⁷ Kathleen M. Blee “Women In The 1920s’ Ku Klux Klan Movement.” *Feminist Studies*, Spring, 1991, v 17, n1, 68.

¹⁸ Kathleen M. Blee “Women In The 1920s’ Ku Klux Klan Movement.” *Feminist Studies*, Spring, 1991, v 17, n1, 64.

¹⁹ Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 66.

²⁰ Kathleen M. Blee “Women In The 1920s’ Ku Klux Klan Movement.” *Feminist Studies*, Spring, 1991, v 17, n1, 68.

²¹ Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 82.

- ²² Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 84.
- ²³ *Western American* January 25, 1923.
- ²⁴ *Western American* January 25, 1923.
- ²⁵ *Western American* January 18, 1923.
- ²⁶ Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 149-151.
- ²⁷ Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 153.
- ²⁸ Kathleen M. Blee "Women In The 1920s' Ku Klux Klan Movement." *Feminist Studies*, Spring, 1991, v 17, n1, 71.
- ²⁹ "Aid This Good Lady Who Creates Beauty" (*Western American* January 25, 1923). Mrs. B. C. Shroy was a widow with three children who made artificial flowers and plants.
- ³⁰ *Western American*, January 25, 1923.
- ³¹ *Western American* September 28, 1923.
- ³² Kenneth T. Jackson. *The Ku Klux Klan In The City*, 210.
- ³³ Jackson. *The Ku Klux Klan In The City*, 210.
- ³⁴ Being caught meant being suspended, expelled, and possibly publicly ostracized as in the case of a Mrs. McFay. Although I do not know what her crime was, the following is an example of public ostracism.

Mrs. McFay not in. In behalf of mutual interests vitally affected, The *Western American* notifies all concerned that Mrs. Ida Viola Fay, of Portland and Forest Grove, has no connection whatever with the Women of the Ku Klux Klan. She was recently suspended from membership in the Ladies of the Invisible Empire (*Western American* June 21, 1923).

This public denouncement was not only an embarrassment, but also was a way for other Klansmen and Klanswomen to hound her out of town. As mentioned in Chapter 4, Lem Dever denounced the Klan for their punishment of wayward members and stated that it would be worse than tar and feathering. McFay may not have been able to keep a job or a place to live. Again, an indication that leadership was autocratic in order to hold power over their own members.

³⁵ *Western American* January 8, 1923. In an article entitled "Following the Fiery Cross in the East," there are several excerpts addressing activities of the LOTIE and the RRRR. The article addressed what other Klans were doing on the East coast, and in sharing that information, they would possibly bring a national connection to one's own local group. For example, "The Betsy Ross Council No. 1 Paterson, N.J. Ladies of the Invisible Empire entertained the Royal Riders at their last meeting and provided a nice little supper which was enjoyed by the happy men in Red" (*Western American* February 1, 1923). The emphasis here of familial solidarity between the two adjunct KKK organizations accentuated how reciprocal the LOTIE were with the RRRR.

The following excerpts from the *Western American*, were written to inform members in Oregon about the LOTIE activities on the East Coast. Not only does this make a national connection for the LOTIE, but also details some of the locations and activities of other LOTIE councils. "United We Stand Divided We Fall, is the motto here in the East and all Klansman, Riders, and Ladies desire the Westerners to know that they are with you in all things" (*Western American* February 1, 1923). "New councils of the L.O.T.I.E. is to be opened shortly in New Jersey" (*Western American* February 1, 1923). "The

Ladies of the Invisible Empire in the East here are hoping that some of their Imperial Officers will some day come this way and watch them put on their works. The ladies sure are letter perfect in their ritualistic work" (*Western American* February 1, 1923). "An entertainment will be given by the Paterson Council L.O.T.I.E. at their next meeting." "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, and LOTIE a dull girl, so the ladies are going to relax for once" (*Western American* February 1, 1923). These excerpts build national solidarity for the LOTIE, as well as inviting Klanswomen to visit other LOTIE chapters when traveling.

³⁶ *Western American*, January 8, 1923

³⁷ *Western American*, September, 1923.

³⁸ Jackson. *The Ku Klux Klan In The City*, 211.

³⁹ *Western American* April 19, 1923.

⁴⁰ "Forty ladies in the regulation robe and regalia used by that Order appeared on the program. The presiding officer was attended by a representative of the KKK and the RRRR all in full uniforms." *Western American* April 19, 1923.

⁴¹ "The women did a drill team exercise to conclude the meeting" *Western American* April 19, 1923.

⁴² *Western American*, March 29, 1923.

⁴³ *Western American*, January 25, 1923. The Crazy Kat Klub and the King Tut Klub also seemed to be under the auspices of the LOTIEs in Portland. It was not specified if these two groups were solely for the purpose of entertainment and fund raising, or if they were active in other LOTIEs activities as well. Most likely they were committees that just branched from the LOTIEs for the sole purpose of providing entertainment at Klan events.

⁴⁴ *Western American*, April 19, 1923.

Chapter Three-Stretching Gender Boundaries

Yes, and there were women folks
 Who lined up with them, too,
 For they felt there was some work
 That they would need to do;
 Since they have the right to vote,
 They'd help put it through
 And we'd go marching to victory.

Bright Fiery Cross, Klan Hymn from the 1920s

Racism and True Womanhood

The Ku Klux Klan first arose as an organization after the civil war in the 1860s in response to the emancipation of slaves in the South and the potential improvement of the lives of African American people in the U.S. In particular the KKK sought to protect white women from the perceived dangers of newly freed African American men. White men lost their access to African American women and feared retribution for sexually abusing them. To gain control over African Americans and white women, Klansmen terrorized African American males, by accusing them of miscegenation and the raping of white women. At the same time white middle class women were confined to the “true cult of womanhood,”¹ and expected to be good wives and good mothers. As historian Ronald Takaki writes: “The subordination of blacks in the ideology of the black “child/savage” and the confinement of white women in the cult of “True womanhood” were interdependent and how both of them interacted dynamically in a process of mutual reinforcement.”² More than ever before white men were making America a “white man’s

country.”³ Takaki stresses the importance of the interrelation of sexual and racial domination by white men and the threat to white male masculinity by women (inherently feminine), as well as by men of color (inherently inferior). Both women generally and men of color needed to be kept in check since they were perceived as possible threats to both white male masculinity and white male hegemony:

Together, racial and sexual imagery enabled them to delineate their own white male identity -- to affirm, through the degradation of blacks, the virtues of self control and industry, and to protect, through the elevation of white women, the culture and beauty which white men feared were in danger in a society where blacks were present and where science and the rapid making of money could “defile white men themselves.”⁴

It was felt that if white women were not accessible to African American men, then the South would survive as the heart of the white race. For white men to maintain their patriarchal hold on society, they needed to seek out like-minded men to protect their interests. Both the mid-nineteenth century and early twentieth century Klan ideology embraced this paradigm of maintaining white male hegemony in the country.

Chivalry allowed Klansmen to protect women as their own property. Klansmen understood this entitlement and assured prospective Klanswomen the security of this relationship as an honorable commitment akin to marriage. The issue of protecting white women, based on sexual access as a sign of ownership, insidiously resurfaced through ongoing lynchings throughout the South. This was supported by women involved in the Klan. For example in an article entitled “Salute Robin Hood! Immortal Crusader, Spirit of Chivalry Abroad in our Land Today, Forever,”⁵ the author, Mrs. G.E.L., compared the KKK to Robin Hood as a protector of widows and children: “He stands guardian of the purity of womanhood, a true knight in a no less romantic age - and guardian of our sacred

liberties, so dearly won by our Anglo-Saxon fathers- these English yeomen.”⁶ Mrs. G.E.L. not only reinforced the Klan’s past chivalry, she also tied in the goal to protect white women and children. These messages of men’s duty to protect women and children continually appeared in the *Western American* through a variety of formats.

Femininity, then, as defined by Klansmen, was based on being a loyal wife and mother; unmarried women were expected to be chaste, and white women were forbidden to marry outside of their race. Women’s entrance into the Klan was a type of bargain for both men and women. Klanswomen were to be adjuncts of the Klan, and in return they would be given legal and social rights as women. Women’s influence would help clean up government, wipe out vice including liquor and prostitution, and find salvation through Protestantism. Klan leaders were willing to take a chance by letting women into their ranks based on the belief that women would be accommodating and invisible -- hence powerless -- and at the same time provide a well of financial potential for Klan growth.

Women Working with Klansmen

The Supreme Grand Council of the LOTIEs was formed by Oregon KKK leaders. These included Grand Dragon Fred Gifford, Luther Powell, R.H. Sawyer, and Rush Davis. They filed articles of incorporation in Salem for the Ladies of the Invisible Empire, an affiliated group of the Oregon KKK on July 7, 1922.⁷ Although the KKK leaders claimed the women’s group was not an auxiliary to the Klan, the LOTIEs was organized, incorporated and its events held under the auspices of the KKK. The KKK hid any direct correlation with women’s groups from the public, and quite possibly, from

many of their own members in order to maintain their masculine façade. Again, it was the prospect of financial gain and power for KKK leaders that soon surpassed fears of a backlash from its members and allowed the door of opportunity to be officially opened for the women leaders of the LOTIEs.

While the LOTIEs spread across the country it gained national recognition as an organization, although each group varied in size and purpose. For example, the Shreveport Louisiana Chapter saw themselves as helpmates to the Klansmen.⁸ Since they wrote their own charters, not all LOTIE chapters had the same rituals or agendas. The LOTIEs in Oregon seemed to have a very different agenda from other LOTIE groups as they grew in size thus gaining power. The home base of the Portland LOTIEs chapter enrolled more than 1,000 members in one month.⁹ Oregon women were attracted to the LOTIEs for political and personal reasons, but not necessarily for the benefit of men.

According to Oregon's *Capital Journal*, the goals of the LOTIEs were "to develop the physical and mental capacity of its members and others; to promote better acquaintance and closer association between its members; to promote and preserve the American free public school system; to preserve the purity and supremacy of the white race; and to unite in one inseparable bond the Protestant women of the world."¹⁰ While at first glimpse these endeavors appear benign in the promotion of Christian sisterhood, white supremacy and militant Protestantism were primary LOTIE goals.

The Oregon LOTIEs set up their headquarters at 326 Pittock Block in Portland, Oregon -- the same street as the KKK. In order to promulgate their goals as a group, the LOTIEs published a pamphlet soon after it organized. Summarized, its goals were "to bring together the patriotic Protestant women of America for the purpose of saving the

ideals and institutions established by our Anglo Saxon fathers".¹¹ It also accredited the Protestant Bible as the only sacred document for Christians and opposed miscegenation on the premise that the white race must remain pure. The organization preached that all white Protestant women should embrace the same ideals.¹²

In their work for the Cause, the KKK and the LOTIEs were more often than not covert, and thus hidden from public scrutiny. In McMinnville it was reported that there was a stronghold of both Klansmen and LOTIEs established there on March 28, 1923.¹³ According to J. Hoogstraat, a kleagle, a main issue faced by both KKK and LOTIEs was that "Roman Catholic teachers were wearing their 'garbs' to teach in the classroom even though public opinion is opposed to this practice."¹⁴ The actual actions being used by the LOTIEs and the KKK against this offense is not clear, although reportedly many Catholic teachers lost their positions teaching around the state, therefore confirming that the Oregon LOTIEs were active in more than charity.¹⁵

Mixed Events and Public Image

To keep the critics at bay about gender divisions, the Klan reflected mainstream society's division of labor in public rallies and initiations. In Klan events where women and men attended, the sexual division of labor was straightforward: Klanswomen cooked and served Klansmen food and provided entertainment, while the men directed traffic and guarded the rally site.¹⁶ "One of the most prominent national WKKK lecturers found herself pressed into service as 'sort of a secretary' for a visiting male Klan speaker in northern Indiana."¹⁷ By projecting the image of male hegemony to the public in order to maintain a masculine image, it would seem that women willingly acted as secondary

members. Klanswomen went along with this, thus stretching rather than breaking the parameters of acceptable feminine behavior during this period.

Another instance of this “gender bending” involves the way many of the LOTIEs (and later, the WKKK) belonged to the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). In her book Beyond the Pale, White Women Racism and History historian Vron Ware describes the WCTU as a conservative organization. Ware also points out, however, that the WCTU had radical policies that involved **aspects** (my emphasis) of socialist and feminist ideology. Women were allowed to join associations like the WCTU as long as they maintained their homes. The women themselves maintained these domestic roles to avoid censorship from concerned men. “For thousands of women, campaigning against slavery was entirely compatible with demanding equal rights for women outside of the home, as long as they accepted that women were basically responsible for the moral and spiritual welfare of the family.”¹⁸ This concept of freedom to work in the political arena (the “gender bending”) was earned by women agreeing not to forsake the sanctity of the home as wives and as mothers. Yet men feared that if women were given too much leeway, these traditional values would be threatened. This was especially true for Klansmen who were anxious about women being too involved politically in the Ku Klux Klan. Women were the hearts of the family, so their roles must remain connected as mothers and wives. This is the context that framed women’s involvement in Klan activities.

The Republican Mother

The trepidation of giving women a voice in politics is the fear that they will overstep their gender boundaries. Women's boundaries have traditionally constrained them to their homes to fulfill their roles as wives and as mothers. The 1790s the concept of Republican Mother was, for women, both liberating in that they were allowed to be educated, and conservative in that they were expected to stay home¹⁹.

The male defined concept of women as mothers and educators of their children, influencing the destiny of their nation, neatly combined an acceptance of gender defined roles for women with recognition of their actual and political impact on society. It was done in patriarchal terms: women's impact was to be indirect, it was to represent influence, not actual power, and it was to be exerted through others for others.²⁰

This same philosophy of the Republican Mother is evident in the 1920s Klan. Under Klan guidance, women were to influence future generations from their homes, but they were not expected to obtain any real power. According to historian Gerda Lerner, when the societal climate is one of transition, male hegemony must address the question of women's place. "As long as virtuous women had private opportunity to influence men and to mold our minds they ought not regret their exclusion from the perplexity and tumult of a political life."²¹ Again, the patriarchal argument contends that women can influence men because of their higher moral natures, and men can protect women from the political quagmire. Paradoxically, men wanted women to accept their domestic sphere as a source of strength, yet men themselves devalued the home as secondary to their own wage earning opportunity.

Republican Mother ideology was revived in the 20th century by “women who saw a commitment to honest politics as an extension as mothers.”²² Women’s activism was defined by feminine gender roles, which also confined them to the home. Since men rejected the true value of the private sphere, homemakers were the unpaid labor force that they are still today. The exchange was to make women dependent on men for their survival, thus giving men control over their lives. As women were confined to the private sphere in the cult of domesticity, many of the reform movements were a response from women to protect their domain from immoral or irresponsible men. Women were defined as nurturing, selfless, and cooperative, while men were competitive, materialistic and self-seeking.²³ According to historian Barbara Epstein, temperance was an action against men whose drinking was depriving the home of its material necessities.²⁴ Simultaneously, the WCTU campaigned for women’s education in order to lessen their dependence on men and gain autonomy in the public sphere.

The Klan addressed this tension between women’s participation in the public sphere of the Klan organization and their responsibilities within the private sphere of their homes. Threads of the ideological “Republican Mother” influenced those who alleged that women maintained an indirect influence in government by influencing the men in their homes. Women were encouraged, then, to be dutiful women in the private sphere of the home and to be honorable women in the public sphere. Klan propaganda not only attempted to define the combination of the progressive roles and the traditional homemaker roles of women, but also maintained patriarchal hegemony over women. Further, it related traditional feminine roles to citizenship. An article entitled “Woman’s Place is in the Home, Where She Should Rule As Queen,” appeared in the December

1922 issue of the *Western American*. Here is the decree of how a woman should act in her own home and what her goals should be (regardless of her class) in order to become a good citizen:

The charm of the home depends upon the woman, because the Woman is the Home. It matters not so much about the size of the roof nor the elegance nor plainness of the furnishings beneath, as about the woman who dwells therein. If, each day, she lives life to the best of her ability, then each night sees her a better housekeeper, a better seamstress, a better cook, a better wife, a better mother, a better woman - which means a better citizen.²⁵

The author continues to chastise female readers about any dissension concerning women's work, since, by working harder, all women can improve their position in life: "Most certainly the progressive woman is not idle, and she is being richly rewarded. Behold her knowledge, poise and individuality! Are not these things worth attaining? They are!"²⁶ A woman could become the modern superwoman by working double duty within the home and outside the home as well. So not only through hard work could women improve themselves, but they would be happy with a newfound social status. Marriage was emphasized as the beginning of life and the author warned women not to stray from their marriages. To be a progressive woman was to reject apathy about her station in life, not just for her own well being, but also for that of her family whom she influences. Consequently, women should develop a political awareness and join certain women's clubs to enhance her life.

Civic questions, Religion and National and Foreign affairs that offer interest, diversion and learning, and are of paramount importance. The modern clubwoman is on easy terms with these issues, and usually she is an interesting woman, capable of casting an intelligent vote, besides

raising a worthy family. In fact, the women's clubs have done much to draw out the home recluse, and make a real, live and useful citizen of her.²⁷

Klan propaganda addressed the value and importance of motherhood, while simultaneously accusing women of becoming recluses in their homes. Additionally, Klansmen recognized women's influence and claimed that "women had hidden power equal to men's, even if their formal rights had been limited."²⁸ However, the usefulness of women as good citizens could not be maintained solely from the home. In order for women to become worldly, the propaganda cajoled them into being involved with women's clubs. WKKK Kleagles encouraged women to work eight hour days as mothers, and, more importantly, to participate in the Klan.

Accordingly, the Klan newspapers responded to women's participation as progressive and natural. Kleagles emphasized the necessity for a woman to join the Klan for herself, her family, and her country. The Klan wanted the women to be involved politically and to feel empowered by the vote. In an article in the *Western American*, the message to men who were concerned about an active public wife was that she would enhance the marriage because her new found worldliness would enrich the family. More importantly, men who doubted the Klan's intention of giving women too much power were appeased because the recruiting emphasis maintained that home and marriage were the primary responsibility of the women. Therefore, to be a useful citizen the women should join a women's club, learn about the issues, and leave the private sphere of their own homes. Yet, this leaving of the private sphere into public politics was a safe transition because the recluse was joining other women to gain their political awareness. Since women were under patriarchal rule, even the most reluctant husband should allow his wife to join the

LOTIEs. The article concluded by encouraging women to join a patriotic Protestant organization for women.²⁹ Although the author does not directly name the LOTIEs in this particular article, the specification of Protestant women's patriotic society is clearly connecting the LOTIEs.³⁰ Klanswomen recognized that it was time to grab this recognition and push for additional rights.³¹

Resistance

Women leaders of the Klan seemed to have a different interpretation of their objectives than did their male counterparts. Not only would women learn the political nature of the public sphere, but they could also gain autonomy, education, financial power, and collectively protect themselves. Using the idea that women are of a more moral nature, they sought to protect their children's education and to stamp out vice, which threatened the family. Klanswomen also developed social work and charities, which usually benefited Klan families even though they boasted working for all people. As previously mentioned, Klanswomen also embraced nativism, racism and Protestantism, which were central in KKK ideology. They duplicated the militaristic hierarchical structure of the KKK, and practiced similar rituals including robes, masks, and cross burnings.³² Women were quite willing to oppress others in order to gain more power and freedom from the domestic sphere. Yet with this freedom came mandatory obedience and "Klannish" behavior. Those women who did not comply were punished for disobedience with sanctions ranging from reprimands to harassment.

Contrary to the beliefs of male Klan members, women did not necessarily see themselves in need of men's protection. The LOTIEs established independent officers

(Klagoros and Klexters) who acted as inner and outer guards to protect them at their meetings.³³ Their job was to keep unwanted visitors out, and to protect the charter and the Mother Counselor. This willingness physically to defend themselves or other members actually came into play when a Klan leader, Rush Davis, stormed into a Portland LOTIEs meeting and was physically attacked (see Chapter 4). Not all members condoned violence, yet women still served as security officers in an official capacity. The very creation of these positions implied that the women must have felt justified in not relying upon male Klan members for protection.

On November 30, 1922, five months after incorporation, The LOTIEs began a campaign to prove themselves a worthy part of the Klan movement by projecting strength in their femininity. A drawing entitled "Our Modern Joan of Arc" appeared in the *Western American*, and was subsequently reprinted (in a reduced form) in other issues (Figure 2). The Joan of Arc figure, although clearly portrayed as a modern woman, also symbolized strong women who were ready to do battle. By wielding swords and joining together in great numbers, the drawing sent a clear message to Catholics and to Klansmen alike. The symbolism of Joan of Arc as a modern crusader of her time, a woman who was considered a fearless soldier and a Christian, is a brazen statement of women as a formidable force who are acting in unison. Similarly it reinforced the idea that a LOTIE member was a warrior, undaunted in battling against any perceived enemy.³⁴ It also suggests that the "Modern Joan of Arc" -- a LOTIE -- can still defy the religious enemy, the Catholics, and lead men, women and their children to defend Protestantism. The selection of Joan of Arc as a symbol for the LOTIEs spoke directly to the empowerment of the Oregon chapter whose members hardly presented themselves as simple helpmates.

These Modern Joan of Arc women were clearly feeling strong and capable of leading their own battle.



Figure 2 Our Modern Joan of Arc

Horizontal Hostility

As women gained power through their association with the LOTIEs, horizontal hostility arose toward the LOTIEs from other women who also wanted to support Klansmen. Jealousy of the LOTIEs arose in women who were excluded or perhaps did

not want to be affiliated with that particular group of women. In Portland, a rival group to the LOTIEs called themselves the Americanization of Public Schools Committee. It was reported that the committee was composed of women whose husbands or brothers were Klansmen. The committee did not collect fees or dues for the group and membership was by invitation only. The criteria for selection were women whom the Committee felt were loyal to the Cause of the KKK:³⁵ “This 100% organization was formed to work with other 100% Protestant groups working for American ideals. The women are 100%. They are not an organization, and have no constitution, no by laws, no ritual.”³⁶

The article quoted above leads the reader to believe that perhaps the LOTIEs approved this new group. It is not clear why rivalry existed between the two women’s groups, but the *Western American* minimized the conflict in their usual manner. Interestingly, there seemed to have been some spying on the Committee and subsequent reporting back to LOTIE leaders: “The members maintain that harmony must prevail, but are quick to detect internal opponents.”³⁷ Furthermore, the reaction of the LOTIEs was definitely hostile to the committee, and the *Western American* was quick to intervene by encouraging both groups to get along with each other. Ironically, the conflict made it clear that not all supporters of the KKK were equally supportive of the LOTIEs. “Contrary to a mistaken idea, the Committee is in no wise (sic) antagonistic to the Ladies of the Invisible Empire, but rather is eager and willing to further the interests of that Order, *regardless of any personal animosity that may exist* (emphasis added).”³⁸ The article continues that the Committee was ready to face any challenges or accusations by any other organizations or orders. The LOTIEs, then, were in a governing position to challenge other women’s groups, as imitative or in competition with them. This may

indicate that the LOTIEs believed that they were the only rightful affiliate to the KKK. The LOTIEs also suspected that someone on the Committee was spilling LOTIE rituals and secrets to the Committee members. Either way, the Committee felt quite defensive about the repercussions of their work conflicting with those of the LOTIEs.

It is also possible that a separate women's group was created because the LOTIEs were considered too militant for some of the Committee members. The Committee insisted that they were sympathetic to the "causes sponsored by the militant Protestant orders," but their intentions were more clearly to work against "alien labor and alien property holders."³⁹ The Committee "is opposing the Tenure bill and doing effective work among the city schools, endeavoring to bring back the 15-minute period of patriotic exercises started during the war."⁴⁰ Members visited the local Portland schools in order to make reports about the exclusion of patriotic exercises from the curriculum. Klanswomen took political issues seriously, especially those that promoted patriotism and influenced school curricula. Being referred to as militant by other women is further evidence of the possibility that the LOTIEs were involved in more than just charity work.⁴¹

In conclusion, women had a moral responsibility in the culture of the 1920s to protect the family home. Many women worked to defend the private sphere from masculine depravity such as promiscuity, drinking, and lack of support for the family. To remedy the immoralities of men, white middle class women volunteered for such different political associations as suffrage and the temperance movements. For whatever motivation these political affiliations allowed, many white middle class women access to the public sphere and freedom from the isolating constraints of the private sphere of the

home. Some associations such as the Ladies of the Invisible Empire (LOTIEs) and the subsequent Women of the Klan (WKKK) created a community for women, with the focus of bettering white Protestant women's lives, their families, and ultimately the country.

The LOTIEs evolved into an organization that supported the Klan cause in many ways. Not only did they organize to raise funds, but also they developed their own organizational goals that complemented the Cause. They formed groups on a local and national level, and continued to be promoted with men as new klaverns were established. These Klanswomen were not simply men's help mate; on the contrary, they forged ahead using their own methods to achieve the goals of the KKK. Even though their militancy was definitely obscure and often times presented as simply patriotic, the LOTIEs intimidated factions like the Americanization of Public Schools Committee without apology. However, the LOTIEs fell victim to a different power struggle over leadership as Klansmen assumed hegemony in the Klan. The argument that the LOTIEs were not an official group of the Klan would see their eventual demise even at the same time that they were replaced by the new WKKK. However, as will be addressed in the next chapter, these changes did not occur without a fight.

Notes For Chapter Three

¹ Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relationships between Women in Nineteenth-Century America," *Signs* 1, no 1 (Autumn 1975) 1-29.

² Ronald Takaki, *Iron Cages, Race and Culture in Nineteenth-Century America*. (Alfred A Knopf, 1979), 136.

³ Takaki, *Iron Cages*, 136.

⁴ Takaki, *Iron Cages*, 142

⁵ *Western American* March 1, 1923.

⁶ *Western American* March 1, 1923.

⁷ *Oregon Statesman* July 8, 1923. The LOTIEs began with beginning assets recorded at \$1,000. The *Oregon Statesman* headlined the incorporation as "Ku Klux Women are Organized," directly affiliating the LOTIEs with the KKK even though this was later denied by these same Klan leaders who established the LOTIEs.

⁸ Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 26.

⁹ Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 25.

¹⁰ *Capital Journal* July 7, 1922

¹¹ Saalfeld, Lawrence J. *Rev. Forces of Prejudice in Oregon 1920-1925*. (Archdiocesan Historical Commission, 1984), 45.

¹² The following is the advertisement that was run in the *Western American* repeatedly in order to recruit women into the LOTIEs. The advertisement was propaganda that emphasized tribalism, racism, nativism, and Protestantism all in the name of patriotism, the sanctity of the home and of the United States government.

Women of America, Wake Up!

We want you to realize your opportunity to have a place and part in a great national and world-wide movement, which is non-political, non-sectarian, secret, unselfish, consecrated and determined to act promptly in an earnest cooperation with millions of the best men and women in America and other countries, For:

The preservation of the sacred ideals and institutions represented by the Constitution and the Magna Charta, the immortal documents of an unconquered race. For:

The protection of our homes, our pure womanhood and innocent childhood, the exaltation of the Protestant Bible, the defense of the public school, free press, free speech, separation of Church and State, the insistent demand that America must be and shall be a white man's country. For:

The creation of a public opinion which will fix an impassable barrier to the intermarriage of the white race with the black, yellow, brown and other colored races of the world. For:

The purification of civil, political and ecclesiastical conditions too long dominated by alien minorities under the direction of their old-world masters. For:

A greater, grander America, free from greed and graft, where an equality of opportunity shall be the secure right of every loyal citizen, irrespective of race, religion or color.

Do you care to have a part in a clean, honorable campaign, in which every justifiable means will be employed to put men of principle at the head of every department of our Government, and in charge of every institution to the end that the people may be unselfishly served?

Call or address THE LADIES OF THE INVISIBLE EMPIRE, 326

Pittock Block, Portland, Oregon. (*Western American* April 5, 1923)

¹³ “Both orders are accomplishing great things for the general good of the community” (*Western American* March 29, 1923). It would then depend on whose interpretation of what ‘accomplishment’ may mean, as far as charity, politics, or boycotts. Also the general good of the community would most likely be for the Klan community first, and then supposedly included those that behaved within that community. Social control and constraints on other people’s behavior allowed for a lot of interpretation and resulted in intimidation of outsiders, as a result of tribalism.

¹⁴ *Western American* February 22, 1923.

¹⁵ Another piece of evidence that the LOTIE attended cross burnings is in the following excerpt from the East coast. “A large fiery cross was the cause of much comment by the citizens of Red Bank, New Jersey on January 29. It was seen to blaze up at 9 p.m. on the top of a large hill on the outskirts of town. As there are many Klansmen, Riders and Ladies in Red Bank, the general public is undecided who is to “blame” for the affair” (*Western American*, March 3, 1923). Admittedly it may have been all three groups, or just one of the factions. However, there was no denial or rebuttal to the possibility of the women being involved with a cross burning, nor to the possibility that they had their own.

¹⁶ Blee, *Women Of The Klan*, 59.

¹⁷ Blee, *Women Of The Klan*, 59.

¹⁸ Vron Ware. *Beyond the Pale, White Women, Racism and History*. (Verso, 1992), 215.

¹⁹ Gerda Lerner. *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness*. (Oxford University Press, 1993), 213.

²⁰ Lerner. *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness*, 213.

²¹ Kerber, Linda, “The Republican Mother”, *Women’s America, Refocusing the Past*. Oxford University Press, 1995, 93.

²² Kerber, Linda, “The Republican Mother”, 94.

²³ Faye D Ginsburg. *Contested Lives, The Abortion Debate in an American Community*. (University Of California Press, 1989) 206-207.

²⁴ *Western American* December 28, 1922

²⁵ *Western American* December 28, 1922.

²⁶ *Western American* December 28, 1922.

²⁷ *Western American* December 28, 1922.

²⁸ Blee, Kathleen M. *Women of the Klan: Racism and Gender in the 1920s*. (University of California Press, 1991), 50.

²⁹ *Western American* December 28, 1922.

³⁰ “We all believe in organization. The Protestant women’s patriotic societies, though still in their infancy, already are offering vast opportunities to women who long for self-improvement, local improvement, and national improvement. Let us learn the meanings of the words, Charity, Fraternity, Unity, and Strength.” (*Western American* December 28, 1922).

³¹ Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 36-41.

³² According to Kathleen Blee the women organized themselves into realm with local charters and officers. The Executive Commander held a 4 year term of office. The Klaliff was a vice-president, Klokard a lecturer, Klud a chaplain, Kligrapp a secretary who was bonded for 25,000 dollars, Klabee a treasurer bonded for 50,000 dollars, Kladd, a conductor, Klagoro an inner guard, Klexter and outer guard, Night Hawk in charge of candidates, Kourier a messenger, and Klokan an investigator (Blee 35).

³³ Interestingly, historian Kathleen Blee and the *Western American's* report about the LOTIEs, listed the same titles for the WKKK officers, hence as the WKKK absorbed the LOTIEs not much was changed.

³⁴ It is ironic, however, that Joan of Arc was unmarried, childless, a mystic, and burned at the stake by the Catholics for being a heretic and a leader of men. This may be why the artist attempts to soften the woman warrior image by introducing a child into the scene.

³⁵ *Western American*, February 22, 1923

³⁶ Meetings were held weekly in different locations and were presided over by a chairman and a secretary. The meeting opened with a prayer, a verse of America and the pledge of allegiance. "The committee is doing very effective relief work. It has cared for many unfortunates on its own initiative" *Western American* February 22, 1923.

³⁷ *Western American* February 22, 1923.

³⁸ *Western American* February 22, 1923.

³⁹ *Western American* February 22, 1923.

⁴⁰ *Western American* February 22, 1923.

⁴¹ "The members maintain that harmony must prevail, but are quick to detect internal opponents and do not hesitate to stand for the principle of the great Cause, regardless of personalities" (*Western American* February 22, 1923). Finally the *Western American* was again encouraging the conflict that had arisen as rivalry be settled as quickly and amiably as possible. They encouraged the women to remember both the Cause and the work that must be done. "More work and less discord is needed" (*Western American* February 22, 1923).

Chapter Four- Klanswomen Challenge Male Authority

Male Hegemony

When discussing the resistance of Klan male hegemony by the LOTIEs it is important to look closely at the KKK's insistence for a merging of the Portland LOTIEs into the national WKKK. Plans for this merger were carried out by Rush Davis, Grand Counselor of the LOTIEs in Washington State, along with Fred Gifford, Grand Dragon of Oregon. Whether it was the intention of the Klan or not, the LOTIEs gained enough power and self-governance to dispute male hegemony on this issue. The merger advocated the absorption of all women's factions acting as auxiliaries to the KKK into a completely new national organization called the WKKK. By creating the newer order, the KKK national leaders would have hegemony over the already loyal women's groups, and be entitled to a huge portion of money collected from initiation fees and monthly dues.¹ The Oregon LOTIE's leaders were not happy with the talk of losing their organization through assimilation into the national group without their consent. Ultimately, in 1923, the LOTIEs along with several other women's groups were incorporated into the WKKK. Nevertheless, this did not occur without a fight on the part of the LOTIEs to maintain their organization.

Male Entitlement to the LOTIEs

In November 1922, Reverend Sawyer, one of the LOTIEs incorporators, spoke to a sold out KKK audience in the Portland Auditorium. He took the opportunity to promote the 'ladies' by emphasizing the success of the women's organization in Oregon and

confirming that the operation of the LOTIEs was running smoothly. In addition, his speech implied that all was well within the KKK. Several newspapers, however, hinted at the discord between Sawyer and the other Supreme Council members of the Klan. And although the real reasons for the disagreements never surfaced, tensions soon became evident to the public. Sawyer maintained his Klan membership, but officially resigned from his KKK lecturer position less than one month after the incorporation of the LOTIEs.

According to the *Portland Evening Telegram*, an adversary of the KKK, Sawyer stated in the interview on November 25, 1922, that as of August 1, 1922, he was no longer a Grand Lecturer of the Northwest for the Ku Klux Klan. The tension between Sawyer and the other Klan officers is evident in the following statement: "The principles of the Klan are splendid and superb... The difficulty comes when human agencies are left to carry them out."² It could be that Sawyer, as the initiator of the LOTIEs, was not willing to be a part of the plan to sell the LOTIEs for the merger into the WKKK, but was squeezed out so that Davis, his successor, could complete the task. From the onset of the LOTIEs as a group, Sawyer was withdrawing from his KKK position. To further disavow his own KKK affiliation, and the ties of the LOTIEs to the Klan, "Sawyer also denied that the organization was a Klan auxiliary. He did, however, admit that the LOTIEs would cooperate with the Ku Klux Klan."³ It is also possible that Sawyer wanted to protect the LOTIEs by separating it from the Klan publicly, due to his own dissatisfaction with the Klan leadership, both on a local and national level.⁴

The LOTIEs' resistance and defiance of the new director, Rush Davis, exemplify their autonomy. Davis and the other male Council members, however, did not honor this

autonomy. Dever, author of the pamphlet "The Confessions of an Imperial Klansman," and previous editor of the *Western American*, claimed that the Portland LOTIEs had 2,000 members; Davis, however, claimed to own the chartered membership and intended to sell the organization for a high price without the knowledge of the LOTIEs.⁵ This conflict of male or female governance of the organization soon resulted in violence.

Davis succeeded Sawyer as official promoter of the Oregon LOTIEs, and self-proclaimed his new position as "Archbishop" of the Portland LOTIEs Council.⁶ As of March 1, 1923, Davis was listed as the Supreme Grand Counselor of the LOTIEs, and his wife, Mrs. Lucien Trigg Davis, was mentioned as a member of the "supreme family."⁷ Mrs. Davis had already established herself as a LOTIEs Kleagle and had a speaking tour planned for recruiting.⁸ Rush Davis used his new leadership role over the LOTIEs to create his wife's official position as well. Davis sought a smooth transition into his role as leader of the LOTIEs in order that no public announcement would be made about the plans to merge with the WKKK. It looked as though business would proceed as usual, allowing the women to continue governing themselves, as they had with Sawyer. Meanwhile, Davis was planning to bring the LOTIEs to an end with the support of Gifford, and national KKK leader, Hiram Evans.

In 1923, trouble was brewing about the LOTIEs operating as an organization endorsed by the Klan.⁹ National leaders Colonel Simmons and Hiram Evans were competing to be the first to create a new women's organization and gain power and control as its leaders. Both men ignored the existence of the already established nationwide LOTIEs. In addition, the *Western American* had dropped the LOTIEs as an

associate listing, possibly fearing the repercussions for acknowledging a supposedly unauthorized group.¹⁰

On April 12, 1923, the *Western American* headline stated that the “Klan Chiefs Battle Over Women’s Plans.” The article discussed the controversy over two contending women’s organizations in Atlanta - the Kamelia (defined below) versus the WKKK. All Oregon Klansmen were encouraged to support the Imperial Wizard, Hiram Evans, and his new organization of the Women’s Ku Klux Klan. The Klanvocation, a national Klan legislative body, had agreed to defer the “women question” until their next meeting on May 23, 1923.¹¹ Yet Colonel Simmons (the Emperor of the Klan, who held an emeritus position with no administrative duties), surprised the Klanvocation when he attempted to launch his own organization of Klanswomen called the Kamelia. The Kamelia was a desperate attempt on the part of Simmons to make a come back after being displaced by Evans as the national leader of the Klan. It is important to note that Simmons ignored the LOTIEs, since he had no part in originating or structuring the organization, nor did he have any input in their present governance. As a result, he had no power over them. It was a better strategy, then, for Simmons to start afresh with his own women’s group, hence his creation of the Kamelia. Simmons' egocentric desire was to hold the Klan “as his child” and to give birth to the Kamelia.¹² While Evans also chose to ignore the established LOTIEs, he did exert his authority to quash Simmon’s attempts to create his own group.

Evans faced other challenges by Klan leaders who were creating their own competing women’s organizations. D.C. Stephenson in Indiana, for example, organized a Midwest women’s group called the Queens of the Golden Mask (QGM).¹³ To thwart these new

organizations, Evans denied that any of them were official affiliates of the Klan, and set out to place the WKKK as the only women's group.

Meanwhile, a Klan paper called the *Searchlight* prematurely approved of the newly organized Kamelia as an official affiliate of the Klan. The endorsement was short lived, however, because the paper, controlled by Colonel Simmons, was rebuked by Evans.¹⁴ The struggle between endorsing the WKKK and the Kamelia as the official affiliate of the KKK was a blatant struggle for power between Klan leaders, yet the *Western American* trivialized the seriousness of the dispute by minimizing how "all brothers quarrel."¹⁵

On April 19, 1923, the LOTIEs affiliate heading appeared again on the front page of the *Western American*, just three weeks after being removed. This may have been a gesture on the part of the Klan to keep the Klanswomen appeased until the official KKK decision was forthcoming. Davis was established as the Supreme Grand Counselor of the LOTIEs, and he continued to recruit as their Kleagle despite the raging conflict between Simmons and Evans over the establishment of a new women's group.¹⁶ Concerning the conflict in Atlanta, Davis remained neutral. That he continued organizing indicates he was not deterred from establishing new LOTIEs councils, although they held only "temporary status."¹⁷ Davis knew that the LOTIEs would be absorbed into the WKKK, but at the same time, he was making money from his new recruits.

It was legally established that Evans was the Imperial Wizard, and that Simmons was the Emperor, a figure head position.¹⁸ It was also decided after court battles between Evans and Simmons that the "Kamelia is not recognized as the women's auxiliary of the Klan and no Klansman, acting as a Klansman can take part in the organization of this or

any other woman's organization. They may act as individuals and as private citizens."¹⁹ This statement was important in that it nullified the connection between the KKK and the LOTIEs. As such, Davis had no authority over the women's group as a Klan representative; he was acting as a private citizen. This may have been the trigger point when the LOTIEs decided to reject Davis and the Oregon KKK's control over their organization.

In preparation of announcing the WKKK to Oregon and the nation, the *Western American* once again dropped the LOTIEs from their headlines of the June 7, 1923 issue, and it continued issuing warnings to the Kamelia: "It has been excluded from affiliation of any kind with the Ku Klux Klan because it could not stand the test of the Klan's basic principle - Non Silba Sed Anthar. An official announcement concerning the Women of the Ku Klux Klan will be made in next week's issue."²⁰ These anti-Kamelia advertisements must have been a source of irritation for the LOTIEs because they kept stating that there was no official women's group, and that the decision about a group was still undecided. Where did this put the LOTIEs as an organization that had been working on the basis of Klan ideals and rituals all along? Could they feel more autonomous after their defiance of Davis and Gifford?

When the LOTIEs realized that their organization was going to be merged with another without their permission, a direct conflict arose between the Klanswomen and their figurehead leader, Davis. The women had achieved enough self-governance and hegemony over their own group that they were ready to defy the men, who wanted their charter. The LOTIE's belief in managing their own affairs, and the KKK's understanding of their right to access the LOTIE charter and sell their group, showed a

real conflict in Klan management. The women were praised for their normative femininity -- working within the safe parameters of the auspices of the KKK. However, they began to bend these boundaries by fighting back for what they had worked for and built as an organization.

Resisting the Merger

Davis fell into disfavor with the LOTIEs when he attempted to sell them to the Klan. "Ready for his departure for the South, where the deal was to be incubated officially, Davis one night in May, 1923, illegally and brazenly invaded a meeting of the Lotie in Redmen's Hall in Portland, Proclaiming himself their royal master, he demanded they return to him the Charter of the organization."²¹

Newspaper editor, Dever acknowledged that the LOTIEs were not willing to merge with the new group and reported that Klan leaders sent a "rattler" to keep the Mother Counselor from entering the weekly meeting and to frighten the women in attendance. Dever surmised that this attempt had been a scheme arranged by Gifford and Davis.

A picturesque gun-thrower from eastern Oregon, wearing a ten gallon hat, a Pierce 'buzzard,' and carrying a six-shooter as long as a boot jack, was stationed at the door to prevent the entrance of the mother counselor, who was inclined to be opposed to the Gifford-Davis scheme. This guard had the sobriquet of 'The Rattlesnake,' but he failed to frighten the Ladies. He rattled, and they laughed.²²

The women of the LOTIEs did not fall into the gender stereotype of easily frightened women who were obedient to male authority.²³ The official messenger, an armed man, was sent with the intention to frighten off the Klanswomen by the KKK. It would seem, then, that the women were forewarned that they were to turn over their charter, and when

they refused, KKK leaders attempted to intimidate the women at their meeting place. The fact that the Mother Counselor was opposed to the merger verifies that the women were fully aware of the coup attempt and were ready to resist. It seems that neither Gifford nor Davis held any authority over the women, let alone their respect. They blatantly defied a male Klan representative, the “rattler”:

The Mother Counselor, a petite and gracious little woman possessing an attractive personality, noted as the youngest grandmother in Oregon, appeared with her Guard of Honor. The ‘Rattler’ gave warning that she could not enter. Her Honor Guard said differently, and its leader quietly dared him to lay a finger upon her. She threw her arms around the Mother Counselor and the ‘Rattlesnake’ could not reach her without touching a silken flag draped around her as part of the costume. The ‘Rattlesnake’ withdrew crestfallen.²⁴

Since the women were willing physically to battle the “Rattler,” the ploy to intimidate them backfired. This willingness to become physically violent and to protect their leader from an obviously armed man showed the militant female leadership of the LOTIEs, as well as the Klanswomen’s unity against male hegemony over their organization. The LOTIEs obviously felt justified in defending their organization, yet the conflict did not stop there. Once the “Rattler” was laughed away, Davis himself showed up, and barged furiously into the meeting to get the charter on his own:

Davis boldly invaded the meeting. He forced his way in while the Ladies were engaged in the opening prayer, and rushed to the platform, where the Mother Counselor sat enthroned surrounded by her Guard of Honor, amidst all the panalopy and ritualism of that Order. In an impudent, loud and threatening manner Davis demanded the Charter of the organization be surrendered instantly to him. The Ladies calmly regarded him as an obstreperous and insolent intruder, or as a rare and interesting bug. Highly excited, Davis clamored in dictatorial language. The Mother Counselor

smilingly held the Charter in her hand. Her attitude was one of serene command and contempt.²⁵

Since *Western American* editor Dever was not at the event, he must have spoken to several women in attendance to get such a detailed report of the incident. The implication of disrespect for the self proclaimed Grand Counselor and incorporator of the LOTIE did not sway their defiance of his authority. This defiance threw Davis into a fit of rage as he physically attacked the Mother Counselor:

Completely losing control of himself, Davis seized the dainty Mother Counselor by the arm and savagely twisted it, causing her to writhe in pain. She cried out as the ruffian forced her downward on the floor. At this moment the gentleman from Shreveport learned something about the Oregon war spirit. A small but muscular lady of the Honor Guard standing upon the platform somewhat above Davis, raised on high a heavy umbrella which she carried in her hand and deliberately struck him a powerful blow on the head, knocking him down and loosing his hold on the Mother Counselor. He was groggy and almost took the count. A feminine wag serving as outer guard at a distant portal declared she heard his false teeth rattle. Another said it sounded to her like a blow upon a zulu tom-tom. Other ladies rushed up and struck him, wherever they could land, and then they swarmed upon him, pummeling pounding and hammering. Several kicked him, where it hurts the most. They raised welts on his body, bumps on his head, pulled his hair, scratched his face, bloodied his nose, blackened his eyes, and gave him a thorough and unmerciful whipping.²⁶

The rage that Davis let loose was met by the raging defiance of the women who physically assaulted Davis for his impudent behavior. By their violence we must reconsider the gendered perspective of many historians that assumes an absence of militancy on the part of women. These Klanswomen were very physically violent, risked injury to themselves, and were willing to take on any other male intruders. It is difficult to say what caused the women to riot and attack Davis as a group, but the physical attack on the Mother Counselor caused more than just the “guards” to attack Davis physically:

He fought back the best he could, with his coat torn off, his shirt ripped open, collar and tie gone, woefully disheveled. Seizing one of the sacred ritualistic crosses, he struck a savage blow with it at a dear old lady 75 years old, breaking the tough wood into pieces. Meanwhile he howled lustily "Help! Help! Help!"²⁷

Davis had brought reinforcements with him, who came to his aid when they heard his cries for help. A Kleagle, who worked for Gifford recruiting in Oregon, named R.C. Keating and Davis's nephew, Gus Noble, who was a football player from Shreveport, rushed in to assist Davis.

Davis howled to them for aid. The ladies continued their drastic treatment of the sacred and sovereign person. Noble managed to get into the hall and rushed to his uncle's assistance. Some of the ladies promptly seized him by the hair and collar and were about to administer the same extreme discipline when a policeman forced his way through the milling throng and rescued the struggling Noble. He lifted him clear of the Ladies and carried him out of the hall, holding him by an ear. Davis finally managed to escape and fled from the hall minus his charter, etc. etc. Turning at the door, he yelled wildly, "I got what I came after!" Presumably he meant the licking, for this was all he got. The Mother Counselor still has the Charter, retaining it as a souvenir of a harrowing experience. The little woman did not faint or scream. She stood serene as any duchess and as Davis fled, like Ben Turpin in the movies, she led in singing of "The Star Spangled Banner."²⁸

Consequently the LOTIEs remained triumphant in their resistance to the personal attack on their group, and held their own against the men. The Mother Counselor proving her leadership got the meeting back into some semblance of order by singing a patriotic song. The women proved they could control their own organization without male support, or, for that matter, Klan support. This recognition of the women's resistance may have been the key to the lack of response by KKK leaders. The male leaders acted as though they did not lose anything from the fight, as Davis completed the merger without

the charter over which the women had so valiantly battled.²⁹ The males regained their hegemony at the national level and formed the WKKK. In this way the KKK gained control of the LOTIEs by using the formation of another women's organization. However, historian Kathleen Blee would argue that the WKKK was even stronger than the LOTIEs.

According to Dever, the episode was harmful to the LOTIEs, as the KKK backlashed against certain members for their participation in the scuffle. Some of the LOTIE members that were in the fight were targeted for harassment for their actions. "One of them, a charming little widow, who was an honored official, had been hounded and persecuted, spied upon and harassed until this day, and every lie and scandal that could be suggested."³⁰ Another woman was refused pay and hounded from job to job. Even though the Klan claimed to protect all women, these rebellious women were in disfavor with the Dragon. Dever claimed that the "Oregon method of harassment was as brutal as tar and feathering that was done in the South."³¹ But the Dragon did not take his wrath out on the leaders, Mother Counselor Maybelle Jette or Rush Davis.³² After the placement of the WKKK in Oregon both Jette and Davis were given leadership positions. At the same time the response to the women's resistance was treated minimally, and Klan leaders pretended they were in charge all along.

The *Western American* rallied in support of the LOTIEs' defiance of Davis as the Supreme Grand Counselor. Headlines screamed that the "Ladies of the Lotie assert authority to rule affairs."³³ The article states that there was a disagreement between the Council members and Davis based on the council by-laws, "and that the local organization was a self-governing body, jealous of its rights and prerogatives."³⁴

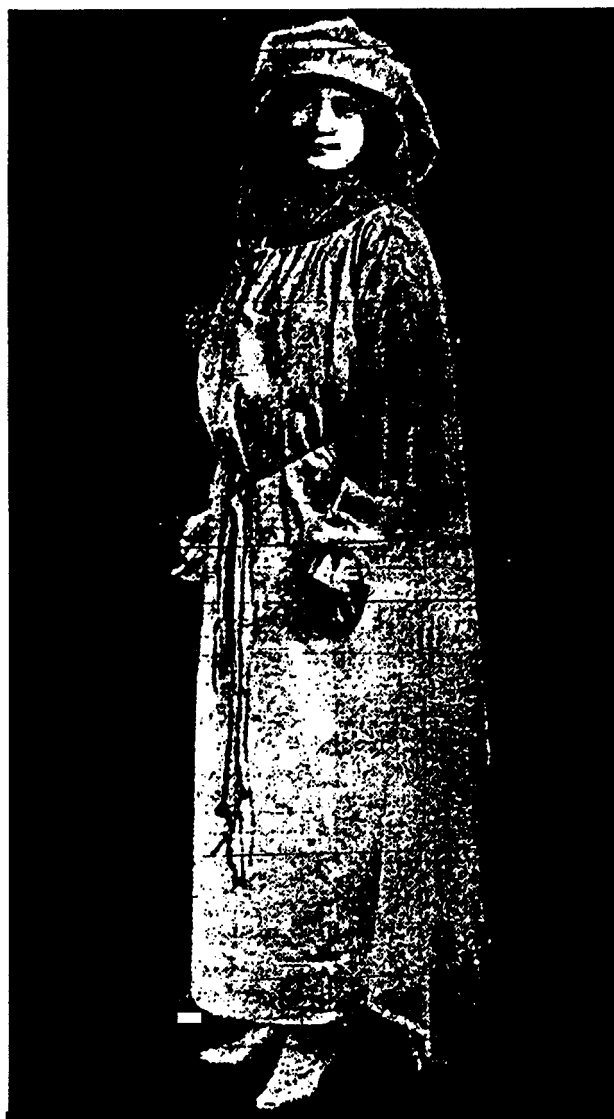


Figure 3 Mother Counselor Maybelle Jette

The author of the article maintains that the women were self-governed and that their duty was to continue their social work in Portland. The article is careful to avoid any mention of physical violence, but does emphasize the women's jealousy. This leaves no doubt in my mind that the LOTIEs defied male hegemony and continued with their business as an autonomous group with Maybelle Jette in command.

As is common with the reporting of Klan events, there are several other versions of the LOTIEs' defiance of Davis at Redmen's Hall. Other reports of what actually happened that night vary depending on the bias of the writer. For instance, the *Western American* first attempted to represent it as a disagreement between Davis and the strong willed and independent LOTIEs. The paper blasted the other newspapers that covered the event for making a big deal over the disagreement. Publishers accused the reporters of the *Portland Telegram* and the *Oregon Journal*, for

grossly misrepresenting the facts and drawing conclusions which were totally at variance with the facts. This guesswork on the part of the festive scribes only evoked amusement and ridicule among the Ladies of the Lotie and their hosts of friends, who understood the situation. It was simply a little family tiff over concurrent authority and jurisdiction, and, of course, the Ladies had their way as is always the case in dealing with men.³⁵

They framed this as a family tiff where the men were unable to control their women. The public ridicule and attention to the fight was an embarrassment to male control within the KKK. The idea that women always have their way with men is a distortion of normative gender roles and inappropriately assumes a displacement of male hegemony. In order to avoid a poor reflection on the entire KKK, Gifford let Davis take full blame for the dispute and made no acknowledgment of the LOTIEs for giving Davis a beating.

Ironically, later in the same issue of the *Western American*, the Klan reporters themselves mocked the attack on Davis and his companions, as they described the fight with the headline, "Ladies Handle Man Without Police and In Dempsey Manner":

"Help!, Help!, Help!, yelled a certain ill conditioned citizen several days ago, when he undertook to be insolent to a group of Portland ladies during

the play going hour in the evening. His identity is known but is being withheld on account of the ladies. One of them in reply to his insolence promptly whacked him over the noggin with an umbrella. Another landed a well directed kick. Still another contributed a scientific upper cut- but it was the kick landing with deadly and unerring accuracy and in the tenderest spot, that cause the ogler, when he caught his breath to howl, Help! Help!, Help!³⁶

Davis's identity was dropped and the second article implies that the man was a stranger, an "ogler" and an "ill conditioned citizen." Even though these statements are in the same issue, it would seem that any reader who had heard about the physical violence at the LOTIEs meeting might still interpret what is written as a different event. The article also avoids mentioning any defiance of authority, and moreover, the LOTIEs were just defending their honor against some kind of vagrant. Negative responses to the LOTIEs' outburst resulted in the resignation of some of its members.³⁷ The ladies at this point would appear as militant, and perhaps, unlady like.

Allies such as Lem Dever, however, felt the LOTIEs were justified in attacking Davis. As already discussed, Dever gave a full account of the incident in Redmen's Hall the night of May 11, 1923. According to Dever, the formation of the WKKK was a scam on the part of Gifford and Davis to make more money by replacing the LOTIEs. He stated that the two had planned to sell the LOTIEs, and merge it with the WKKK. Although it was not specified how much money would be obtained in the sale, a percentage of the monthly dues, as well as new initiation fees would be shared by certain KKK leaders. The value of the LOTIEs also lay in the funds that they held from their fund raising and holding assets. It could be surmised, then, that with the transfer of funds, the sale would bring a fair bit of money to Gifford and Davis.

Dever referred to the LOTIE as a “purely feminine movement,” which Davis felt he controlled completely.³⁸ He also claimed that Davis, as the leader of the LOTIEs, was a despotic authority. Dever liked the Portland LOTIEs, referring to them as a useful and hard working organization.

The Merger

Nationally, Hiram Evans sought to regain sole control of the different women’s factions, through the Imperial Klonsilium in Atlanta, and established the WKKK in June 1923. Davis had been chased out of Portland at the LOTIEs’ meeting and headed to the Imperial Klonsilium in order to sell the LOTIEs without their permission, but with Gifford’s approval. Both Davis and Gifford were at the Imperial Klonsilium, and completed the merger of the LOTIEs with the Women of the Klan.³⁹ Davis evidently stayed in the Atlanta area as an employee of the Klan, since the LOTIEs would resist his interference in their governance, and Davis’s wife was also offered employment in Atlanta. “By this deal Davis retained lucrative Klan employment, down South, his wife was made Treasurer of the Women of the Klan, and Mae Gifford, the wife of Dragon Gifford, was made ‘Imperial Commander’ of the Western States.”⁴⁰ Subsequently the sale of the LOTIEs enhanced the control of Fred and Mae Gifford in Oregon, as well as giving Rush and Lucien Trigg Davis positions in the national KKK and WKKK. Even so, Gifford needed a plan to sway the LOTIEs over to the WKKK willingly, and to appease the resistant women.

Regardless of the LOTIEs’ attempt to maintain its own organization as an autonomous group, its own organizers sold it out. The LOTIEs did eventually merge into

the WKKK, and the official “orders for the dissolution of the LOTIEs were filed on September 8, 1923.”⁴¹ Even though Maybelle Jette led the Portland LOTIEs into battle to resist the takeover of the LOTIEs, she too eventually succumbed to the merger with the WKKK. As Gifford and Davis personally benefited from the merger, so did several female leaders of the LOTIEs, including Jette herself. The *Western American* encouraged the LOTIEs to merge over to the WKKK, but without the leadership of Jette, the merger might have not happened.

Propaganda based on a fundamental desire to join such a great women’s organization appeared in the *Western American*. “Among the women’s organizations which were listed as being desirous of being affiliated with the Women of the Ku Klux Klan are the League of Protestant Women, the American Women, the Puritan Daughters of America, the Ladies of the Golden Mask, and the Ladies of the Invisible Empire. The new order, it was emphasized, will in no way be connected officially with the Ku Klux Klan, although it will have its full support.”⁴² Here again is the double talk assertion of the Klan that the new group will not be officially connected to the KKK, which was also said of the LOTIEs. This would intimate that the Klan was allowing the new group the self governance that they had previously experienced, although there is also evidence that the Klan was still very much involved.

In the same issue of the *Western American*, Gifford began his campaign to appease any of the hard feelings that the new merger had caused. He acted as if the whole sell out of the LOTIEs had been publicized as a sanctioned agreement between himself, Davis, and the LOTIEs. His best strategy was to act as if nothing had happened, as he ignored the fight in Redmen’s Hall, therefore guaranteeing the desirability of the new merger.

“Mr. Gifford requested your correspondent to extend for him to the LOTIEs his cordial and respectful greetings and to assure them, in his name, that they will form a powerful part of the new national organization - the greatest order composed of women in America or the world.”⁴³ The article conveyed assurances to the women that included a gradual change in organization, the maintenance of their offices in Portland, and, importantly, the confirmation of the Mother Counselor, Maybelle Jette, as their leader.⁴⁴ This was a vital strategy on the part of Gifford, for without Jette he might not have successfully swayed the others. This must have been a great political risk for Gifford because Jette had directly defied his and Davis’s authority in May. Gifford worked quickly to obtain control in Oregon by placing women he sponsored in positions of power. In the June 28, 1923, the *Western American* stated the “Woman Klan Chief for Oregon Named By Grand Dragon. Mrs. M.V. Schonberg of Portland has charge of organizing work for the WKKK.”⁴⁵ “The meeting of the WKKK will be held Friday night at Redmen’s hall. Mrs. Maybelle Jette, acting Exalted Cyclops will preside”⁴⁶ Consequently Gifford moved to put another woman in control at the state level while emphasizing that Jette was still in charge in Portland. This may have been a point of negotiation between the two leaders, and Jette would surely have had an upper hand due to the fierce loyalty that the women showed in protecting Jette from Davis.⁴⁷

The membership drive goals of the Oregon WKKK were posted at the end of August in the *Western American*. “Mrs. Jette and her co-workers hope to enroll more than 5,000 select members before the Christmas bells rhyme (sic) again.”⁴⁸ Jette was working as the Exalted Commander in the Portland area at this time, and the Portland WKKK was striving for high numbers for their locality. Most likely Jette had a vast staff to help

achieve these goals. The hierarchy of leadership was intricate and forged after the KKK.⁴⁹

The following week the *Western American* worked to publicize the merger and the changes in the LOTIE organization. They initially began with financial issues: "Pay no money to Lotie officials, merger is a fact."⁵⁰ However, the statement was not referring to the women leaders, but to Davis instead. The continued animosity that Dever held for Davis was evident in the article:

R.H. Davis former owner and Supreme Grand Counselor of the Ladies of the Invisible Empire, signed an agreement transferring and giving up forever all right title and interest to and in the Lotie organization. The Women Of The Ku Klux Klan at that time was officially launched, with the full backing of the Klan. For those reasons no one has the right to collect dues, or fees of any kind, for or in behalf of the defunct 'Lotie' which ceased to exist as part of the Klan movement when Mr. Davis signed the transfer. The headquarters of the WKKK is at 407 Pittock block in charge of Mrs. Maybelle Jette, now acting as Exalted Cyclops.⁵¹

Jette was still the leader of the Portland WKKK, although she was given a new title of Exalted Cyclops. This would indicate, then, that she and Gifford had come to some sort of understanding, whereby Jette maintained control in Portland, as she had with the LOTIEs. Through her support, Gifford moved to hold a meeting with the LOTIEs in order to discuss the implication of the new merger and the new rules of governance.⁵² "Gifford and Mrs. Fred Gifford was welcomed from the audience as the second Vice president of the national WKKK. She had attended the convention to decide the merger with Fred in Washington D.C."⁵³ Once more the implication is that the women should trust the decisions made on their behalf by the male leaders, because Mae Gifford, as a previous LOTIE, had also been a part of the decision to merge.

Some of the leadership issues were clarified by Gifford. For instance, a position as the State Grand Dragon (paralleling the men's group) was being created to give a woman leader on a state level. Consequently the political organizing of the WKKK gave women power on state and national levels as long as their membership was large enough. The assumption, then, was that the membership must become large enough to pay for all of these positions.

The *Western American* presented the meeting between Gifford and the ex-LOTIE members like a friendly chat, emphasizing how excited the women were about the merger. Gifford felt quite comfortable discussing with Klanswomen about the merger with the WKKK, in an attempt to legitimize the move and emphasize Jette's support.⁵⁴ At one point when he was discussing the funds he implied that the LOTIEs knew and had approved of the merger before the fight at Redmen's Hall.

Q- Would you suggest that we give advice to the ladies to hold all funds of the LOTIEs now on hand in the various defunct councils?

A- Yes. The former officials of the Lotie knew six months ago that there was to be a reorganization and that all funds should have been held intact until final action of the Klan. No legal question can be raised on account of the Women's Klan holding such funds.⁵⁵

No evidence of the forewarning concerning the merger appeared in the papers, and the resistance of the Portland LOTIEs shows contrary evidence to this statement. Again it helped to sway those dissenters on the basis that the whole process had been legitimate, so the transition should be expected.

Gifford also decided to keep elected LOTIE officers to obtain cooperation and transfer of power. Overall the meeting seemed to attempt to appease any conflicts and to

be vague about any changes, which would imply that negotiations for power were still being debated:

It was explained that the women's organization is an exact counterpart of the Klan itself, with no difference whatever except that of gender. They will use the same constitution, ritual, regalia and methods. This news delighted the women, who were eager to know every detail of the merger. Mr. Gifford explained, withholding nothing, and said the two or three spies in the audience were welcome to report, from the housetops if they desired everything they had heard.⁵⁶

The statement that there was no difference except gender itself may have been a strategy to connect them in that women's power had become equal to the men's power. This notion would be appealing to the LOTIEs, as an acknowledgment of its own gained status (having defied male authority), and a tactic by the male leaders to offer more gender power through the WKKK to lure in women members. This would make the WKKK seemingly more powerful than the LOTIEs, and this new power was desired by the women as a group. Gifford also addressed the supposed spies in the audience, encouraging them to report all that they were saying at the meeting, but more importantly to advertise that all was well within the organization concerning the merger.

The *Western American* reported information about the new national leader of the WKKK, Lulu Markwell, which reflected another change in increasing women's power. Previously the only nationally known leader of the LOTIE was a male - Reverend Sawyer. Therefore, the WKKK gave women incredible power to obtain positions within the WKKK on national and regional levels.⁵⁷ Even though the male Klan leaders assumed power over all of the different women's groups by forming a single

organization, Klanswomen continued growing in power and challenging male entitlement.

Notes for Chapter Four

¹ Gifford established in a meeting at Redmen's Hall that the membership dues between the LOTIEs and the WKKK were to be settled. "All members of the Lotie (now defunct) in good standing will be obligated in the Klan without payment of any fee whatever, and new members will be initiated. 'Lotie' members whose dues are in arrears must pay down to date before being admitted to the Klan. The Friday night meeting is expected to be one of great constructive importance. The women are going to work steadily with the men, though the two organizations are entirely separate" (*Western American*, June 28, 1923). Funds and memberships were transferred over, and there seemed to be no increase of money for the KKK because of the merger. The contradiction of contextualizing the women's group being admitted into the Klan itself and working with the men was compounded by the denial of their overlapping association. This discrepancy left the door open for the women to remain autonomous.

Gifford also asserted that all men were barred membership from the WKKK. The fact that the WKKK was a women's only organization still leaves the question if men had any control over them. Obviously not including men as part of the membership would imply self governance, but the women of the WKKK, according to their charter, must report to the Klonsilium.

² *Portland Evening Telegram* November 25, 1922.

³ *Portland Evening Telegram* November 19, 1922.

⁴ According to Lem Dever, editor of the *Western American*, Sawyer was the originator of the LOTIEs. In the *Morning Oregonian* on April 11, 1937, an article about Sawyer stated that "his strained relations with the Klan and the interference of Davis in the work of the LOTIEs soon caused the LOTIEs to drop Sawyer as their director." Yet Sawyer seemed to be an exemplary leader and loved by the LOTIE locally and nationally. If the LOTIEs did replace Sawyer, it would certainly indicate the authority of the LOTIE to pick their own directors themselves. This action would in itself prove that the women in the organization maintained self governance apart from the men in the KKK.

⁵ Lem Dever. *Confessions of an Imperial Klansman*, (Portland: Pamphlet, 1924), PP 30-31.

⁶ Dever, *Confessions of an Imperial Klansman*, 31.

⁷ *Western American* March 1, 1923.

⁸ Due to an illness she was unable to meet her speaking engagements, which had to be canceled (*Western American* Feb 22, 1923).

⁹ Beginning on March 29, 1923, the *Western American* stopped using the header that listed themselves as the official paper for the LOTIE.

¹⁰ The irony is that the RRRR was still cited as an affiliate; the battling KKK leaders did not deem it necessary to create a new group to replace an already established men's organization.

¹¹ *Western American* April 12, 1923.

¹² Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 27. E.Y. Clarke assisted Simmons with the Kamelia campaign and was consequently removed from his position as Imperial Organizer by Dr. Evans (*Western American* April 12, 1923). As further retaliation, Mr. Clarke was then dropped from the Klan completely due to his unauthorized action. The *Western American* minimized Simmons attempted comeback into his own organization (the KKK), and placed the full responsibility on the wayward Clarke (*Western American* April 12, 1923).

¹³ Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 27.

¹⁴ *Western American* April 12, 1923.

¹⁵ The *Western American*, April 12, 1923, stated that the Grand Dragons and the Imperial officers would decide the question of the women's organization, and was scheduled to meet on the May 23, 1923 (*Western American* April 12, 1923). An investigative committee that was established at the November (1922) Klanvocation was ready to report back about an organization of women to be established and supervised by the Klan. Evans, acting as the new Imperial Wizard, also invited the Exalted Cyclops and or Klan heads from every Klan in the realm to meet and elect two delegates to the May convention. The convention would also be attended by the Grand Dragons, the Grand Titans and the King Kleagles from all of the realms. Basically this move was to find out who would be loyal to his leadership over the old leadership under Simmons. This large meeting reportedly was so that all of the Klans in the nation would have a part in organizing the women's organization, although the Imperial Klouncilium would have the final vote in the matter (which Evans controlled at that time). (*Western American* April 19, 1923). This would also be the perfect time for sell outs of the already established women's organizations by their leaders. The leaders would either gain financially by the merger and/or gain influence with Evans, as in the case of Daisy Barr who sold out the QGM to gain power with Evans (Blee 27). Davis and Gifford both benefited from the LOTIE merger, as did their wives, who gained positions of political leadership.

¹⁶ He was traveling a recruiting circuit and had just established a group in Kelso, WA. He then headed to Pendleton County in Eastern Oregon (*Western American* April 19, 1923).

¹⁷ *Western American* April 19, 1923.

¹⁸ On May 10, 1923, the *Western American* headlined the return of Gifford from Atlanta with news from the Klouncilium.

¹⁹ *Western American* May 10, 1923. Simmons continued his quest to make his come back as a powerful Klan leader through the Kamelia, and by June he had them established in twenty states (Blee 27). The *Western American* ran articles against the Kamelia in order to support Gifford and Evans' battle against Simmons and his supporters. Although a question appeared in an April issue of the *Western American* asking "Do you have a little Kamelia In Your Home? (The *Western American* April 5, 1923) Thus indicating that Simmons and his supporters were previously promoting the Kamelia in Oregon, as well as the Southern states.

The *Western American* emphasized that there was no “official women’s auxiliary to the Ku Klux Klan as yet, and all women were warned to “beware of promoters’ claims that the ‘Kamelia’ recently ‘launched’ by certain Georgia exploiters has the backing of the Klan. The contrary was true, in fact, the ‘Kamelia’ has no standing whatever in Klan circles. It was a graft scheme, pure and simple, aiming to exploit the unsuspecting women and for this reason it was repudiated officially by the Klan” (The *Western American* May 17, 1923). The article did not use Simmon’s or Clarke’s names as the grafters, rather they purposely excluded that information. The following week the *Western American* reported an update of the situation.

The Kamelia, a new scheme to exploit Protestant women which has been repudiated by the Klan and its friends, has been assigned by the Northwest section and is on his way to Portland to attempt clean-up. Look out for him! Tell him to keep moving. He is said to be a very good man, personally, but he has the wrong pig by the ear, which will never develop a silk purse. The aim of the Kamelia promoters who live way down in Dixie, is to garner the golden ducals of unsuspecting ones, who will be few and far between in this section. Later on perhaps, the Klan itself may have an official auxiliary, but it won’t be the Kamelia, so-called but something entirely different and worth while. Official's advice will be given publicly on this subject, by Klan authorities, in due season. Watchful waiting is the wise policy at the present time (The *Western American* May 17, 1923, p3).

²⁰ The *Western American* June 14, 1923.

²¹ Dever, *Confessions of an Imperial Klansman*, 31.

²² Dever, *Confessions of an Imperial Klansman*, 31.

²³ Even though Dever stated that Davis was their ‘sovereign and royal leader,’ he certainly was not shown that level of respect, therefore, Davis was like Sawyer, no more than a figure head.

²⁴ Dever, *Confessions of an Imperial Klansman*, 31.

²⁵ Dever, *Confessions of an Imperial Klansman*, 32.

²⁶ Dever, *Confessions of an Imperial Klansman*, 32.

²⁷ Dever, *Confessions of an Imperial Klansman*, 32.

²⁸ Dever, *Confessions of an Imperial Klansman*, 32-33.

²⁹ Dever was personally upset by the event and against Davis for his rash behavior. Even though Davis was reportedly unable to leave his hotel for two or three days, this was not punishment enough according to the outraged Dever (Dever 33). Dever brought charges against Davis at a Klan Tribunal, and warned Davis that he had done so, consequently Davis left town. Dever met with Gifford in the privacy of Gifford’s home, and the Dragon was amused by the LOTIE’s physical and emotional response, and allowed Dever to press charges against Davis. Davis, however, headed back to Imperial

headquarters in Atlanta where he would rendezvous with Gifford, as Evans' supporters, to complete the sale of the LOTIEs.

³⁰ Dever, *Confessions of an Imperial Klansman*, 34.

³¹ Dever, *Confessions of an Imperial Klansman*, 34.

³² In the August 24, 1923, the *Western American* headlined "Ladies Attention! Register at once. Women of the Ku Klux Klan and their friends always are welcome at the office of the Exalted Commander, Mrs. Maybelle Jette 407 Pittock Block, telephone Broadway 1873, where they can register for work, or call for help of any kind."

It seems that business was usual with Jette still in charge, working from the same Portland office, but with the new title of Exalted Commander. Previously, the LOTIE advertised just their office location, however, the WKKK advertised that work was available and interestingly if one needed help to come to the WKKK office. The article continued "members of the Lotie (now officially merged with the Women of the Klan), who can pass the scrutiny of the membership committee, will be accepted as in good standing until September 20. After that date a membership fee will be required. New members are wanted - REAL WOMEN, whose oaths are inviolate" (*Western American* August 24, 1923). Evidently after the merger there were LOTIEs who refused to join the WKKK, so the KKK gave them until late September to join. Also note the screening by a committee that would decide if they could join the all powerful WKKK, perhaps a selective tribalism, but more likely it was to see if their dues were in arrears. The imitation of the KKK advertisement of needing "real men," by the WKKK needing "real women," may show how the WKKK attempted to balance the gender discrepancy. In order to be a member of the WKKK you must be a real woman, one who can pass the scrutiny of a committee and participate in a great organization of the KKK. This alone equates the women with the macho militancy demonstrated by the KKK.

It would seem from this point on that the LOTIE was completely merged with the WKKK at the cost of a few members. Jette was able to maintain her leadership role of the Portland women's group, and Gifford seemed satisfied with the outcome. The WKKK in Oregon had a strong legacy from the LOTIE's attainment of power, resistance, leadership, and self governance. These gains stretched the normative gender boundaries enhancing the women's position in the governance of the KKK. Even though Gifford felt he was in control of the WKKK by placing his own women leaders in positions of power, Jette had established herself in her stronghold of the Portland WKKK, and was not likely going to give her power over to him. Once the power struggle between the leaders on state and national levels seemed to be settled, the KKK and the WKKK continued their focus to issues of recruiting and working toward the Cause. The work of the Oregon WKKK, although the similarities to the LOTIE prevailed to the point that not much discerns the two groups, in fact, many women members will referred to themselves as Ladies of the KKK.

³³ "Transfer of management results in family row. Davis is taught Lesson. Oregon Women Demonstrate Ability to Handle Their Own Program" (*Western American* May 17, 1923)

There was a misunderstanding and a clash of authority between Rush Davis Supreme Grand Counselor of the Lotie and the officers and members of Portland Council No 1 at

the latter's meeting in Redmen's hall last Friday night May 11, 1923, which resulted quickly with the rigorous enforcement, of the local council's by laws, even against the demand of the Supreme Grand Counselor, whose wishes as to program that meeting differed from those of the Council's officers and members of whom about 500 were present. The unfortunate incident grew out of the transfer of the management of the Order from R H Sawyer to R H Davis about four months ago, but now that the facts and law are understood by all concerned, there will be no further trouble as far as Davis and the local Council are concerned. Mr. Davis and his two companions retired from the meeting when he was made to understand the ironclad nature of the council's by-laws, and that the local organization was a self-governing body, jealous of its rights and prerogatives. Shortly afterward Mr. Davis left for Little Rock, Ark. to attend a meeting of representatives of Protestant - women's - organizations. The Portland Council of the Lotie will continue to function serenely and harmoniously, and is expected to speedily become a still greater power in the social betterment activities of the Oregon metropolis. The Oregon women in the "Lotie" are the architects of their own destiny, and recent events have demonstrated that they are fully able to take care of themselves. Mrs. Maybelle Jette, the beloved Mother Counselor of Portland Council No. 1 will preside at a regular meeting Friday night May 18 in Redmen's hall, as usual. An interesting program has been arranged. (*The Western American* May 17, 1923)

³⁴ *Western American*, May 17, 1923.

³⁵ *Western American*, May 17, 1923.

³⁶ *Western American*, May 17, 1923.

³⁷ "All members are advised to pay no attention to contrary rumors set afoot by enemies of the Cause. The Portland Council is prosperous and progressive and just now is undertaking a constructive program of honorable achievement which is sure to benefit all concerned" (*Western American* May 31, 1923). The typical strategy of the *Western American* to disclaim other reports of Klan activity was to minimize the conflict as a tiff between siblings.

³⁸ Dever, *Confessions of an Imperial Klansman*, 31.

³⁹ Dever, *Confessions of an Imperial Klansman*, 33.

⁴⁰ Dever, *Confessions of an Imperial Klansman*, 33.

⁴¹ Eckard Vance Toy, Jr., *The Ku Klux Klan in Oregon; Its Character and Program*. Thesis presented to U of O, Dept of History, 1959, 128.

⁴² *Western American*, June 14, 1923.

⁴³ *Western American* June 14, 1923.

⁴⁴ "The headquarters of the Women of the Ku Klux Klan, in which the Ladies of the Invisible Empire has been merged is at 407 Pittock block, Portland, in charge of Mrs. Maybelle Jette, the Mother Counselor, until an official announcement by Fred L. Gifford of any change" (*Western American* June 14, 1923).

⁴⁵ Schonberg's office was located at her residence, 1022 Vernon Avenue, telephone Garfield 6313. The announcement was made by Fred L. Gifford at the state convention, the Klorero of the Klan, on June 24, 1923.

⁴⁶ *Western American*, June 28, 1923.

⁴⁷ The Imperial Klonsilium met on June 13, 1922, in Washington D.C. and decided to finalize the WKKK as an organization that would include all other women's Protestant organizations from around the country except the Kamelia (*Western American* June 14, 1923). This exclusion of the Kamelia worked in two ways. It reinforced the notion that to be worthy of joining the WKKK, a group must be invited by the leaders. On the other hand if you were in the Kamelia, you had better find another way to join this exclusive new organization of the WKKK, hence censoring Simmon's attempt for control again. Evans established the power of his authority through the successful incorporation of the WKKK. "The Klonsilium endorsed fully the administration of Dr. H. W. Evans as Imperial Wizard and planned a national campaign for the enforcement of all laws on the state books and all constitutional amendments" (*Western American* June 14, 1923). Headquarters of the new women's organization was established in Little Rock, Arkansas, and was incorporated under the state laws of Arkansas.

The WKKK became officially chartered by Judge Richard Mann on June 27, 1923, after eight women from several states signed under the representation of James Comer the Grand Dragon of Arkansas. According to the Articles of Incorporation the Women of the Ku Klux Klan are organized for the purpose of promoting literature, education, science and for all such activities that might tend to develop a Christian character and for the benevolent, fraternal and protective methods. They will hold themselves accountable to the Imperial Klonsilium" (*Western American*, June 28, 1923).

⁴⁸ *Western American* August 31, 1923.

⁴⁹ Jette led a hierarchy of women officers who spent a great amount of time working in the group, and probably not as unpaid volunteers.

An Imperial Commander governed the WKKK on a national level. Under her a complex series of state, regional, and local officers, with titles of Klaliff (vice-president), Klokard (lecturer, Kligruff (secretary), Klabee (treasurer, and Klarogo/Klexter (inner/outer guard), enforced the code of Klan conduct, collected membership dues, and organized events. Like their male counterparts, the WKKK had an array of social, cultural, and economic units, including drill teams, bands, choirs, a social service agency, and a robe-making factory (*Western American* August 31, 1923).

⁵⁰ *Western American* June 21, 1923.

⁵¹ *Western American* June 21, 1923.

⁵² Gifford organized the first meeting with the LOTIE in the Pythian Temple on June 19, 1923. "The meeting was to gather the members and officers of the LOTIE to discuss the merger into the Klan's official auxiliary group" (*Western American* June 21, 1923). Below are the questions were asked of Gifford by the LOTIEs, as reported in the June 28, 1923, *Western American*.

Q- Does a woman have to be a wife or sister of a Klansman in order to join the Women of the Klan?

A- No. The same rule applies to women as to men with this one exception: that women of foreign birth who were members of the Lotie or some other order now merged with the Klan, may continue as members of the Klan, if

otherwise qualified.

Q- Are the women who have not paid up their dues in the Lotie to become members of the Women's Klan without paying dues?

A- As a matter of justice to all concerned they will have to pay their back dues to the new Klan organization.

⁵³ *Western American* June 21, 1923.

⁵⁴ *Western American* June 28, 1923.

⁵⁵ *Western American* June 28, 1923.

⁵⁶ *Western American* June 21, 1923.

⁵⁷ It was announced that Mrs. Lulu Markwell was the Imperial Commissioner of the WKKK. "She has long been a national figure in women's clubs and public welfare work and a former national head of the WCTU. Mrs. Markwell is a lady of middle age, wealthy and socially powerful. She is famed as a leader of consummate skill in women's work" (*Western American* June 21, 1923, p1). Even though Markwell is hailed as a national leader, her feminine side is praised and her skills are based in women's work. Moreover, women's work was being readily defined as socially and politically oriented through the association of the WKKK. Mrs. Gifford received a letter from Markwell on June 9, 1923, addressed to both Mr. and Mrs. Gifford. "Dear Co-Workers: Am glad to tell you that today we received our charter for the WKKK, we are now ready to begin active organizing work, and it seems the outlook is boundless. The great organization of which you are an honored officer, is really a federation of women's orders" (*Western American* June 21, 1923). Therefore, Markwell recognized that much of the work ahead was to secure any seditious factions, and unify them all to the WKKK.

Conclusion

The Oregon KKK and WKKK lost power very quickly due to the bad publicity propagated by their opponents of Klan violence (see Appendix 4). Another downfall was the infighting and the accusations about absconding funds amongst national leaders, as well as accusations of rape and murder.¹ In Oregon, the powerful Portland Klan and WKKK virtually disappeared with the downfall of Fred Gifford, who was also accused of embezzlement and sedition. Although traces of WKKK activities continued throughout the state, I can only assume that Jette lost power with Gifford's demise as the Grand Dragon.

Financial divisions and dissension plagued Klan activities. Klanswomen protested that Klan leaders were taking money away from their klaverns: "Many Kleagles appointed their wives as directors, the better to seize women's treasuries."² Klanswomen reportedly took the cases to court in order to regain their stolen funds. Evans stepped in and "suspended the charters of seven klaverns and warned both sides to cease and desist."³ However, the fighting continued over money as well as the issue of male hegemony.

Oregon's Grand Dragon Fred Gifford was caught in several major financial scandals besides the Children's Farm Home (see Appendix 3). The Klan was to build a ten story building called the Skyline Corporation toward which \$30,000 had been raised. When the building was not built, Gifford skimmed 3% off the top and the rest of the money was never recovered.⁴ Gifford also sold oil stock with the RRRR, which proved to be worthless.⁵ Gifford continued to lose support of politicians and Klan members. The final straw of demise was Lem Dever's pamphlet "Confessions of an Imperial Klansman."

Most Klansmen respected Dever and "his revelations had an immediate and devastating affect."⁶ By 1926, Gifford resigned and the Klan became obsolete in Portland.

Gifford was investigated, personally and professionally, for his unscrupulous money scams, and for undermining the powerful Portland klavern. National Klan leaders, concerned about the fall of Oregon's powerful Klan, demanded an investigation. In a letter from attorney Charles H. Glos to the Attorney General of Indiana, Glos accused Gifford of sedition by infiltrating and financially destroying the Klan.

The former dragon, while ostensibly a Shrine Mason and a professed Protestant, had a Roman Catholic wife and had his children in a Catholic school...It is the current belief here among most of the former Klansmen that the Klan was dominated by the unseen influence of the Catholic Church, not only for the purpose personal financial gain but with the purpose and intent of breaking up strong and glowing organizations which were opposed to the influence of the Roman Catholic Church⁷

Glos further accused Gifford, who obtained money and land from the building in Portland, "and the fact that this individual's wife holds all the property owned by the former official to whom I refer --- by the name of Fred L. Gifford."⁸ Glos also accused Gifford of collecting money from bootleggers and boss gamblers for "protection purposes and was used to corrupt the Klan members of the Police Force."⁹ Glos offered to provide depositions to file suit against Gifford. The fall of the Portland Klan, according to Glos, was all to blame on Gifford and his cohorts, but more importantly, his wife and children's link to the Catholic Church. The assumption was that Gifford's betrayal was a conspiracy under the auspices of the Catholic Church purposefully to ruin the Klan. In the Klan's own paranoid delusions about its religious righteousness and its fierce tribal loyalty, Fred and Mae Gifford were accused of being outsiders. As a result, these

grafting issues were not reflective of befitting Klan behavior, but were a result of defamation attempts by the Catholic Church.

The WKKK organization faded in Oregon after the withdrawal of Gifford from the Klan. Yet the WKKK operations did surface on occasion. "On January 19, 1928, there was an announcement that the Grand Dragon requested the Klans to nominate a woman for state head of the Women of the Klan."¹⁰ Hence, the WKKK still operated in the state, even after the KKK was finished in Portland. Without further documentation to verify the fall of Jette and the powerful Portland Council of the WKKK, it can only be speculated that she too lost her position of power when Gifford lost his hold in Oregon

Regardless if problems were local or national, the Klansmen and Klanswomen worked together to maintain Klan ideology. According to historian Kathleen Blee, men in the KKK were more overt in their racist-terrorist actions, while Klanswomen were more covert¹¹ Yet both groups were unified under the burning cross, "a baptism of fire," which signified the valor of the KKK and the WKKK.¹² Even with internal conflicts and money problems, the followers of the Klan felt like they were a part of an essential group that would defend their rights as white middle class Protestants.¹³ As a tribal group they recognized their goals and ideology and would protect the Cause by oppressing outsiders who were considered the real enemy that generated lies in order to bring the Klan down.

The Klan based its movement on the complexities of gender, which was often manipulated to their own agenda. By introducing concepts of women's inherent morality to clean up politics the Klan curtailed their acts of terrorism and crime. Klansmen justified the need for chivalry to protect the sanctity of home and motherhood, yet they eventually encouraged women to come into the public sphere under their protection.

Klansmen argued for purity of the race in order to guarantee exclusive sexual access to white women. Klansmen knew they would benefit by letting women join, but they did not expect the Klanswomen to become autonomous or defiant. As Klansmen defined women's power within the confines of gender normative boundaries, women took advantage of the power and authority given to them to create and self define themselves as a group. The emergence of Klanswomen forming identifiable tribal groups such as the LOTIEs and the WKKK emanated from the highly masculinized fraternal group of the KKK. These women led other white Protestant women into a campaign against outsiders including other women. I would argue, then, that the men may have set the gender boundaries to restrict women under their power, only to have the women undermine male Klan authority and redefine the gender norms themselves. Women do not always agree with societal dictation of their roles as women, and when a tribal group such as the Oregon LOTIEs grew in political autonomy, male hegemony was militantly challenged.

The importance of understanding the part that Klanswomen played in perpetuating the Klan was their contribution to making the Klan a wholesome part of mainstream 1920s culture. When the Klan opened membership to women and children, it reflected a family oriented movement minimizing the Cause as a reactionary movement based in exclusion and persecution of Klan enemies. To add to this normalcy Klanswomen brought the Cause to their homes, churches, associations, schools, dances, card games, family events, work place, celebrations, and families.¹⁴ Klanswomen did not see the movement as evil, but a righteous battle for religious privilege validating their own convictions and a battle against enemies of the Klan. Whether women hid KKK

terrorism, acted as hostesses at events, or contributed financially, they exemplified autonomy and fierce tribalism as Klanswomen within the Ku Klux Klan.

When reactionary movements are based in morality it is important to understand gender roles as far as female domesticity and women needing protection from immoral men or from an immoral culture. At the same time, each new right wing movement experiences a reformation of domesticity and motherhood. For example, the 1920s Klanswomen proved that if women were allowed to gain power that they would transcend the normative gender boundaries. Subsequently, women of the modern KKK are rarely in positions of authority, and women's rights are the antithesis of the KKK agenda.¹⁵ By continuing research about the Klan, and importantly, women's participation we may find how women once again are Republican Mothers thus influencing politics from their homes.

The further we move from the 1920s Klan, the less information will be accessible to researchers due to the secretiveness of Klan documents. It is difficult to compare the Klanswomen in Oregon to other state Klaverns, or even to claim Oregon Klanswomen were unusual without more research in other states. As more research is completed concerning women's participation in right wing organizations today we may understand why women accept secondary gender status and show a continual willingness to oppress outside groups such as Jews, immigrants, feminists, and gays and lesbians. Right wing groups are very active today and it would be erroneous to imply that women are not participating in the movements. Hence, continuous feminist research is needed to **challenge** the premise that women were politically insignificant in the past and politically powerless in the present.

Notes from the Conclusion

¹ David Stephenson, Grand Dragon of Indiana, was in charge of 250,000 members during 1923. Stephenson was not only wealthy, but he was politically powerful. He was infatuated with a woman named Madge Oberholtzer whom he raped and was charged for her death, which resulted in a suicide attempt by poisoning. He was charged with second degree murder, and when the governor refused to release him from prison, Stephenson started telling Klan secrets and incriminated several politicians. By 1926, KKK membership sharply declined as a result of Stephenson's indiscretions and brutality (Katz 101-104).

² William Loren Katz. *The Invisible Empire, The Ku Klux Klan Impact on History*, (Open hand Publishing, 1986), 104.

³ Katz, *The Invisible Empire* 104.

⁴ Kenneth T. Jackson. *The Ku Klux Klan. in the City, 1915-1930*. (Oxford University Press, 1967), 213.

⁵ Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan. in the City*, 212.

⁶ Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan. in the City*, 214.

⁷ (Oregon Historical Society, *Glos and Glos*).

⁸ (Oregon Historical Society, *Glos and Glos*, 2).

⁹ (Oregon Historical Society, *Glos and Glos*).

¹⁰ Eckard Vance Toy, Jr. *The Ku Klux Klan in Oregon: Its Character and Program*. Thesis presented to University of Oregon, Department of History, 1959, 128.

¹¹ Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 69.

Propaganda clouded the wrongdoing of the KKK, as loyalty to the men's group was highly publicized by the WKKK. In an exceedingly affectionate letter reportedly written by a WKKK member who sang high praises of Gifford, the importance of men in the Klan is dramatized. The author was not specified and may have been a letter written by Gifford or by his colleagues, and sent in as a letter from a WKKK member, as the men were not always scrupulous. The letter was written on June 28, 1923, to welcome Gifford home, after suspiciously selling out the LOTIE. After reading the letter out loud, I noticed a rhythmic pattern and actually found that it must have been written as a poem in its original format. The piece is a classic piece of Klan propaganda.

Welcome home beloved Grand Dragon,
 faithful guide and leader of men.
 Thousands strong the Klan will follow
 do your bidding your every command.
 Man of strength, manhood loyal,
 faithful soldier of the fiery cross,
 signaling the white Protestant people to duty,
 else what is ours by birth is lost.
 Awake America! Your sleep is ended join in this our great powerful band,
 of pure white all American Christians, protect our Bible, our flag, our
 land. Business man, professional man,

proud to be a member of the Klan,
 yet for business reasons weak kneed,
 lukewarm expects to be honored as a real man.
 Pray to God to give to cause more back bone.
 May God give us real men in this time of need,
 more men like our noble Grand Dragon -
 highest ideal of manhood, in principle and deed.
 Thousands of white robed hooded Klansmen,
 what a beautiful sight to conceive,
 all white Protestant Americans, real men -
 how proud they should be.
 Men come forward, give your strength,
 your heart, your hand, and close behind the flaming cross will follow.
 WKKK (The *Western American*, June 28, 1923 p 2).

If indeed the letter was written by a Klanswoman, the author obviously leaves women's identity completely out of the poem and glorifies the male gender. At this point this voluntary invisibility in the Cause would be unlikely. If it was indeed written by a man, it would be an obvious strategy to put men first in the order, as well as glorify Gifford's role as the Grand Dragon. The women were not hesitant to celebrate themselves or their new leaders, and did not readily embrace a secondary position as women.

¹² Katz, *The Invisible Empire*, 93.

¹³ Interestingly, the Klan dictated to its own members what they could or could not do and often in a threatening tone. The following excerpt is an example of racism, and an example of paranoia that Klan members may be swayed by someone else's propaganda.

Don't attend this race equality meeting. Mrs. Beatrice H. Cannady, colored, the talented manager of the Advocate, a Portland journal for negroes is scheduled to speak at a meeting of the daily vacation Bible school in Arleta, probably speaking of equal rights. "Klansmen and their wives and daughters will not attend this meeting" (The *Western American*, July 6, 1923).

The mandate specified the demand to Klansmen and included wives and children, as though the women and the family itself was controlled by the man. Yet the command was to the family as a whole, just in case attending the meeting could cause sedition. Although there was no threat to the Klan, the message was quite clear that Cannady may vacillate family members away from racist ideology.

¹⁴ Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 177.

¹⁵ Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 176.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Chronology of Klan Events

1863- Emancipation Proclamation

1866- First organized Ku Klux Klan appears.

1867- Ku Klux Klan headed by General Nathan Bedford Forrest, First Imperial Wizard of the KKK.

1870- 1872- Ku Klux Klan officially dissolved.

1915- Reemergence of the Ku Klux Klan led by William J. Simmons.

June 1920- Klan takes off in popularity as a result of the Southern Publicity Association. Simmons hired Elizabeth Tyler and Edward Clarke to promote the Klan. In their first 6 months Tyler and Clarke signed up 85,000 new members (representing \$850,000 in dues).

1920- Elizabeth Tyler became the first major female leader in the Ku Klux Klan.

1921- U.S. House Committee on Rules investigated the accusations by Klansmen that Tyler was the head of the Klan and that Clarke and Simmons were figureheads.

By the mid 1920s approximately 4 million women and men enlisted

1921 Kleagles arrived to recruit affiliates in Portland. After a dispute they were replaced by Fred Gifford and he became the Exalted Cyclops of the Portland Klan.

July 7, 1922- Ladies of the Invisible Empire are incorporated by Grand Dragon of Oregon, Fred Gifford, Minister and Klan lecturer, R.H. Sawyer, and kleagles, Rush Davis and Luther Powell. Filed in Salem Oregon the LOTIEs were based in Portland. R.H. Sawyer was the Grand Counselor of the LOTIEs.

July 1922- Lem Dever began the *Western American*, a Klan weekly newspaper in Astoria, OR.

August 1, 1922- R.H. Sawyer resigned as Grand Lecturer of the Northwest KKK.

November 7, 1922 Oregon Klan endorsed candidates and measures won, including the Oregon School Bill, which outlawed parochial schools.

November 1922- Hiram Evans, Texas dentist, becomes the imperial Wizard of the Klan and dismissed both Tyler and Clarke as promoters and leaders of the Klan.

- 1922- Grand League of Protestant Women formed in Houston Texas, White American Protestants (WAP), Ladies of the Invisible Empire (LOTIEs), Queens of the Golden Mask (QGM), Ladies of the Cu Klux Klan, Order of American Women, Ladies of the Golden Den, Hooded Ladies of the Mystic Den, and Puritan Daughters of America. And Dixie Protestant Women's League, all predecessors to the WKKK.
- 1922- Imperial Klanvocation voted to meet with women concerning a policy about women's organizations. The meeting was scheduled June 1923, in Washington D.C.
- March 1923- Simmons jumped the gun and launched the Kamelia in an effort to gain control of the KKK back from Hiram Evans.
- March 21, 1923- Rush Davis claimed control of the Portland LOTIEs as the Supreme Grand Counselor.
- April 4, 1923- Albany, Corvallis, and Lebanon chartered the LOTIEs.
- May 11, 1923- Portland LOTIEs attacked Rush Davis at Redmen's Hall.
- June 1923- Hiram Evans began the Women of the Ku Klux Klan (WKKK) in a counter attack against Simmon's Kamelia.
- June 1923- Lulu Markwell appointed to lead the WKKK with a starting membership of 125,000 women.
- June 10, 1923- Judge R. Mann officially chartered the WKKK in Little Rock, Arkansas.
- June 14, 1923- WKKK sets up headquarters officially in the same office as the LOTIE headquarters.
- June 21, 1923- Maybelle Jette was named the Exalted Cyclops of the Portland WKKK, and Mrs. M.V. Schonberg of Portland had state leadership in Oregon.
- August 23, 1923- Maybelle Jette was named Exalted Commander of the Portland WKKK.
- September 8, 1923- the Oregon LOTIEs were legally dissolved in Oregon.
- November 1923- WKKK claims membership had doubled to 250,000 women and organized 36 state chapters.
- February 1924- Simmons is court ordered to resign his rights, title and interest in the KKK and the Kamelia. He received \$145,000 settlement.
- 1924- Tyler left the Klan and died the same year

1924- Congress restricted immigration

1924- Robbie Gill Comer succeeded Markwell as the new national WKKK leader.

1925- Indiana Grand Dragon, D.C. Stevenson I is convicted for raping, kidnapping and causing the suicide of Madge Oberholtzer, hence the fall of the Indiana KKK. The estimated Indiana Klan membership of 500,000 dropped to 4,000 by 1928

June 1, 1925- Supreme Court over turned the Oregon School Bill.

1926- Fred Gifford resigned as Grand Dragon of Oregon.

January 19, 1928- Election held for state leader of WKKK in Oregon.

1930- Robbie Gill's last speech to the Klanvocation as the leader of the WKKK.

1930- Second Klan collapsed, although some small factions were covertly meeting until WWII.

1950- third reemergence of the KKK until 1970.

1980s- fourth reemergence and currently active.

Appendix 2 - Glossary of Klan Terminology

I did not find any listing of LOTIE officers, however, the Mother Counselor was the leader on a local level, and other officers are mentioned, but not their titles. The following is a list from an August 1923 *Western American* article combined with a listing from Blee's *Women of the Klan* page 35.

An Imperial Commander governed the WKKK on a national level. Under her a complex series of state, regional, and local officers, with titles of;

Realm Commanders,

Imperial Commanders,

Klaliff (vice- president), acted as presiding officer

Klokard (lecturer) to disseminate Klancraft

Kludd (chaplain) to preside over rituals,

Kligrapp (secretary),

Klabee (treasurer), and

Kleagles (recruiters) major and minor, all taking a share of membership dues,

Klarogo (inner guard),

Klexter (outer guard),

Night hawk, in charge of recruits,

Klokan (investigator and auditor),

Kourier (messenger).

The guards enforced the code of Klan conduct, collected membership dues, and organized events.

Each position was also broken down nationally, statewide, citywide, and locally. All positions were also ranked for example a kourier may have been a kourier private, corporeal, sergeant, lieutenant, captain, major, and colonel. Like their male counterparts, the WKKK had an array of social, cultural, and economic units, including drill teams, bands, choirs, a social service agency, and a robe-making factory.

Appendix 3 – Charity Fundraising

Many large events were held to raise Klan funding or to raise the Klan's public image, and on occasion for specific charities. The King Tut Klub held a dance to raise money for the KKK, while a committee of LOTIEs was assigned to supervise the event. "The net proceeds were donated entirely to the general relief fund of the Ku Klux Klan to be expended for the greatest good, regardless of race, creed, or any other condition."¹ This fund could not be more equivocal about where the money would really be spent. The propaganda that the money would be shared with any unfortunate regardless of race or creed simply put the KKK as a higher moral order by boasting that the Klan was capable of giving to everyone. Entertaining was considered a woman's task and proved to be a popular method for women to raise money. In the 1920s, typically women worked through their churches and communities to raise funds for various charities. Often funds were raised through entertainment, contests and raffles. The LOTIEs organized huge dances including the location, entertainment, refreshments, and decorations for the dance. The organizers also sold the tickets and advertised the functions. For example, a dance held by the LOTIEs, specifically for the Children's Farm Home of Corvallis, was to be held on Friday, May 25, 1923, in Redmen's Hall. The event was co-sponsored by the Camaretta Club and the Krazy Kat Klub, two other organizations of women under the auspices of the LOTIEs.² The organizers expected over 300 couples at 35 cent each to attend for dancing, music, refreshments and cards. In a time where there was little entertainment at home, couples went out to dance, so these were always successful

events. Functioning as “protectors” of women, the KKK or the RRRR were on hand at these events to act as honor guard for the LOTIE’s functions.

The KKK, RRRR, and LOTIE also held large gatherings together as a whole organization to raise money for charity. These events usually would include lectures in order to obtain donations, and entertainment to reinforce the community of the Klan. A huge event for charity was held at the Portland Auditorium Saturday, February 17, 1923, officially under the auspices of the KKK. The evening began with a sermon, which was reportedly “rich with wit and humor.” The sermon was followed by a full evening of entertainment.³ For the grand finale Mrs. H. F. Stevenson modeled a hat and gown made of the *Western American*.⁴ The evening was filled with pomp and circumstance with a finale of a Klanswoman exhibiting her loyalty to the Cause, as well as promoting motherhood and the home. The event shows the massive amount of organization necessary to orchestrate such a large function, especially with all the planned entertainment, which was allocated to the LOTIEs. National Klan headquarters sent specific instructions about how to hold these events to increase public image and membership.⁵ The whole event was probably spectacular, hence reinforcing to all those that attended such functions that the Klan was a great organization and a popular group as well. The roles for the women at mixed events were to provide the entertainment and to act as the hostesses, all under the gender division restrictions that were expected of them as women.⁶

Oregon Fundraising

Women quickly embraced Klan goals that emphasized social services, particularly in that many past associations for women involved work in the community. Since many

Klanswomen were all ready associated with the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) as members and supporters of the organization, the LOTIEs were a strong supporter of WCTU's Children's Farm Home. According to the *Western American*, the LOTIEs raised \$500 for the Children's Farm Home as of May 25, 1923, as a starter for their promised \$5,000 pledge.⁷ The same issue of the *Western American* published a letter of appeal written by W.H. Evans, President of the Children's Farm Home, asking for help to raise the \$125,000 needed for the home.⁸ The actual donations given to the Children's Farm Home were far less than the promised amount.

The Children's Farm Home was a charity that the KKK and WKKK used as a great hype for the Klan to raise money and to promote themselves as an upstanding organization.

A distinct triumph was won by Mrs. Ada W. Unruh, business manager of the Oregon Children's Farm Home of the WCTU at Corvallis, for after her address, describing eloquently the dire need of providing a home for dependent children, the delegates voted \$50,000 for two Klan cottages, each having 25 acres of ground... The two cottages will bear the name of the Klan, and constantly will be the object of Klan interest, but will never be the home of any Klan children, all of whom will always have parental homes and all needed loving home.⁹ The Klansmen are deeply concerned in the Children's Farm Home, "non silba sed anthar."¹⁰

Mrs. Unruh herself reported back to the Children's Farm Home that she had found people to help her raise money. "In taking hold of the work of raising funds for the home, Mrs. Unruh found a large army of men and women willing to cooperate with her in every way possible."¹¹ She believed that the KKK and WKKK would succeed in helping her with raising the funds needed to start the home, unknowingly at the time that very little of the money raised would actually ever be turned over to the home. On August 3, 1923,

the *Western American* headlined that the “Oregon Klan Gives \$50,000 to WCTU.”¹²

However, it was reported in the *Capitol Journal*'s interview with Unruh that she was very disappointed that she had received less than \$100.00 of the promised money from the Klan as of November 25, 1923. The Children's Farm Home had actually set up an account receivable for the Oregon Klan, and its affiliates, and tracked all Klan donations. The following donations received from groups was listed in the Book of Remembrance from 1921 to 1929 as follows:

WCTU	44,065.52
Church and Sunday school	20,741.63
KKK	7,964.52
Women's Organizations	10,561.27
Lodges	9,566.88
Granges	1,074.48

Figure 4 Donations to Children's Farm Home, Corvallis, OR

Upon examining the ledgers at the Children's Farm Home, I discovered that there was never a huge lump sum from the Klan itself. Many of the KKK donations were made by Klansmen who donated in their own name and identified their KKK affiliation.¹³ Also, small donations were received from Women of the KKK Oregon, Ladies KKK La Grande, and Ladies of KKK Sherwood. The RRRR also made a one-time donation of \$100. The largest lump sum paid by the KKK was listed as a donation by Walt Taylor, State Treasurer of the KKK for \$2,027.90 on December 6, 1924. The last entry for the KKK was made on December 31, 1925.¹⁴

Gifford went to Atlanta and bragged to Evans and the Klanvocation that he had raised all of the money and said that it had been turned over as promised.¹⁵ The money was evidently grafted by the Oregon KKK, and probably the LOTIEs and the WKKK followed suit. Jette had pledged \$5,000 from the LOTIE and subsequently the WKKK. The Camaretta Club, Krazy Kat Klub, and King Tut Klub reported having raised funds for the home and none of these groups actually donated the money. Also, no money was received specifically from the Portland Council, which was under Jette's leadership, so Jette and other Klanswomen were collaborative in the grafting schemes that plagued the Oregon KKK. Women, then, were involved with the darker politics that eventually closed down Gifford's hegemony over the KKK. The question of the money raised specifically for the Children's Farm Home was never really questioned at the time, except by Unruh herself, and later by various anti-Klan newspapers.

The Klan's final demise was its misappropriation of funds. If there is ever a topic the Klan was vague about is where the money was going even from their members. In one set of financial records that Blee accessed, out of a \$1459.87 only \$10.00 was actually given to charity.¹⁶ Dues were paid to the local groups, however, large amounts were also paid nationally. Charity drives were often to supplement the income of the Klan or to improve the lives of Klan families. Although Klanswomen claimed to be collecting for the needy they often gave to "Klan families arrested for rioting and vigilante activities."¹⁷ Thus, if there were any dissenters about the funds, they would not be able to get any money back without a legal battle.

Notes for Appendix Three

¹ *Western American*, June 14, 1923.

² *Western American*, May 24, 1923.

³ A skit was performed by a group called Henderson and Henderson. Following the skit was a performance solo sung by Mrs. Harvey Blakeslee. The next act was Mrs. Bezlee, who led a group of dancers in a butterfly dance. Next in the program was a musical presentation performed by Miss Jordan who played the violin and Mrs. McCall who played the piano. Performing next was "The Royal Riders," an honor guard band led by Kernel K Kumtax.

⁴ As she walked into the spotlight on the stage she was introduced:

Allow me please to introduce to you the living image of the *Western American*, for this noble mother represents the greatest institution in our land, and that is the home. To make her doubly 100% she is wearing a dress made from the *Western American*, the official journal of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in the Realm of Oregon, the Royal Riders of the Red Robe, and the Ladies of the Invisible Empire, and which newspaper has just one object - the thorough Americanization of all people in the United States. (*Western American* Feb. 22, 1923). Mrs. Stevenson stated that "it is an honor to be the publicity medium of the great and glorious Klan, and to be helpful to the brother organization the Royal Riders of the Red Robe and to the ladies organization which promises such splendid results" (*Western American* Feb. 23, 1923).

⁵ Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 166.

⁶ The LOTIEs raised money for the smaller events as well. In a dance given by the Parent Teachers Association of Woodstock, the association thanked all of the contributors of food and drink from the LOTIE and the Klan. The dance was to raise money for the school and "the ladies declare this is the easiest and most enjoyable way of raising money for a good cause" (*Western American* January 25, 1923).

⁷ "The Ladies are making tremendous progress with their Portland organization and they have the moral backing of the individual Klansmen and of all Protestant organizations" (*Western American* May 24, 1923).

⁸ *Western American* May 17, 1923.

⁹ Note the classism in the statement that no Klan children would ever need to go to such a home. The Klan would provide parenting and support for any homeless Klan child, as if no Klan family ever had the misfortune of children being orphaned or parents who are poverty stricken that may need to use such an agency as the Children's Farm Home. The snobbery is quite evident in the statement, yet the great Klan was willing to be parental and lend a hand to the less fortunate. Again the Klan double talk arises by their classist differentiation of who would use the home and how they touted non-classist behavior within their own organization by wearing white robes.

¹⁰ *Western American* June 28, 1923.

¹¹ *Book of Remembrance*, Children's Farm Home, Corvallis, Oregon.

¹² August 2 - A gift of \$50,000 for the WCTU Children's Farm Home has been voted by the Oregon Ku Klux Klan at its convention held in the Pythian temple. The fund was voted following an address before the Klansmen by Mrs. Ada Unruh of the WCTU and

the superintendent of the Children's Farm Home. The donation represents the gift of all the Klans in the State and it is said that the funds are at hand and will be ready for delivery to the WCTU in the immediate future" (*Western American* August 23, 1923).

¹³ H.C. White from Coquilla and J.M. Klabee from the Dalles.

¹⁴ *Book of Remembrance*, Children's Farm Home, Corvallis, Oregon.

¹⁵ *Western American*, August 3, 1923.

¹⁶ Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 140.

¹⁷ Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 140.

Appendix 4 – Oregon Klan Crime

The fall of the Klan during the 1920s began with exposure of its leaders stealing money and immoral behavior. Many in Oregon found Klan leaders to be hypocritical, such as Fred Gifford pocketing funds, and the accusations against Mae Gifford and her three children for being Catholics. Anti-Klan papers accused Klanswomen of high divorce rates and low morality, while one judge referred to Klanswomen as “sister Amazons of Hate.”¹ In some Southwestern states, men were whipped for wife beating, desertion of their family, and for being home wreckers.² Hence, white Protestants as well as other harassed groups lashed out at the Klan and riots occurred across the country.³ In certain parts of the country, the KKK experienced a backlash against them at their own publicized events. This did not seem to dissuade the KKK as a group, except to perhaps become more secretive about their terrorist activities.

In Oregon, “neck-tie parties” and murder were ways to terrorize enemies of the Klan. In 1922, the WCTU and the KKK criticized Medford police for not catching bootleggers. According to the *Capital Journal* on July 11, 1922, an African-American man, Arthur Burr, was jailed for twenty-two days for possession. Upon his release he was kidnapped by the Klan and taken to Shasta Mountain. He was accused by his captors of being intimate with white women, which Burr denied. “His protestations of innocence were in vain, and he was three times strung up before being freed. A volley of shots were fired into the ground around his feet was part of the warning directed at him.”⁴

In April of 1922, another African-American man named Henry Johnson of Jacksonville Oregon, was also taken to a “neck tie party,” and told to leave town. A

Grand Jury indicted his attackers who were accused of inciting a riot and assault with a deadly weapon. All six were acquitted.⁵ In Salem during 1922, the Klan threatened an African-American man named Charles Maxwell. They left him a message at his business stating “we have stood you as long as we intend to stand you, and you must unload, if you don’t we will come see you.”⁶ In 1924, in Marshfield (Coos Bay), an African-American male was murdered and his body was found floating in the bay.⁷ The NAACP wrote a letter of protest about the murder and the lack of investigation to the governor of Oregon:

Marshfield is infested with the Ku Klux Klan, and we are of the opinion, and so are the colored people who live in Marshfield, that all efforts are being made to cover up the crime. Colored people there demanded a second autopsy of the body, which revealed the testicles had been removed.⁸

A white man was also harassed for a civil suit against a Klansman. J.H. Hale was a piano dealer and a bond salesman. Hale was kidnapped and taken to the mountains, where he was raised off his feet three times by the neck, and then ordered to leave the county or be killed.⁹ The hooded men demanded that he return the letters of the Medford family that he was in litigation with, and not to say a word to anyone about his experience.¹⁰ The Klan’s vigilante activities were rampant in Oregon as well as the rest of the country.

Notes for Appendix 4

¹ Blee, *Women Of The Klan*, 66-67.

² Katz, *The Invisible Empire*, 90.

³ Katz, *The Invisible Empire*, 94

⁴ *Capitol Journal* July 11, 1922.

⁵ McLagen Elizabeth. *A Peculiar Paradise, A History of Blacks in Oregon, 1788-1940*. Portland: The Georgian Press, 1980. 139.

⁶ McLagan, *A Peculiar Paradise*, 140.

⁷ McLagan, *A Peculiar Paradise* 137.

⁸ McLagan, *A Peculiar Paradise* 137.

⁹ *Capitol Journal* July 11, 1922.

¹⁰ *Capitol Journal* July 11, 1922.