

KU KLUX KLAN. BATON ROUGE NO. 3 RECORDS

Mss. 4770

Inventory

by
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Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections
Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library
Louisiana State University Libraries
Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University

2005

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SUMMARY

Size	.3 linear ft. (90 items)
Geographic Locations	Baton Rouge, Shreveport, Louisiana
Inclusive Dates	1928-1939
Bulk Dates	1828-1930
Languages	English
Summary	Correspondence, membership material, printed items and miscellaneous items related to the Ku Klux Klan in Baton Rouge and Louisiana.
Access Restrictions	None
Copyright	Physical rights and copyright are retained by the LSU Libraries
Related Collections	Ku Klux Klan Collection, Mss. 2358, 2660, 3011, 3232, 3158, 3309, 3673.
Citation	Ku Klux Klan. Baton Rouge No. 3 Records, Mss. 4770, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
Stack Location	UU:308

HISTORICAL NOTE

The Ku Klux Klan first organized as a secret society in Pulaski, Tennessee around 1865. Confederate General, Nathan Bedford Forrest, became the Klan's first *Grand Wizard*. The group adopted the name Ku Klux Klan from the Greek word *kuklos*, meaning circle, and the English word clan. The organization did not recognize the civil and voting rights granted to freedmen following the Civil War. Klansmen in the South terrorized African Americans and their sympathizers with threats, beatings, or murder while wearing white robes and hoods to mask their identity. The Klan became known as the *Invisible Empire*. In 1871, Congress passed the Force Bill authorizing the President to use of federal troops against the Ku Klux Klan. The organization all but disappeared soon after passage of the bill.

William J. Simmons, a former Methodist preacher, organized a new Ku Klux Klan in Stone Mountain, Georgia in 1915 as a patriotic, Protestant fraternal society. This new Klan directed its activity against, not just African Americans, but any group it considered un-American, including immigrants, Jews, and Roman Catholics. The Ku Klux Klan grew rapidly having more than two million members by the mid-1920's. Departing from its secrecy, the Klan became a political force, assisting in the election of many public officials throughout the nation. The Baton Rouge, along with other communities in Louisiana organized chapters during this time, and in 1928 the KKK, Baton Rouge No. 3 chapter incorporated the Klansmen of the defunct Denham Springs chapter.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Correspondence, membership lists, printed items, financial and legal documents, and miscellaneous papers comprise this collection. Correspondence relates almost entirely to administrative matters, membership, and local chapters. Some letters pertain to national politics, congressional legislation, and anti-Catholic sentiments. Printed items make up the largest portion of this collection. They reflect the Protestant and American ideals of the Klan as well as the political environment at the time. Also demonstrated are the Klan's involvement in national politics, and the threat they believed Catholics and African Americans posed to their perception of the American way of life. Additional printed material relates to Klan affairs and includes an instructional booklet for a "Klavern". Miscellaneous papers contain minutes, book of donations made by members, receipt book for gasoline sales, and the Kilgrapp's (Secretary) quarterly reports.

LIST SERIES

- I. Correspondence, 1928-1930, undated, 33 items**
- II. Membership Records, 1928-1930, undated, 6 items**
- III. Printed Items, 1928-1933, undated, 20 items**
- IV. Financial and Legal Documents, 1928-1939, 24 items**
- V. Miscellaneous, 1929-1930, 1934, undated, 7 items**

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

I. Correspondence, 1928-1930, undated, 33 items

Letters to J. T. Paul, Kilgrapp or Secretary of Baton Rouge chapter, from R. H. Davis of Shreveport, the Grand Dragon of the Realm of Louisiana mostly pertain to administrative matters such as mail outs, meetings, elections, and reports; also regarding membership transfers and reviving Baton Rouge and area chapters. Of note are two letters between Elmer Rogers, presumably a national officer of the Klan, and J.L. Thornton, Secretary to Senator Tom Heflin, of Alabama, regarding prohibition and the threat of Catholics to Protestant and American ideals (May 29, 1930); and the support and contributions of Klansmen, Masons and other fraternal organizations to Heflin's re-election (June 2, 1930). In one of his several letters, R. H. Davis, Grand Dragon, Realm of Louisiana encourages Denham Springs Klansmen to join the Baton Rouge Klan [printed by-laws for relief and benefit fund of the Shreveport Klan appears on verso] (Oct. 18, 1928). Additionally, H. K. Ramsey, Imperial Klaliff, comments on the prospect of building up a Baton Rouge Klan and requests copies of the Baton Rouge newspapers during the Huey P. Long impeachment trial (April 23, 1929).

II. Membership Records, 1928-1930, undated, 6 items

Membership lists with names, addresses and paid dues comprise the majority of membership materials (1928; 1929, undated). Other material includes a membership card issued to E. B Young (Dec. 31, 1929) and a completed membership application (1930).

III. Printed Items, 1928-1933, undated, 20 items

Printed items mostly contain newsletters, published booklets, circulars. The monthly newsletter, *Bulletin*, composed by Grand Dragon R. H. Davis and distributed by the Office of the Grand Dragon, Realm of Louisiana gives updates on Klan business and its political positions. The newsletter reflects the Klan's anti-Catholic views (Aug. 1928; March 1929, June/July 1930) and race relations (Sept., Oct./Nov. 1929). Among the published booklets are the *Kloran of the Knights of the Great Forest*, an instructional booklet for conducting meetings with a diagram and directions for conducting the ceremony (1928). Others are *The Little Bible* of selected biblical excerpts (undated) and an issue of *The Golden Age, Journal of Fact Hope and Courage* contains Judge Rutherford's letter espousing anti-Catholic views (Aug. 16, 1933).

In his circular letters, H. W. Evans, Imperial Wizard, reports on the threat posed by Al Smith presidential bid, which necessitated the Klan's public involvement, and its return to secrecy after his defeat and location changes of the national headquarters (May 28, 1929). Evans also reports the creation of a new ritual, the House of Mirth (Nov. 26, 1928); and calling Klonvocation (May 1, 1930). Another circular details the role of the Klan, views on prohibition and Catholics. Circular (undated) also comments on Al Smith, the Klan's political lobbying efforts, interracial marriage, and the NAACP and other African American political action organizations. Other items contained are the

code for deciphering the password (May 1, 1930); and blank ballots, kilgrapp quarterly reports, membership cards and membership application.

IV. Financial and Legal Documents, 1928-1939, 24 items

Financial papers consist of scattered bills for building maintenance, utilities and property insurance premiums for the meeting hall, and miscellaneous statements of accounts of individuals with local businesses (their relationship to the organization is unclear). A contract for leasing a building between the AKIA Association and Cochran and Killingsworth, a commercial partnership, is the sole legal document (April 13, 1939).

V. Miscellaneous, 1929-1930, 1934, undated, 7 items

Minutes of meetings (Nov. 8, Dec. 13, 1929; May 9, 1930) include the passage of a resolution seeking Representative Kemp's support for the Robinson School Bill and requesting that he work against immigration (Nov. 8, 1929). A memo book records members' donations toward payment on the Klan's outstanding mortgages (1939). A receipt book records gas sales made at Norsworthy's Service Station by John Timple (March-April 1931). Kilgrapp J. T. Paul's quarterly reports relate total members for the month and dues owed to the national headquarters (Nov. 22, 1929). A checkbook (April-July, 1935) and a note of paid and unpaid pledges (undated) comprise the remainder of miscellaneous papers.

INDEX TERMS

Terms	Series
African Americans--Political activity.	III
AKIA Association.	IV
Anti-Catholicism--United States--History.	I, III
Cochran and Killingsworth.	IV
Davis R. H.	I
Emigration and immigration law--United States.	V
Evans, H. W. (Hiram Wesley).	III
Heflin, Tom.	I
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Ku Klux Klan-- Political activity.	I, III
Ku Klux Klan—Rituals.	III
Long, Huey Pierce, 1893-1935--Impeachment	I
Norsworthy's Service Station.	V
Paul, J. T.	I, V
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Ramsey, H. K.	I
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CONTAINER LIST

<u>Stack Location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folders</u>	<u>Contents</u>
UU:308	1	1-2	Series I. Correspondence, 1928-1930, undated.
	1	3-6	Series II. Membership records, 1928-1930, undated.
	1	7-10	Series III. Printed items, 1928-1933, undated.
	1	11	Series IV. Financial and legal documents, 1928-1939.
	1	12-13	Series V. Miscellaneous, 1929-1930, 1934, undated.

