

The Nebraskan Klan: a history

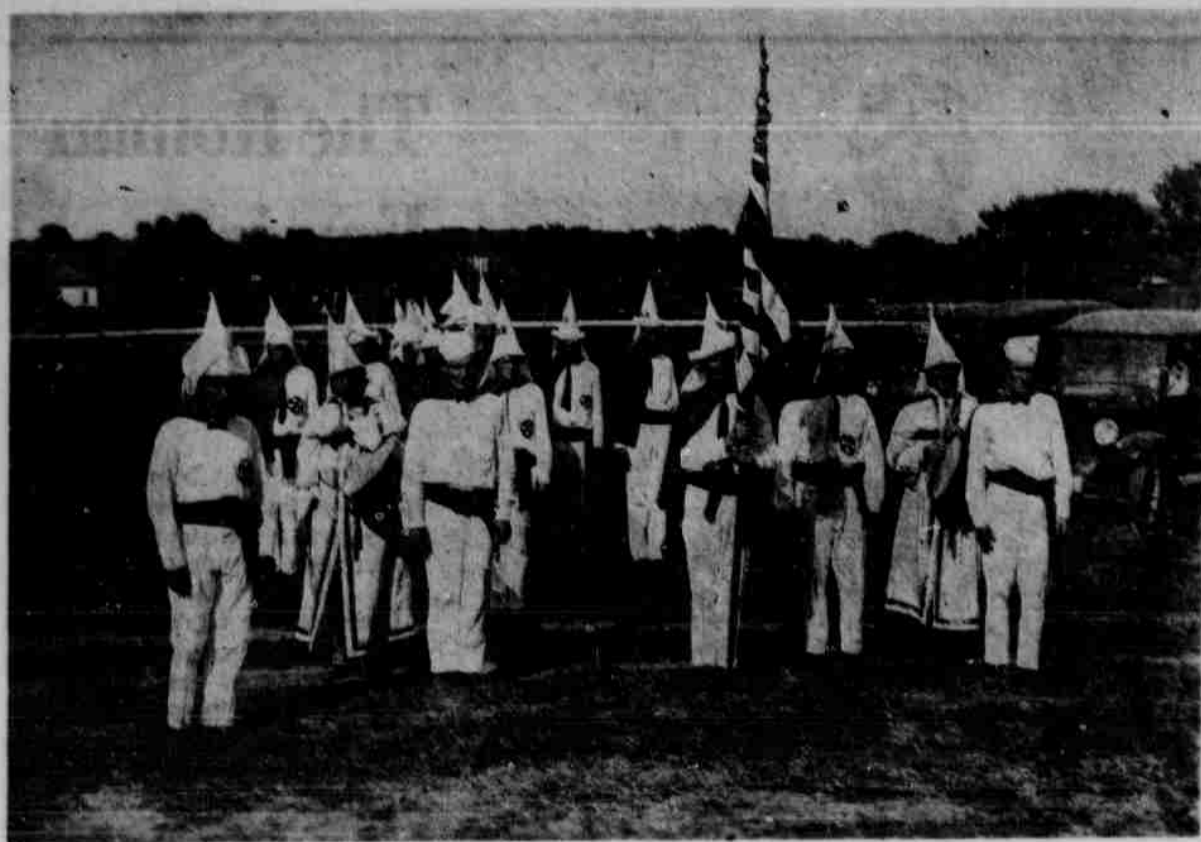


Photo Courtesy the Lincoln Journal

Nebraska Klansmen at a 1929 Klan meeting in Neligh; floggings and burning crosses as a sickness spreads.

"In December of 1865, in Pulaski, near the Alabama border of Tennessee, six young men decided to form a club. They were mainly college men and had been officers during the late War for Southern Independence. Their problem was idleness, their purpose amusement.

They might have taken almost any name. 'The Jolly Six' or 'Thespians,' and followed a completely different path, but someone suggested the Greek word for circle, Kuklos, and with its fine alliterative and mystical possibilities, their path was set. They met in secret places, put on disguises and had great fun galloping about town after dark.

THEY ENGAGED in much horseplay, for which purpose the secret initiation was the focal point of their activities. They quickly realized that their nocturnal appearances had an unexpected effect, and they capitalized on it.

Ghastly, ghostly figures who claimed that they had not had a drink of water since the battle of Shiloh and who lived in hell and had ridden twice around the world since supper-time, frightened the initially credulous Negroes.

To the Southern white, to take a phrase from S. F.

Robert Shelton, Imperial Wizard of the United Klans of America, has called for "millions" of Nebraskans to join the Ku Klux Klan. Following is the history of the Klan, a history of the American way gone awry. The history was compiled by Calvin Rife, a junior in Arts and Sciences and a Nebraskan columnist.

Horn's history of the Ku Klux Klan, 'the time was 'rotten-ripe' for the development of the Klan as a means to control the newly freed Negro and his Northern friends. At first there was no thought of violence but this soon changed."

The Klan began attracting attention and spreading rapidly throughout the Confederate states. There was loose allegiance to the mother-Klan in Pulaski, however, there was no overall organization, and no discipline or restraint.

In 1867 the group was formally recognized as the "Invisible Empire of the South" with a grand wizard at the head of the organization. Each realm, or state, was ruled by a grand dragon, and titan headed each province or county. A grand

cyclops ruled each den, or local unit.

Klansmen tried to prevent Negroes from voting. They rode at night, wearing masks and cardboard hats. They also draped themselves and their horses in white sheets. Then the Klan started getting tough. Klansmen frightened, flogged, tortured and lynched Negroes and Negro sympathizers.

AS A SELF-APPOINTED police organization, it regarded itself as the enforcer not the breaker of the law. It was police, judiciary, and executioner. Its purposes and the "needs of the times" justified its actions, and no sense of guilt lingered.

"Changing conditions and martial law finally combined to bring the Invisible Empire to an end by 1871, but the memory of the Ku Klux Klan remained as one of the treasured folk myths of the South."

A new Ku Klux Klan was organized in Atlanta, Ga., in 1915. It directed its activities against Negroes, Jews, Roman Catholics, so-called radicals, and foreigners. This revived Klan spread throughout the United States.

It is estimated that the organization had perhaps 5,000,000 members at the height of its power. It became a powerful political force in many states. Again the Klansmen burned crosses and flogged, lynched and tortured people whose behavior they did not like.

During this second major offensive the Ku Klux Klan crossed the Missouri River into Nebraska, where Klavern No. 1 was established at Omaha. Forty-first and Farnum streets was the exact location. The Klan then spread across the state, with its main strength in Platte River cities such as Fremont, Lincoln, Grand Island and North Platte.

The five thousand members in Lancaster County numbered more than a tenth of the states total. Anti-Catholicism was one of their hang-ups, as was customary, but no night riding was reported, and the Klan, largely Republican, was not an important force in politics.

HOWEVER, A FIERY cross was implanted on the

capitol grounds one April evening in 1924. The National Klan was active in the 1920 senatorial campaign in an effort to unseat George W. Norris, but its efforts were futile.

"For the most part, Klan power was something that Klansmen only dreamt about in their mystical citadels in York and Grand Island, as the Invisible Empire in Nebraska ebbed away." The Klan was dissolved as a national body in 1944, because it could not pay \$500,000 in back taxes to the federal government.

Klan groups began to appear again after World War II. In 1949, groups from six Southern states met in Montgomery, Ala., and formed a national organization. Many persons were flogged and crosses burned by the Klan. In 1952, more than 60 Klansmen in North Carolina were convicted on charges of assault and conspiracy to kidnap.

The Klan was revived after the Supreme Court of the United States outlawed compulsory racial segregation in public schools. "After tapering off in the late fifties, the Klan sprang into action again with the campaign of Negro lunch counter demonstrations, freedom rides, sit-ins, and later protest marches of the 1960's.

"The increasing pressure of integration, the growth of the equal rights movements and the shift of its focus to the city streets of the South, fueled a growing interest in the Klan." Nightly cross burnings and mass meetings began to draw larger turnouts in Alabama and Georgia than had been seen in a decade. The Klan found a new leader in Robert Shelton, a Tuscaloosa rubber worker.

According to Imperial Wizard Robert Shelton, there are "quite a few" members of the United Klans of America in Nebraska. In a Lincoln Journal interview last week, he said that there were no full-time employees of the Klan working in Nebraska but "there are some coming a going promoting the Klan your state."

"THERE IS activity in the vicinity of Lincoln," he said. "It is left up to the individuals' discretion as to whether they reveal themselves as Klan members and leaders, but I can tell you there are quite a few in Nebraska," Shelton remarked.

Recently Shelton commented that business was booming for the Klan all over the U.S. He claimed activity in 38 states and said he planned to go to Alaska and Hawaii as soon as possible.

DAILY NEBRASKAN

Editorials

Commentary

Hubert, no, Harry, si!

Despite all the liberal panegyrics of late belatedly praising hapless Hubert Humphrey, hardly anyone seems convinced. His old liberal cohorts feel, as Esquire magazine said, that he sold his soul in 1964. As for the rest, there are enough law-and-order mongers around to vote for the way it is, and Hubert's position on that line has remained compromisingly feeble.

What is wrong with Hubert is, in essence, what is right with Bruce Hamilton. Where Humphrey has buried himself in tons of contradictory rhetoric, Hamilton has, in his virginal political career, shown an amazing ability for forthrightness and brevity.

WHERE HUMPHREY has masked his intentions under labyrinthine dialogues worthy of Lyndon B. Johnson himself, Hamilton makes no bones about his ideas.

Hamilton's party is as refreshing as its name (The New Party) might suggest. When he stood up at Saturday's student power seminar at the Midwest Conference on Movement Politics and suggested that a group of bickering radicals get off their duffs and do something, he received the only applause of the afternoon.

As a result of Hamilton's speech, University students are organizing a march on City Hall this Thursday to protest housing discrimination. Perhaps Hamilton senses, as Arlo Guthrie suggests in "Alice's Restaurant," that "if you wanna end war and stuff, you gotta sing loud."

Bruce Hamilton is singing loud, loud and clear. While endorsements from the Daily Nebraskan aren't the hottest-selling item on the political assets market this year, it seems that anyone who wants to end war and stuff would do well to sing along with Bruce.

A BRILLIANTLY perceptive former Innocent was good enough to point out to this writer that Robert Denny shouldn't be overlooked when it comes to handing out endorsements because he is an ex-FBI man.

This country has had enough of the FBI. It has had enough of the anti-communist hysteria that colors our thoughts pink and colors Vietnam red. It has also had too much of men like Clair Callan who want to play it safe and stick with LBJ all the way.

America has not heard enough from its Bruce Hamiltons. Perhaps it should try one. After all, he's an ex-Peace Corps man.

Jack Todd

of men and words

Who then devised the torment? Love.

Love is the unfamiliar Name

Behind the hands that wove

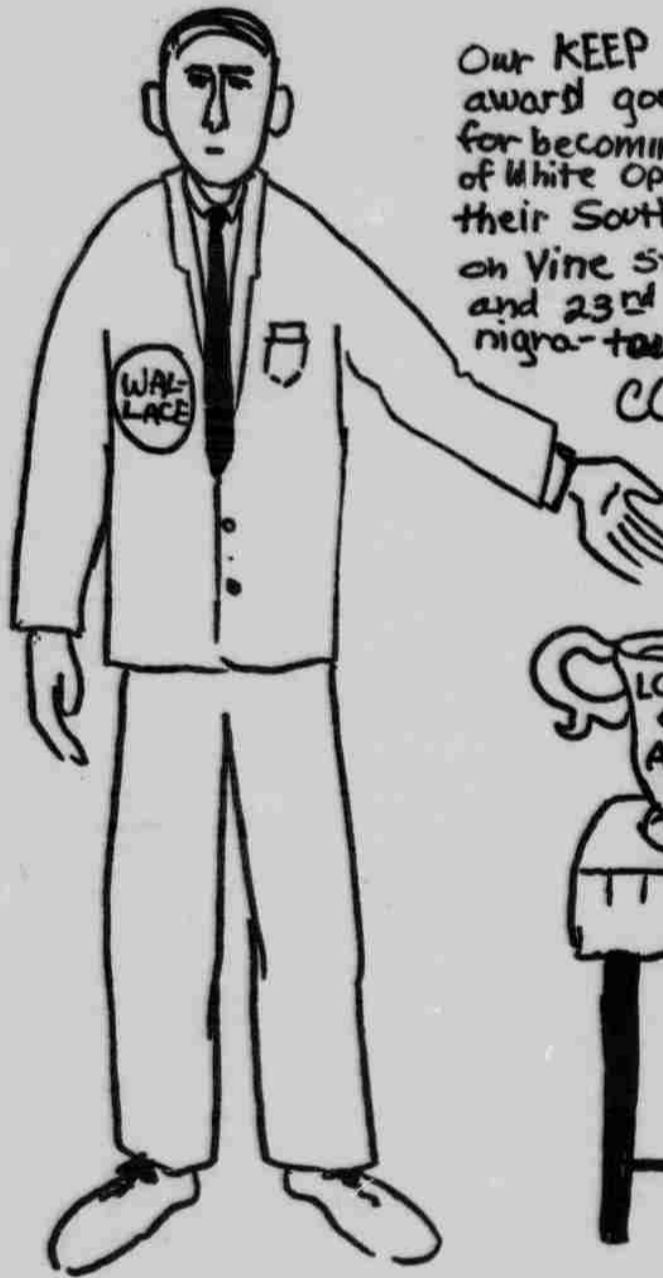
The intolerable shirt of flame

Which human power cannot remove.

We only live, only suppire

Consumed by either fire or fire.

T. S. Eliot
Little Gidding



Our man Hoppe . . . Yes, Virginia, there is a George Wallace

"Dear Mr. Hoppe: I am eight years old. Some of my little friends say there is no George Wallace. Please tell me the truth, is there a George Wallace?"—Virginia.

Yes, Virginia, there is a George Wallace. He exists as certainly as Commies and Yippies and bearded pseudo-intellectuals exist.

ALAS! HOW dreary would be our fate if there were no George Wallace. It would be as dreary as if none believed in him. There would be no childlike fears then, no hatreds, no sense of superiority to make tolerable this white middle-class existence.

Not believe in George Wallace! You might as well not believe in hobgoblins. You might get your papa to hire men to watch every door at night to catch hobgoblins, what would it prove?

Nobody sees hobgoblins, but that is no sign that there are no hobgoblins. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see.

Did you ever see Black Panthers dancing on the

White House lawn? Of course, not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the horrors there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

No George Wallace! He lives, Virginia, in the hearts of men.

Each time a man says, "If any dirty demonstrator lies down in front of my car, it'll be the last car he lies down in front of," George Wallace lives, Virginia.

EACH TIME a man says, "I got mine and they can go

to hell," George Wallace lives, Virginia.

He lives in the hearts of those who see the unseen and the unseeable — those who see a pinko State Department plotting to bankrupt us by giving away our hardearned money to Commies overseas; those who see a power-mad Supreme Court destroying law and order; those who see that crooks are running our country, that hoodlums are running our cities, and that the Washington bureaucrats with their briefcases are out to enslave us all.

Daily Nebraskan

Second-class postage paid at Lincoln, Neb. TELEPHONES Editor 472-2586, News 472-2588, Business 472-2589. Subscription rates are \$4 per semester or \$8 for the academic year. Published Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday during the school year except during vacations and exam periods by the students of the University of Nebraska under the jurisdiction of the Faculty Subcommittee on Student Publications. Publications shall be free from censorship by the Subcommittee or any person outside the University. Members of the Nebraskan are responsible for what they cause to be printed. Member Associated Colleges Press National Educational Advertising Service.

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And you know him, Virginia. Have you known anger at your parents for making you share your candy with your brothers? Have you known envy for those richer and contempt for those poorer? Have you known distrust and unease and fear on being alone in a dark and empty house, swept by strange noises you do not understand?

Then you know George Wallace, Virginia.

Most important of all, have you ever wished for a magic wand to whisk away your troubles in a world you never quite made? Ah, Virginia, in all this existence there is nothing else so real and abiding as faith in that magic wand.

No George Wallace! He lives, Virginia, and he has lived forever. A thousand years from now — nay, ten times ten thousand years from now — he will continue to frighten the hearts of the childlike and ride the crest of their fantasies.

Unless, Virginia, we all grow up.

Chronicle Features

CAMPUS OPINION

Mr. Editor:

On September 20th I accepted a position of non-cooperation with the SSS, by the act of mailing my cards back to Local Board No. 66 in Fullerton, Nebraska.

I believe a thirteen member A.S.U.N. subcommittee should be formed for an exhaustive study into this action. This study is vital for two reasons.

FIRST OF ALL, what factors were present that would allow two students to act on their conscience? The second and most pressing reason is the prevention of the mass spread of this disease to any other students who have maintained an active conscience.

It is of the utmost importance that their students (if alive) be made aware of this sickness. The main symptom of this ugly sickness is rumored to be an overpowering love for all people.

A.S.U.N., I appeal to you. You must act quickly and violently as I know you can.

In Peace and Love
Bob Lucy

Dear Editor:

Well, you've done it again! Your editorial page never ceases to amaze me. I see you're still supporting draft dodgers here on campus. Well, as a former Sgt.-U.S. Marine, (and damn proud of it), I simply cannot go along with your views.

If everyone felt like you did, I'm afraid our country would be in a hell of a shape. Anyone who avoids the draft

to obtain temporary safety deserves neither liberty nor safety!

YOUR CONCEPT of war is extremely limited it seems to me, so may I suggest you and your staff spend a thirteen month tour in the Viet Nam theatre of conflict to broaden your scope. Perhaps this would no doubt enlighten you as to the moral issues you always seem to bring into your articles in "The Daily Nebraskan."

As for me, I don't feel like fighting a war in the United States. We've got to stop Communist aggression someplace and Viet Nam seems like as good a place as any. Stop and think about it, what have you done for your country lately?

Warren H. Storms

Dear Editor:

Ernie Chambers said that defenders of free enterprise do not understand motives other than "making money." On the contrary, we do understand what the sloppily used terms mean. We know that only two choices are open to a man wishing to survive: making money, i.e. creating wealth, or parasiting those who do make money.

Chambers is right: the American government has become destructive of our rights. However, it is not by attacking free enterprise that we will reverse the situation.

Jacky Emmons Hood
Tom Cardwell
Roger Stark
Hull Cook
Edwin Loeffel, Jr.