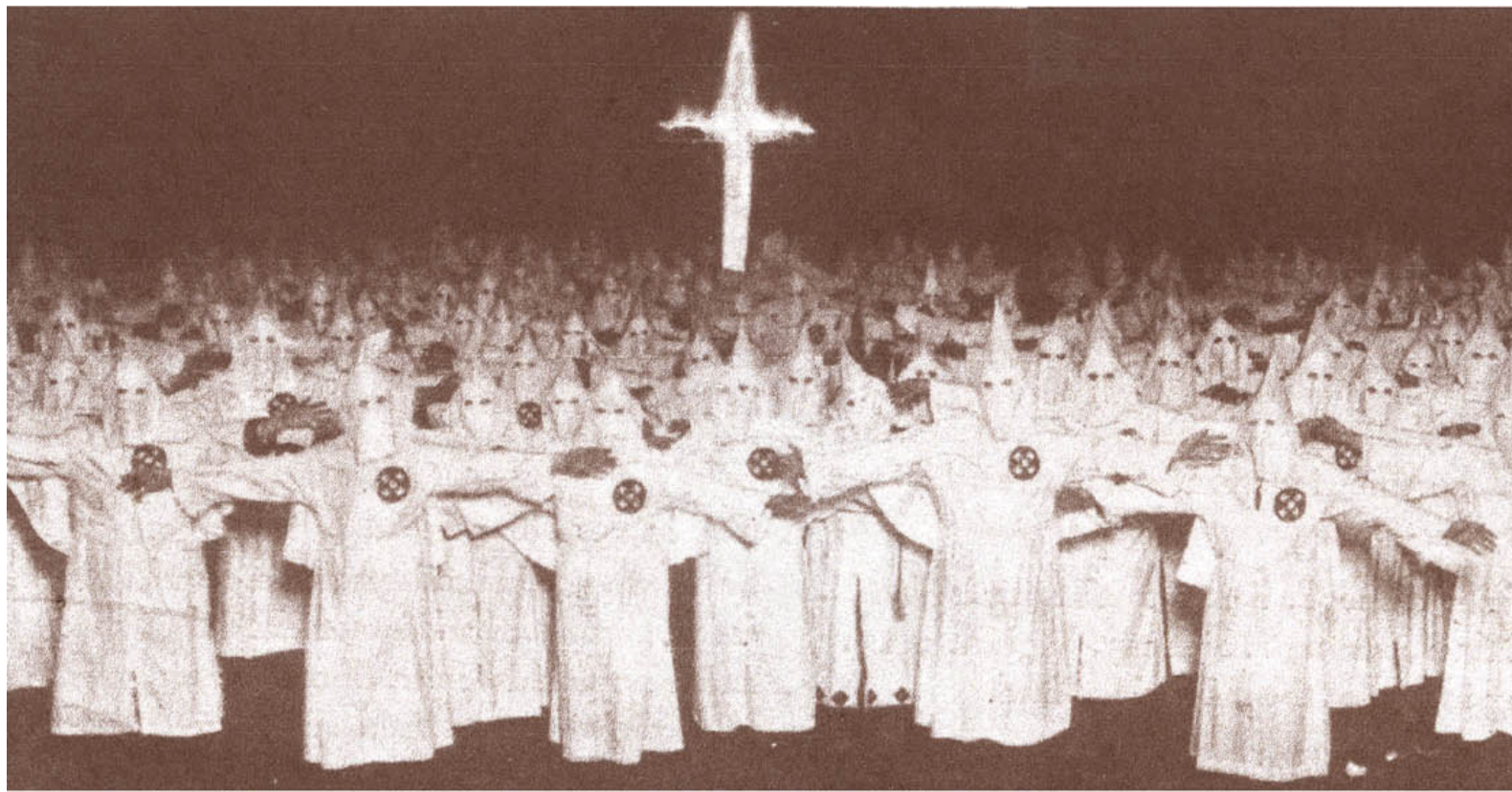


# QUAINT CUSTOMS AND METHODS OF THE KU KLUX KLAN



A crowd totaling nearly 30,000, from Chicago and northern Illinois, gathered to witness the initiation of nearly 3,000 new members into the secret council of the Ku Klux Klan. The ceremonies were performed in an immense field, three miles northwest of Springfield. Similar ceremonials, celebrating the initiation of tens of thousands of new members, have taken place in other parts of the country.

**T**HAT "NIGHTGOWN TYRANNY," as one of its enemies called it, which was supposedly suppressed if not exterminated by concerted exposures and attacks some months ago, has again stalked into public view, bigger, stronger and more influential than ever before, and the country at large is asking "Why?" It has won the hostility, on its Imperial Wizard's own word, of 80 per cent. of the nation's newspapers. A Pulitzer prize was awarded to the *New York World* for its work in gathering anti-Ku Klux evidence, which was published by a large group of influential newspapers covering the country. Most people, perhaps, would have agreed with the editor of *The Lutheran*, who admits, in his issue of July 13, that he had "relegated it to a place among dead organizations." He discovered, with a shock, that it is very much alive. Its power has just been put forth in a Texas election, and its influence in Georgia, as well as in many other parts of the country, is admitted, even tho, following a threat by Governor Hardwick, its Imperial Grand Wizard announced on July 22 that the Knights had been ordered to discard their masks, robes and other regalia, except when in their lodge rooms. The order, according to an Associated Press dispatch from Atlanta, at first mentioned only Georgia Klansmen, but later it was said that the regulation would become general.

Whatever the secret of the Klan's "pulling power," even its enemies admit that it is doing very well. Reports of huge initiation ceremonies, weird and picturesque, come from such widely separated parts of the country as Los Angeles, Chicago, "somewhere in Massachusetts," and Lockland, Ohio, near Cincinnati, as well as from numerous places throughout the South, where the movement originated. While various editors indulge in long and carefully considered explanations of the Klan's power, the *Seattle Spokesman-Review* speaks for a large element in announcing that the vigor of the movement is "explicable only on the theory that a considerable number of the American people love mummeries, are fascinated by mystery, and dearly love to be swindled." Whatever the cause, scenes like that described in the *Tulsa Tribune*, for June 24, are indicative of the Klan's vitality. To quote:

One thousand and twenty men pledged allegiance to the Ku Klux Klan at a giant ceremonial, which lasted for hours last night, on a pasture range about nine miles southeast of the city on the Broken Arrow road.

They were inducted into Tulsa Klan No. 2 before a fiery 70-by-20-foot cross at one end of the immense pasture. A smaller cross lighted up the other end of the initiation grounds.

More than 30,000 motorists from Tulsa and surrounding towns tried to reach the scene of the spectacle, but only a few thousand succeeded. The huge crowd was in 10,000 automobiles.

The attempt of this great number to reach a vantage-point from which to view the unique ceremonial created the greatest traffic jam since the march of the refugees from the towns in France and Belgium when the Germans swept into them at the start of the World War.

Cars were lined three deep on the Broken Arrow road throughout the nine miles to the open-air amphitheater. They were motionless most of the time. When the lights were turned out on the crosses shortly after 11 o'clock, the cars were hours in unwinding and getting home.

Not only was the paved Broken Arrow road jammed, but all of the feeder roads and even the prairie trails were alive with crawling autos.

To the aviator who flew over the scene with his plane sparkling with a cross beneath it the scene must have resembled a giant forest alive with fireflies.

To the motorist on the ground, everywhere he looked he seemed to see an endless procession of beetles with twinkling eyes.

In the traffic jam were 580 Klan neophytes, a member of that organization told *The Tribune* to-day.

At the last minute yesterday it was decided to make the class 1,600 instead of 1,000, the Klansman said. But only 1,020 could reach the spot, and after an hour's delay these were initiated.

The Klansman who called *The Tribune* to-day said that very soon there would be another initiation here for the other 580. Next time, he said, better arrangements would be made for the crowd.



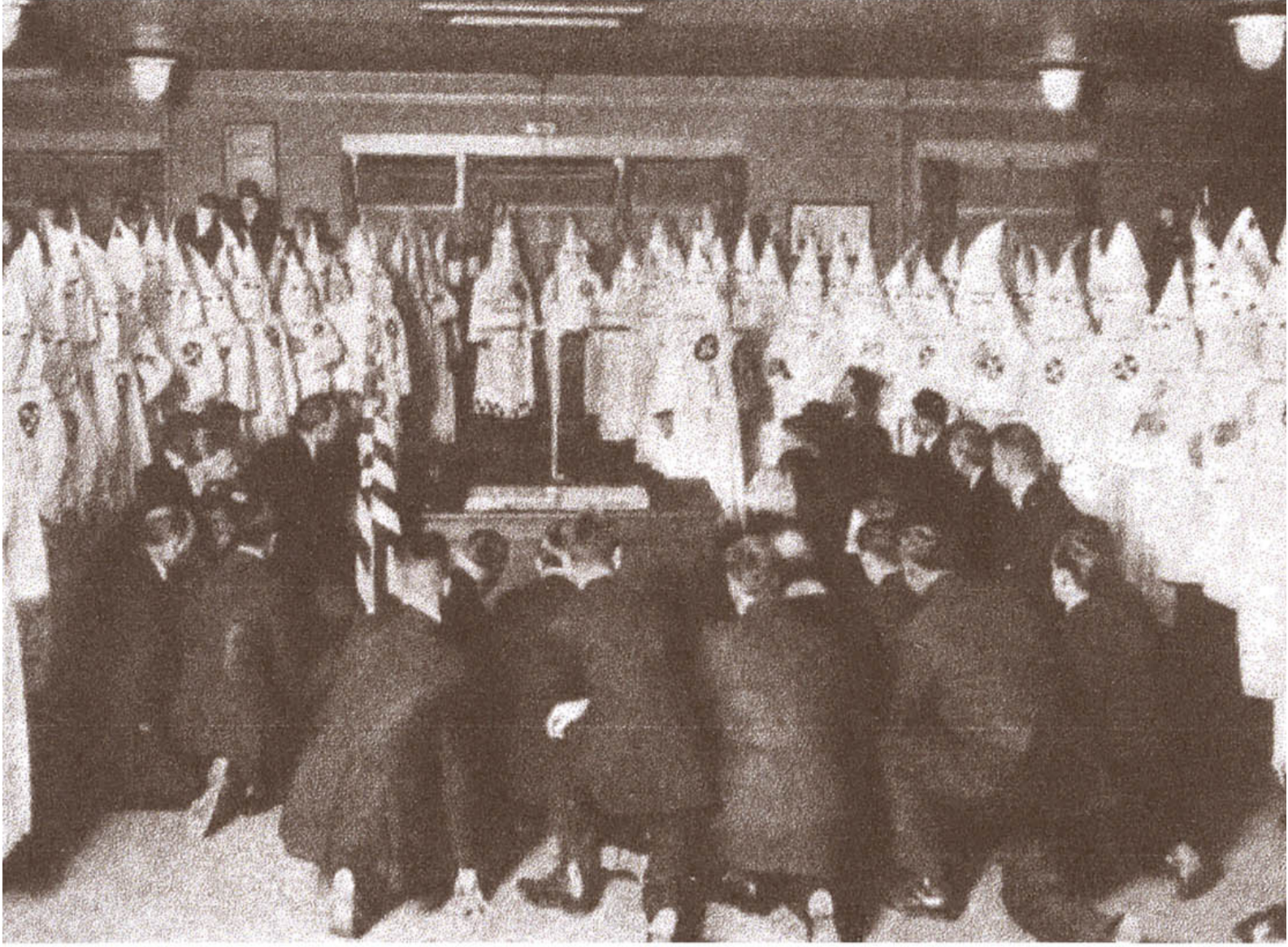
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He also announced that next Wednesday more than 1,000 would be "naturalized" at an open-air ceremony near Muskogee, and that another class of 1,000 would take the oath July 1 at Bartlesville.

One negro girl was well up front at the ceremony last night.

"How many Klansmen were there in the field?" she was asked by the occupants of one car as she walked homeward.

"I've counted a thousand of them Ku Kluxes," she declared, "and they wuz thousands more."



SWEARING ALLEGIANCE TO THE INVISIBLE EMPIRE.

The photographer who secured this unusual photograph was blindfolded before being permitted to enter the sanctum of the Klan and blindfolded again when taken away, so that he would be unable to reveal the whereabouts of this Klan Temple, which is said to be "somewhere in Los Angeles."

Several small boys were able to view the entire spectacle, they told less fortunate persons along the road.

They described the ceremony with graphic phrases.

"Every one knelt before the flag and seemed to kiss it," one of the boys said. "It was awful solemn and spooky. White figures were every place."

At Beaumont, Texas, reports *The Beaumont Enterprise*, the Klan claims to have one of the strongest organizations of the South. Recently, according to this paper:

The Klan announced in a published statement that it would hereafter function as a political machine. It plans to place in office Klansmen or sympathizers of the order. With this announcement a Citizens' League was immediately formed to combat the Klan's announced intention, and the bitterest political campaign in the history of the country is now being waged. The League is supporting candidates for county offices known to be strongly anti-Klan. Beaumont has been the scene of numerous tar-and-feather parties during the past year. The Citizen's League charges the Klan with being responsible for all these attacks. The Klan admitted beating and tarring Dr. J. S. Paul and R. F. Scott, sending letters under the official seal to newspapers, giving a detailed account of these affairs, but later denied both attacks following a visit here of one of the imperial officers of the Klan. The city is split "wide open" as the result of the Klan's entrance into the political field, and feeling is running high in some quarters.

Tar-and-feather parties, and more serious offenses against law and order, in many sections of the country have been credited, either rightly or wrongly, to the Klan. On the other hand, the Klansmen are responsible for such incidents as this, related in the *Sacramento Bee*:

The Ku Klux Klan raised its hooded head last night for the first time in Sacramento.

Choosing Palm Sunday as the day of its advent, six supposed members of the mystic order appeared with the suddenness of an apparition at the Westminster Presbyterian Church last night, shortly after the close of the evening sermon, marched to the altar with the precision of a military drill squad, and handed Rev. William E. Harrison, the pastor, a sealed envelop, which contained a new \$50-bank note and a typewritten letter explaining the gift and commending the work of the minister.

Moving in unison, they left as quickly as they came, never uttering a sound, and were gone apparently before any one in the church realized what had happened. No one could be found to-day who saw them approach the church or who witnessed their departure or the means of their conveyance. It is presumed they used an automobile, but this can not be verified.

It is estimated that 800 people were in the church at the time, and the congregation was described to-day as being dumfounded by the suddenness of the appearance of the robed figures.

Not a sound was uttered by any one, and the church remained in silence as Rev. Harrison opened and read the



KKK

key

pin





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Imperial Wizard  
Hiram W. Evans

letter, which was as follows:

"Dated at Sacramento, California. Send reply to XXX.

"Rev. William E. Harrison, D.D.:

"THE UNKNOWN EYE HATH SEEN, and we have come to appreciate the work that you are doing, in cooperation with the allied forces, struggling for the right, and seeking above all things else, the betterment of our social and political conditions, and the spiritual uplift of mankind.

"We present herewith a donation, that we hope will in a small way assist in lightening the burden of indebtedness now resting on your church.

"Back of this donation stands our entire organization, an unbroken phalanx, ready and willing at all times to fight with you, and all honest men, to rout the forces of evil, in whatever form they may be. It is our earnest prayer that you, and all ministers of the Gospel, may prosper in your work; and we as citizens of 'The Invisible Empire,' deem it a privilege at this time, to render you, and the cause you represent, our loyal respect and steadfast support.

"With God, and right, as our foundation, we have nothing to fear in the erection of our spiritual structure.

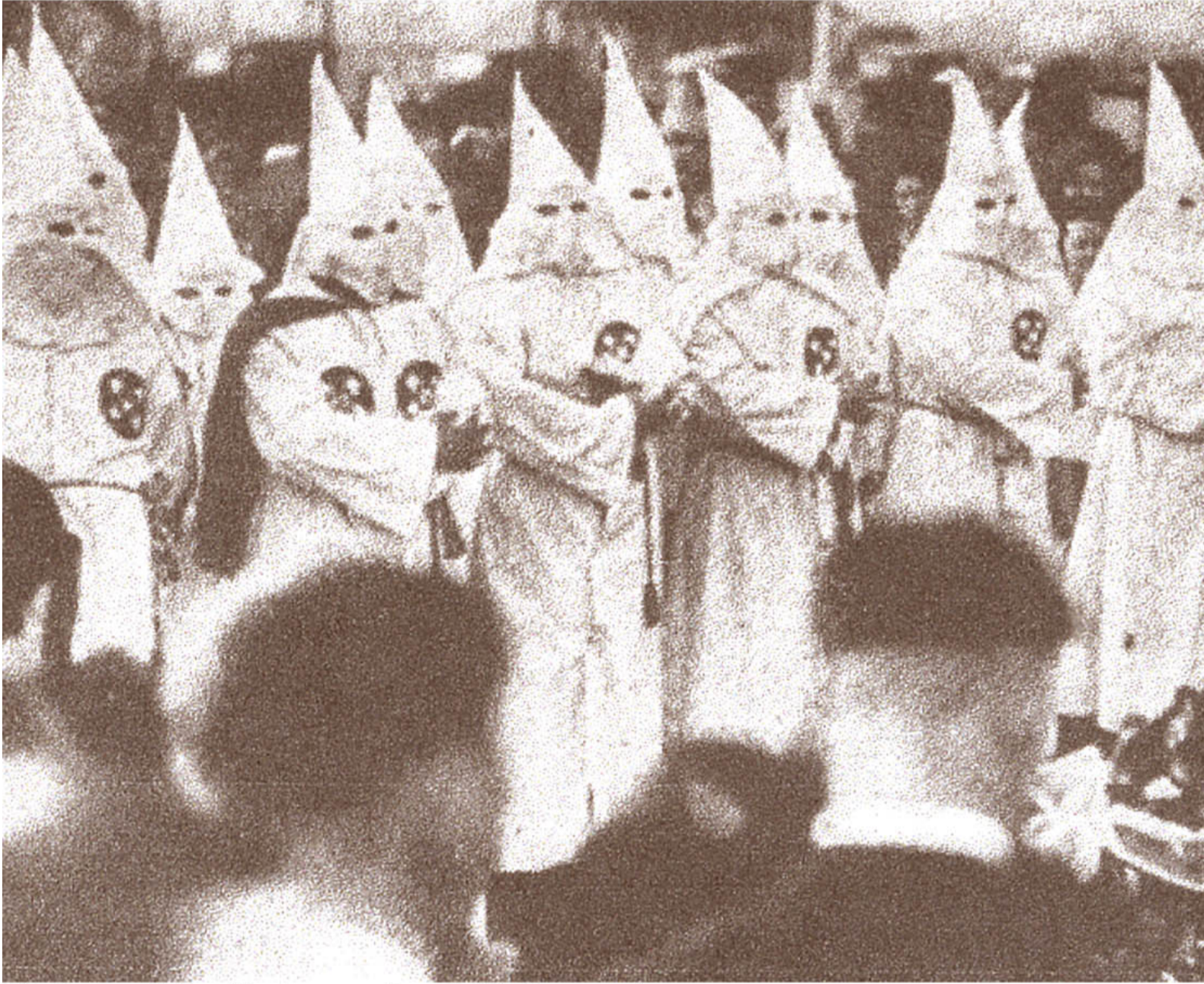
"May God bless you.

"KNIGHTS OF THE KU KLUX KLAN.

"Sacramento Klan, Realm of California."

A "party" of an entirely different sort was put on, at about this time, near Inglewood, California, a suburb of Los Angeles. As the *San Francisco Call* summarizes the incident:

In a suburb of Los Angeles these week-end citizens took the law into their own hands. And, as usual, in such cases, both the



Photograph by Underwood and Underwood.

A FUNERAL SERVICE CONDUCTED BY THE KLAN.

Members of the secret organization are shown as they appeared at a ceremony in Lockland, Ohio, early in the summer, when a fellow Klansman was laid to rest. This is said to have been the first Ku Klux Klan funeral ever held in the North.

law and some human beings were roughly treated. Men rarely take the law in their hands to save human beings from punishment, but almost always to punish them. The result in Inglewood was that one man is dead and that two are dying. A crowd of men, one a constable and two his deputies, went to the home of a Spaniard in the middle of the night and charged him with running a still. It is a preposterous excuse; for bootleggers aren't being mistreated by private citizens these days.

They abducted the man and his brother, mistreated his wife, compelled his two young daughters to dress themselves before the crowd, and drove a nearby family into the fields in the cold of the night. All this in the name of the law. Finally they were routed by one man—Frank Woerner, night marshal, who remembered the law and fought in its behalf. This one man, both physically and otherwise brave, was stronger than the mad one hundred.

It is not proved that the Ku Klux

An 1867  
lynching  
reward pin



Vintage KKK Travel Alarm Clock





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Klan directed the raid. The grand goblin of the Pacific domain of that Order, who lives in Los Angeles, announces that if any Klansmen took part, they did so without authority. But that's ridiculous. The sort of thing such organizations stand for, in the name of "red-blooded citizenship," is as contagious as influenza or extravagance in any other form. There may not have been a single follower of the goblin in that mob, but the goblin, nevertheless, was its leader.



KKK "Michigan Realm" coin

As an incident of this raid, a constable, a member of the Klan, was killed by Marshal Woerner, and two deputy constables were wounded. The Klan's offices in Los Angeles were raided and evidence produced to show that the Inglewood raid was planned at a regular meeting of the organization. Wholesale dismissal of public officials, "whose oath mingled with pledges of loyalty to the Klan," followed throughout the State. The Los Angeles Times, commenting on this affair and on the action of the heads of the Klan following it, observes that:



KKK money clip

One of the most convenient and practical methods of "fighting to the last ditch" is to make a rapid movement rearward, hunting for the last ditch, leaving the rest of the boys fighting in the first ditch.

That seems to have been the method

adopted by the Grand Chief Pooh Bah of the Ku Klux Klan, who has coolly disowned the Klan members who took part in the Inglewood affair; and has demoted and reduced to the ranks of a distinguished horde of king kleagles and emperor kleagles and grand assistant grooms of the backstairs.

In making the sweeping order yesterday, which orphaned the night-riding crusaders, Imperial Klaliff Edward Young Clarke issued a solemn ukase in which he said, among other things, that they will fight to the last ditch for something or other—it isn't very clear just what; and he added:

"America sorely needs the Ku Klux Klan, but it does not need any organized body of men anywhere of any kind who



KKK Memorial coin



KLOTHES MAKE KU KLUX KLEAGLES.

As shown above, by the light of the moon, they are "weird, impressive and awe-inspiring." As they appear in everyday life, in the lower picture, however, they "are just plain Tom, Dick and Harry."



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may have in their souls the belief that they have the right to take into their own hands the execution of law."

All of which is a highly commendable step in the right direction; but it doesn't seem to leave much thrill to knighthood in the Invisible Empire.

Far be it from one on the outside to attempt to assess the benefits and secret joys that flood the soul upon payment of the initiation fee in the Ku Klux Klan.

A rough outside survey of the situation, however, would seem to indicate that there wouldn't be much fun in being a knight of the Invisible Empire without being able to wear a nightie and a hood, and clatter around the country scaring colored people and foreigners, and occasionally hanging some poor wretch to a tree.

The impression that the Imperial Klaliff leaves, as he retreats with the only life-boat, is that the Ku Klux Klan is a highly conservative organization which consists of orderly citizens gathered together to read papers on the best manner of dealing with the outfall sewer, what ought to be done about the parking ordinance and how to insure the safety of milk bottles left on the doorstep.

In order to get a line on popular opinion of the Klan, THE DIGEST recently sent over a hundred letters to newspaper editors, in the various sections of the country in which it has been more active, asking for recent comment and news stories. Of the several hundred editorials received in reply, not one has been favorable to the institution. The burden of most complaints is summed up, rather humorously, by the *Los Angeles Times* in its previously quoted editorial, and in its additional statement that the organization "is always under suspicion when midnight marauders assume functions of authority. There is no telling what may happen when night-riders are abroad. If men feel the itch for wandering around in their nighties, it is best that they be held in restraint. Crusaders and reformers should not find it necessary to wear masks and operate under cover of night." Equally representative is the conclusion of the *Macon (Ga.) Telegraph*, in a two-column editorial consideration of the Klan, that "it is for the good of every Georgian, the Klan members themselves as well, that no secret organization that goes forth masked be allowed to exist." Subscribers to these general views include the *Dallas Journal*, the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, the *Bellingham (Wash.) Herald*, the *El Paso Herald*, the *San Antonio Express*, the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, the *San Francisco Call*, the *Pittsburgh Gazette-Times*, the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, *Fort Wayne News-Sentinel*, the *Lexington (Ky.) Daily Leader*, the *Spokane Spokesman-Review* and the *San Francisco Chronicle*. The recent order for the unmasking of the Knights, except in their own halls, may answer some of the objections of several editors, but, as one of them points out, "lynching parties have proven that masks and regalia are not necessary for mob violence, and any organization which countenances extra-legal measures enacted by mobs is un-American."

*The Atlantic Monthly*, for July, contains a six-page attack on the organization by Leroy Percy. His conclusions run:

The most malign effect of the organization is the destruction of the spirit of helpfulness, cooperation, and love in the community where it intrudes itself. In a community composed of Jews and Gentiles, Catholics and Protestants, white and black, where the life and progress of the community has been marked by helpfulness and cooperation, friendship and harmony, this organization comes to plant discord, racial hatred, religious dissension, and intolerance. Whatever may be its aspirations, it can breed only suspicion and distrust among the members of a community. It paralyzes all spirit of cooperation. It is violative of every principle of Christianity, repugnant to every sense of right, justice,



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and fair dealing between man and man. Good citizenship should actively and openly oppose its entry into any community.

The evils of the organization should be pointed out, so that good men will not join it, and active war should be made upon those who do join it.

Because of failure to pursue this course, thousands have become members of the organization in Arkansas, Alabama and Georgia, and the great State of Texas is rent asunder over a Klan fight. When this organization seeks to find lodgment in a community, the common sense and patriotism of the people should be appealed to. The shams, sophistry, un-Americanism, and evil of the organization should be exposed. The light of publicity should be turned upon the trappings, tomfoolery, and gibberish of the Imperial Wizard.

In a noncommittal editorial, the Birmingham (Ala.) *Age-Herald* explains the cause of the growth of the Klan as lying "possibly in the activity of racial groups during the World War, and the influx of negroes into the Northern States. Anglo-Saxon stock throughout the United States, and particularly in the South, where it predominates, was thoroughly incensed by the unpatriotic attitude of the hyphenates. . . . In Birmingham, Alabama, the Klan has never been guilty of lawless acts, altho it has been charged with such offenses, and there is no doubt that its regalia and the practise of wearing masks encourages lawless persons to commit crime." The writer concludes:

It is rather significant that the congressional investigation of the Ku Klux Klan came to nothing. The attempt of the New York *World* to "expose" the Klan made little or no impression on Washington. It would be interesting to know what went on behind the scenes during the investigation. Congress showed plainly that it preferred to let the Klan alone. That has been the attitude of city and State governments, with a few exceptions.

In Birmingham the Klan has met with strong opposition from the Bar Association. An effort was made to have an ordinance passed prohibiting masked parades, which was aimed at the Klan. It was not passed. Whether good or bad in its influence—opinion as to that being about equally divided in the South—the Ku Klux Klan is a curious manifestation of the times, and draws support from sources that would cause surprize if they were known.

The *Virginian Pilot*, of Norfolk, congratulates the Klan, at least, "on its valiant efforts to establish itself in the public's confidence." The editor observes:

Considerable progress has been made from the spirit of a year or two ago when the Klan was steeped in the illusion that it occupied a position midway between the Supreme Court and the Seat of Judgment. In those days "aliens" caught snooping around its al fresco conventions were intercepted by sentries, hauled before an exalted Night Gown and more or less vigorously instructed to attend to his own business.

There has come a noticeable change for the better. At the Ocean View convention of the Virginia Klansmen a newspaper reporter was permitted to witness the extremely private business of administering the oath to initiates. He heard what was said, saw what went on and was permitted to depart, no bones broken. It is the first time in the history of Virginia klandom that a person not a member of the priesthood was permitted to witness this sacred ceremony with the Klan's permission.

Nothing can be clearer than that the Klan is learning. That is encouraging. For a long time it seemed that it was beyond redemption. The most important reform, however, remains still to be accomplished. That consists in the unconditional acknowledgment of the supremacy of the law. For the present the Klansmen still take oath to use all "justifiable" means to further the Klan's assorted crusades. The evil of that commitment lies in the fact that the Klan is its own judge of what



is "justifiable." The true test is not justification but legality. What is "justifiably" to be done about a sin against society or against the State, is for the courts to define and for the established correctional agencies of the State to carry out. The Klan is here altogether without jurisdiction. In the degree that it assumes jurisdiction, it is an outlaw.

In order to give an authoritative view of the Klan from the inside, THE DIGEST presents below this statement by Edward Young Clarke, grand wizard pro tem.:

With at least 80 per cent. of the newspapers of the country bitterly attacking the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan upon every conceivable angle, augmented by the desperate efforts of misguided philanthropists, political charioteers, and certain religious and racial groups who have nothing in common with Anglo-Saxon ideals, this purely American Order is not only holding its own, but enjoying phenomenal growth.

Arguments against the Klan are invariably based upon false premises. For instance, there is the oft-repeated charge that this organization metes out justice from its own tribunals, an allegation that has never been proven. Another accusation, popular with the anti-Klan forces, is that the sole purpose of the Order is to feed the fires of racial and religious hatred. Again, the public is led to believe that this institution is made up of fanatics, degenerates, brigands, and every sort of enemy to society. We are socialists or anti-socialists, reformers or law-breakers, "wet" or "dry," religious or sacrilegious, depending upon the personal sentiments of our accuser.

We are denounced because, by right of our sacred inheritance, we glory in wearing the regalia of the original Ku Klux Klan as a memorial to that dauntless organization of the Reconstruction Days. The unthinking public condemns us for our strategy in fighting secrecy with secrecy. They censure us because we are sworn to safeguard the welfare and the noble blood of the Caucasian Race, to preserve the traditions of the Republic, to propagate our Christian faith! And it is surely significant that the most violent opposition emanates from racial and religious groups who have nothing in common with those principles.

The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan do not expect to have their principles and working policies universally approved. Every cause has its worthiness questioned. Every issue has its proponents and opponents. But every movement that claims a worthy motive is certainly entitled to fair play, and the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan are no exception.

Opposition to this organization is mainly psychological. It is made up of senseless inhibitions and the associations of ideas. No person has yet presented a logical reason as to why a secret organization sworn to uphold the law, to propagate Christianity, and to perpetuate American ideals, should not exist. I say that no person has done this, unless, of course, he ignores the most vital urges known to man—self-preservation and the safeguarding of the home.

The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan owe their tremendous growth, not to the efforts of professional organizers, but to its individual members. Those who have crossed the portals of the Invisible Empire have found there a great human machine, whose ideals are an inspiration to any God-fearing Christian, and whose ranks are peopled with sane, intelligent and honest men.

The modern Klan is not, as our enemies charge, a revival of Know-nothingism. It is not a political party, it will take no part in political controversies, and it has nothing to do with partizan issues. Klansmen will follow the dictates of their individual conscience in casting their votes. As an organization, we have no candidates—no favored party.

This organization came into existence as an honest attempt to solve certain well-defined problems concerning the interest of those whose forefathers established the nation. It is this force of things, this necessity for national solidarity which has brought the Klan into being.

**THE LITERARY DIGEST**

*August 5, 1922: p. 46*