

**"THERE IS HELL GOING ON UP THERE":
THE CARNEGIE KLAN RIOT OF 1923**

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As darkness fell on August 25, 1923, the Imperial Wizard of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Hiram Wesley Evans, arrived at a rally outside Carnegie, Pennsylvania. During the Saturday afternoon, twenty-five thousand Klansmen had converged on a hillside on the Forsyth farm in Scott Township, overlooking the city. The original planning for the event, which involved an initiation ceremony of one thousand new members and burning a massive cross, also included a late-night parade in regalia through the streets of Carnegie. But the city burgess opposed the march, a matter Evans addressed as he spoke before what seemed a "peaceable assembly" after 9:00 p.m. He told the crowd that they lacked permission to enter the town, though Klansmen as American citizens "had a perfectly just and legal right to march through the streets of Carnegie."¹ The assembled Knights voiced their collective displeasure by interrupting the speech, prompting Evans to announce, "we are taking [the issue] under advisement and you may get your chance."² Parade marshal Roy Barclay

"told the Imperial Wizard we had better march or we would have trouble." The Grand Dragon of Pennsylvania, Sam Rich, and Klan pastor Rev. William Dempster huddled with Evans and Barclay to consider the issue. Evans then gave the order to parade through the city as planned.³ Within an hour, an outburst of savage public violence resulted. One man lay dead and hundreds were injured in the wake of a massive riot that unfolded on the streets of the western Pennsylvania town.

Though the "most publicized incident in Pittsburgh Klan history," as Kenneth T. Jackson notes, the Carnegie riot has received little more than passing references from historians studying the organization. In spite of his recognition of the importance of the incident, Jackson devotes a mere paragraph to the disorder in his comprehensive *The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-1930*.⁴ David M. Chalmers better appreciates the role of violence in contributing to Klan growth in the Keystone State, but his coverage of the riot in *Hooded Americanism* is nearly as brief.⁵ Even Emerson Hunsberger Loucks's impressive 1936 organizational history of the Pennsylvania Klan devotes only two pages to the event.⁶ Lacking a detailed investigation of the violent conflict from which to draw, broad syntheses of Klan activism provide limited insight into what occurred on the streets of Carnegie in August 1923.

Though the Carnegie riot may have received brief, superficial coverage from scholars, the general subject of the 1920s Ku Klux Klan continues to spark considerable interest. This attention is warranted, as the Invisible Order attracted as many as five million members at its peak in 1925 and wielded considerable political clout in many areas of the country. Traditionally, works on the Klan have portrayed the secret order as primarily an extremist, nativist fringe group that attracted bigoted Protestants fearful of change. Misfits and outcasts flocked to the reactionary movement that not only championed white Protestant supremacy, but prohibition, fundamentalism, morality, and "one hundred percent Americanism."⁷ Paul Boyer, in his work on moral control in the United States, sums up this view succinctly, observing that the organization "became the pathetic residual legatee of generations of accumulated anxiety over the disappearance of a simpler America."⁸ David H. Bennett, in *Party of Fear*, identifies the 1920s Klan as "traditional nativism's last stand."⁹

Over the past twenty-five years, a number of regional, state, and local studies of Ku Klux Klan activism have challenged aspects of the traditional interpretation, suggesting the Klan is best understood as more of a populist group than a nativist one.¹⁰ The revisionist works serve as a valuable antidote

to traditional interpretations. They demonstrate the danger of treating the Klan as a monolithic national movement composed of aberrant groups of social misfits anxious over status. They show that Klan activism and even ideology varied greatly from region to region. Equally important, they reveal that "ordinary people" of all social classes acting rationally made up the rolls of the Ku Klux Klan.¹¹ It may be comforting to dismiss the Klan movement of the 1920s as deviant and irrational. But as Robert A. Goldberg illustrates in his 1991 study of social movements, the Klan fits well into a long American tradition of organized groups that have acted "consciously and with some continuity to promote or resist change through collective action."¹²

Recent studies, moreover, have considered the issue of the extraordinary expansion of Klan membership nationwide in the early twenties. Historians have long recognized the effectiveness of Klan recruitment techniques pioneered by Edward Clarke and Elizabeth Tyler beginning in 1920, but newer studies provide more sophisticated analyses of the economic and political forces that created fertile ground for Klan growth. Rory McVeigh, for example, employs logistic regression to show that Klan strength was generally greatest in areas facing "a combination of agricultural decline, industrial expansion, and population growth," trends that tended to devalue the "economic and political 'purchasing power' of Klan recruits."¹³ In addition, scholars who focus on both activism and ideology have found Klan support less tied to ethnic conflict than "prohibition enforcement, crime, and a variety of other community issues," as Leonard Moore argues.¹⁴

In many ways, Klan growth and activism in western Pennsylvania was consistent with recent findings in other regions. Considerable evidence reveals that Klan members were indeed "ordinary white Protestants" drawn from across the class structure. Recruitment of members started slowly, with very few throughout the state in early 1922, then expanded dramatically. By the end of 1924, there were 125,000 Klansmen in Pennsylvania—and at the end the following year, as many as 300,000 in the Realm.¹⁵ Allegheny County led the way in the number of klaverns in 1925 with thirty-three, while six of the nine other counties with ten or more chapters also stood west of the Allegheny Mountains.¹⁶ Some of these counties, such as Armstrong and Clearfield, included extensive rural areas where farmers of modest means struggled to make ends meet.¹⁷ In most other areas of Klan growth, cities expanded rapidly in the years before 1920 due to a steady influx of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. Predominantly Catholic, these recent immigrants filled steel industry and other factory jobs, mined for coal,

and worked the railroads. Klan promoters thus found exceptional recruitment possibilities in western Pennsylvania.

A common thread in much recent scholarship minimizes the importance of Klan-inspired violence. As Kenneth D. Wald observes about the organization in Memphis, the Klan was primarily an "interest group peacefully pursuing its goals through conventional political activity."¹⁸ Many historians have suggested, in fact, that the Klan was more likely to supply the victims for violent attacks and harbored, as David J. Goldberg claims, "little interest in battling it out with their enemies on city streets."¹⁹ "In most of the United States," argues Stanley Coben in a review of recent literature on the subject, "the Klan served as an ordinarily peaceful defender of white Protestant morality and power."²⁰ In western Pennsylvania, however, this could hardly have been less true. The Carnegie riot was just one event in a pattern of extreme violence and intimidation initiated by the Klan. In the Carnegie disorder, as in many other instances, Klansmen aroused hatred, sought conflict, and came armed with weapons. As a federal judge concluded in a civil case based on the testimony of Pennsylvania Klansmen themselves, the organization "stirred up racial and religious prejudices, fomented disorder and encouraged riots and unlawful assemblies which have resulted in flagrant breaches of the peace, defiance of law, bloodshed and loss of life."²¹

The period of Klan-inspired violence in western Pennsylvania followed the removal in 1922 of founder William J. Simmons as Imperial Wizard. A faction led by Dallas dentist Hiram Wesley Evans tricked Simmons into accepting a powerless, largely ceremonial position as "Emperor." Evans became Imperial Wizard, while a key figure in the anti-Simmons plot, David C. Stephenson of Indiana, assumed the role of King Kleagle, or chief recruiter, in Pennsylvania and other northeastern states.²² Though often at odds on other issues, Evans and Stephenson shared an interest in seeing the "Invisible Empire" grow less so. Stephenson ordered Pennsylvania Grand Dragon, Samuel Rich, to relax standards of admission to the order, lessen the importance of secrecy and ritual, and build a mass movement. The cornerstone of this plan was to build membership through large open air demonstrations, complete with picnics, dramatic speeches, cross burnings, and parades. Public conflicts with targets of Klan hatred—particularly Catholics—became both common and desirable.²³

In Southern states and throughout much of the "empire," Hiram Evans began a campaign to posture the Klan as a legitimate political interest group that promoted philanthropic causes, and tried to rein in some violence

associated with the Klan.²⁴ But in the North and Midwest, under Stephenson's direction, the Klan sought violent conflict, and the formula was simple. As Sam Rich often told the Klan's paid "chief investigator" in Pennsylvania, Roy F. Barclay, "it takes the riots to swell the ranks of the Ku Klux Klan."²⁵ Demonstrations, cross-burnings, and parades were regularly held near areas inhabited by large numbers of Catholics. Events were scheduled for late evening, after darkness fell, where arriving Klansmen and recruits enjoyed protection provided by special units brandishing revolvers and rifles.²⁶ Participants wore robes during ceremonies, often with the visors down. Bands played military marches, speakers shouted fiery addresses, and large crosses illuminated the night. It was not simply a grand spectacle, but one where potential danger enhanced the excitement. Many Klansmen came armed with handguns, black jacks, or clubs concealed under robes, particularly when parades were scheduled.²⁷

Evans, Stephenson, and Rich understood that secrecy and exclusivity had a place in Klan recruitment, but tedious rituals and weekly meetings could be dull. Grand spectacles aroused the emotions: of people of various social classes; of city, town, or country folk; of men and women. The partisan political rallies and torchlight parades of previous generations faded away in the early twentieth century.²⁸ The war frenzy of 1917 and 1918 gave way to post-war "normalcy." The Klan, simply put, promised a revival of excitement. As historians of the Klan have long recognized, its appeal was not merely ideological: the mysterious order offered an escape from the monotony of daily life.²⁹ Massive cross burnings and pyrotechnics provided awesome entertainment. Moreover, to build a mass movement, Klan leaders required more than visual stimulation, fraternal bonding, and picnics. Bullets and bricks had to fly, streets might have to "run knee deep in Catholic blood."³⁰

The Klan's promotion of violent public disorder was consistent with the well-established American tradition of rioting documented by historian Paul A. Gilje. Klansmen were rational actors with recognized leaders seeking coherent goals through collective action.³¹ This is not to say that the main intent of Klan leaders was to foster organized mayhem, or to murder, maim, or intimidate Catholics, Jews, and African Americans. Public statements of Hiram Evans and other top officials, in fact, claimed that the order opposed violence. Did most individuals who joined the Klan, however, oppose participation in the occasional turbulent mass demonstration? It may have been a secret organization, but its tactics were no mystery. The behavior of the 1920s Klan in many states, including Pennsylvania, illustrates an unsettling lesson,

that "ordinary" people can readily embrace public disorder, vigilantism, and terror.³²

When Sam Rich and other Klan officials planned a large demonstration and initiation ceremony outside of Carnegie in August 1923, they invited and anticipated violent conflict. The presence of Hiram Evans would bring a large crowd to the Forsyth farm. Carnegie itself was a growing city of twelve thousand people, evenly divided between Protestants and Catholics, and a place where the latter enjoyed political power. Many Catholics inhabited Irishtown in the southwest portion of the borough along Chartiers Creek. A transportation hub, fourteen Pennsylvania Railroad tracks carried a train every seven minutes, on average, through the borough. The railroad employed a large number of local residents, while others worked in area coal mines and steel mills.³³ In the days before the planned demonstration, Klan officials inquired through informal channels about permission to parade. They learned that Carnegie lacked an ordinance requiring a formal permit for parades, but knew certain local officials opposed the demonstration.³⁴ The burgess, John F. Conley, an attorney and Catholic, stated his opposition openly and began preparations to keep the Klan out of Carnegie. On the other hand, the police chief, Klan member Christ H. Keisling, visited Sam Rich at Klan headquarters in Pittsburgh to propose a self-serving charade. Keisling told Rich "he could not obtain a permit to march that day" but "when [parade marshal Roy Barclay] was ready to have the parade move, [Keisling] would go to the marshal and say that they were not permitted to parade in that town." Barclay would then announce to the chief that "this is a free town, and we are going to march here anyway." Keisling would walk away, and the Klan would enter Carnegie.³⁵

Klan officials also "prepared" for the event by telling members to bring weapons. Harry E. A. McNeel, Exalted Cyclops and kleagle for Armstrong County, later testified that Sam Rich told him at two o'clock on Saturday afternoon "to provide myself with a revolver" because he had "given out all he had . . . and didn't have one to give me."³⁶ Rich "named fifteen men, including [McNeel], that were to be killed by Catholics and Jews down in Carnegie that night."³⁷

With the potential for violence evident, preparations for the Saturday, August 25 event on the hill in Scott Township went forward. Trucks loaded with lumber arrived early in the week, to be transformed by carpenters on Saturday into crosses, a band stand, and a speakers' podium. Concession tents were erected for serving dinner before the ceremony. Dressed in "civilian"

clothing, Klansmen started arriving at 3:00 p.m. by street car, train, taxicab, and automobile. As many as four thousand cars parked near Wabash Hill, nearly all with Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, and Kentucky plates. Klan guards, most in Army uniforms, checked that autos had white crosses on the front windshield and on the back glass panel. Klansmen paid fifty cents to enter and no one was admitted without a password.³⁸ At about four o'clock in the afternoon, Carnegie constable Ira "Ike" Irving arrested ten of the guards, who were directing traffic in the town, for carrying loaded weapons.³⁹

As the Klan gathered nearby, Police Chief Keisling, acting according to Burgess Conley's directions, called the county detective bureau and the county sheriff's office to request assistance. At 8:00 p.m., the Klansman and Klan opponent met, though certainly the burgess did not know that the chief of police was a member of the secret order. Keisling suggested that "the parade should come through as long as they didn't do any harm."⁴⁰ Conley disagreed and prepared for trouble. "There seemed to be a lot of people on the street and sort of a tense feeling existed," Conley later noted, "it was one of those intangible things that you could not see but you could feel it."⁴¹

As evening approached at the Klan demonstration site, Sam Rich and Roy Barclay arrived together by car and were told that the Klan lacked formal permission to march. At nightfall, Klansmen donned their robes and hoods. The initiation ceremonies got underway at 9:00 p.m. Hundreds of electric lights fastened to trees were illuminated, as was a fifty-foot high cross, constructed of wood and oiled cloth. Hooded Klansmen formed a circle around the thousand initiates, then the Malta Band of Wilkinsburg and a fife and drum corps paraded around the field. Fireworks and bomb explosions followed. After Hiram Evans focused on "education, immigration, obedience to law, and white racial supremacy" in his speech, the ceremony concluded with "a pyrotechnic display of three Ks in red."⁴²

A half dozen revolver shots interrupted the spectacle at one point, apparently fired at Klan sentinels on a roadway. Thousands of Klansmen rushed to the area. As the *Pittsburgh Press* reported, "Cries of 'Get a rope,' 'Lynch them,' 'Kill them' and similar threatening expressions filled the air."⁴³ The snipers were not found. After Evans decided to allow the parade to go forward, Klansmen massed to march toward the city. "Led by an automobile draped in American flags and with an electrical [five foot] K.K.K. on the front," the line of men with visors down or faces covered by handkerchiefs moved down the hill toward Glendale and Carnegie.⁴⁴ The procession of about 3,500 marchers,

with the band at the front, paused many times when confronted by huge crowds of spectators who filled the roads.⁴⁵ Their intended route was straight into Carnegie across the Pan Handle railroad tracks, but this entrance was blocked with trucks. So the hooded marchers, carrying torches, moved along Lincoln Avenue in the direction of Glendale to the Washington Avenue Extension. They started on Carothers Avenue toward the Glendale Bridge spanning Chartiers Creek. Just before eleven o'clock, upon reaching the bridge, the Klansmen found a Ford automobile turned sideways blocking their route. Undaunted, the procession moved the machine and tried to cross the bridge, but a large crowd drove them back. The band at the front had seen enough, and turned around and headed back to the Forsyth farm. With their car still in the lead, the Klan procession pushed back onto the bridge, but could not cross. A standstill ensued for about twenty minutes, while the two sides insulted and jostled one another. Men were perched on the girders of the bridge, threatening and throwing objects.⁴⁶

As events began to unfold at the Glendale Bridge, John J. Dillon, assistant chief deputy sheriff of Allegheny County, arrived in Carnegie. He learned from two injured motorcycle officers of the standoff and thus boarded a sheriff's car with a few deputies and headed for the scene. A boy pressed by him with a bundle of maces or clubs wrapped in newspapers as they drove to the site of the confrontation. The officer expected the worst when he arrived at the bridge:

I seen that things looked very serious and realized that if we could not get control of either party that there would be some serious trouble. After pleading with the citizens and the Klansmen for sometime, I seen it was useless, and I mounted the machine that was leading the Klansmen's parade and addressed the Klansmen in the name of the Sheriff of Allegheny County, demanding them to desist, as we were there to protect life and property, and that I knew if they insisted on marching that there would be some serious trouble. Some of them listened to me, and I went back among the Klansmen myself, pleading with them, and telling them, "What would they gain if they would triumphantly march through the streets of Carnegie Borough if there was a life lost A lot of them were paying attention to me . . . and we held them in check for about half an hour."⁴⁷

Assisted by some Klansmen, Carnegie citizens, police officers, and county sheriffs, Dillon held back the Klan, maintaining a three to four foot space

between the antagonists. The anti-Klan crowd cheered the effort, and spectators continued to taunt Klan members, calling them "yellow sons of bitches" and "one hundred percent bastards." Some shouted, "Kill them. Get a rope and lynch them."⁴⁸

Finally, a Klan official (probably Grand Dragon Sam Rich, who was at the bridge) tried to address the Klansmen. As he stood on the car's bumper, his speech was met with a hail of missiles, townspeople assaulted the vehicle, and some ripped off the KKK emblem. Rich, Barclay, and Dempster decided to continue the march, the order was given, and the Klansmen burst through with a tremendous force.⁴⁹ Singing "Onward Christian Soldiers," the Klansmen pushed through in rows of threes, with over three hundred crossing the bridge initially. In the process, deputy sheriff Dillon nearly fell off the bridge and others were trampled as Klan marchers faced an onslaught of flying bricks, stones, and clubs.⁵⁰ Brutal fighting quickly filled a three-block area approaching West Main Street. The first of the advancing Klansmen engaged in combat with their opponents and gradually battered their way up the street. "The Klansmen waved flags and shouted," according to a writer in the *Pittsburgh Press*, "their voices adding to the din raised by yells of the citizens and cries of the injured."⁵¹ Witnesses reported numerous gun shots.

After the initial fierce confrontation on the Carnegie side of the Glendale Bridge, Klansmen formed into lines of eight abreast, filling Third Street. Spectators packed the sidewalks, side streets, and alleyways as the procession entered the borough. Just as the bitter fighting began, Carnegie constable, Ike Irving, arrived on foot after parking his car nearby. Following a futile attempt to help Dillon hold back the crowds, he rushed with the throng of Klansmen to his automobile, then drove through the crowd, with great difficulty, to the front of the procession. He shouted to bystanders to "get off the street" and "take the women away." As he got out of his car, a local minister asked him what was going on. Irving replied, "There is hell going on up there. They are killing people up there."⁵²

About fifteen minutes after the Klan surged past the crowd at the bridge, the front of their ranks approached Main Street and paused. "There were shots from every direction," witnesses reported, as both Klansmen and their antagonists fired pistols. One observer remarked that the Knights "were so nervous and excited they did not know where they were really shooting—half of them." As Klan marchers approached Main Street just after midnight on August 26, a volley of shots rang out, probably fired in the air, to clear their

path. Some townspeople returned fire from the sidewalk and from alleyways. One Klansman, Thomas Rankin Abbott of Atlasburg, who was standing between Third Avenue and West Main, fell to the ground, hit in the right temple. Some of his comrades carried him to the office of Doctor F. B. Jones at 432 Third Street, a block away. Abbott arrived in a comatose state, barely breathing, and died five minutes later.⁵³

Immediately after the fatal shooting, most Klansmen retreated across the Glendale Bridge to the site of the initiation ceremony and automobiles to take them away from the riot scene. Some of the seriously injured were carried to doctors' offices, undertakers, or private homes. Dozens of Klansmen and townspeople received treatment, but few gave their names.⁵⁴ Critical injuries included a Carnegie man shot twice in the back and another in the leg; injured Klansmen included one shot in the abdomen and one in the head. Only Abbott died of wounds received in the clash.⁵⁵

Twenty Allegheny County detectives arrived on the scene an hour after the fatal shooting. Deputy sheriffs and police reserves from Pittsburgh also rushed to Carnegie to restore order. All cars that entered Pittsburgh were searched and though few arrests were made, "hundreds of weapons were reportedly confiscated." At sunup, witnesses observed "streets strewn with coal, bricks, railroad ballast, cudgels, and other weapons used in the disorder."⁵⁶ As street cleaners loaded numerous carts with bricks, stones, and clubs, law enforcement officers and bystanders picked up hundreds of discarded revolvers.⁵⁷ A few Klansmen were detained briefly by police as they headed home, but no serious effort was made to question them. The *Gazette Times* noted that "many men, dusty, torn and apparently weary, some with unattended wounds, lacerations, and bruises, were seen in Pittsburgh restaurants and passing through the city in automobiles." County detectives showed more interest in questioning residents of Carnegie, but had no luck penetrating a "Sphinx-like silence." Though hundreds of Klansmen and residents were injured, the detectives could only interview the few seriously wounded who remained in hospitals.⁵⁸

The only promising lead into Abbott's death came from a Carnegie resident. Harry Albright claimed he saw Patrick "Paddy" McDermott, a popular local undertaker, fire the shot that killed Abbott. The sixty-five-year-old McDermott faced arrest for murder, and six other residents were arraigned for inciting the riot. No Klansmen were charged. When Allegheny County Coroner, William J. McGregor, convened an inquest into Abbott's death on September 28, Albright repeated his accusation against McDermott,

claiming he saw him fire three shots from an alleyway. A Klansman who marched next to Abbott, B. F. Helings of Wilkinsburg, supported Albright's identification.⁵⁹ But other eyewitnesses identified "gunmen" of various descriptions who fired from the street or sidewalk as Abbott fell.⁶⁰ Many of the most credible witnesses testified that Klansmen also fired dozens of shots.⁶¹ With so much conflicting testimony, and no other evidence implicating McDermott, the coroner's jury was unable to name the undertaker as the gunman who killed Abbott.

The announcement of "Paddy" McDermott's release actually provided welcome news to Klan leaders, who sought to make the most of the attention provided by Abbott's murder. The Klan mounted a very public campaign to bring the murderer or murderers to justice, offering a \$2,500 dollar reward to those helping to convict those responsible. Immediately after learning of Abbott's death, Evans reportedly said the shooting would lead to 25,000 new members.⁶² He soon recognized the potential for recruitment went well beyond this modest figure. In its detailed account of the incident, the Klan's national publication, the *Imperial Night-Hawk*, predicted that the "answer to the Carnegie attack on the Klan will be a half a million new citizens of the Invisible Empire in Pennsylvania."⁶³ Prior to a Klan meeting of five hundred Knights at the Fort Pitt Hotel, Evans issued a statement, claiming the riot was the fault of a "mob of Carnegie residents." The Klansmen tried to "prevent their constitutional right of peaceable assembly being abridged by an element of citizenry absolutely dangerous to the safety and cause of freedom," and most newspaper editorials in the country echoed Evans's view. In a more ominous public statement, Sam Rich warned, when "peaceable Americans banding themselves into a Patriotic organization are prevented from executing the same rights as Catholics, Jews, and Negroes, . . . it is high time action is taken."⁶⁴

In subsequent weeks, the pages of the *Imperial Night-Hawk* contained articles about Carnegie and claimed "Pennsylvanians are flocking to the Klan."⁶⁵ Stories were carefully worded to portray the Knights as victims of intolerance, and avoided any hint that enemies of the Klan routed the marchers. The publication quoted a speech by Evans in Little Rock, Arkansas, who explained: "If we wanted to fight back we could have taken that little town apart just to see what it looked like."⁶⁶ The Klan published a ninety-page booklet, *The Martyred Klansman*, to assist recruitment efforts. It echoed Evans's contention that the Klan could have "massacred" the "perverted agents" of un-Americanism, but refused to "violate the law."⁶⁷

The *Night-Hawk* also emphasized the fact that Paddy McDermott purportedly fired from an alley beside a Catholic Church, that all those arrested in the riot investigation were men of Irish descent, and that Deputy Sheriff Dillon and Burgess Conley were also Catholic.⁶⁸ McDermott was first characterized as a cowardly assassin but became a "religious fanatic" in the pages of the Klan publication in subsequent issues.⁶⁹ The Illinois Klan organ, *Dawn*, went further in sounding the alarm against Romanists. "The type of 'shanty' Irish who made up the major portion of the mobs where Americans were wounded and the flag torn from their grasp by vastly superior numbers," the weekly observed of the Carnegie and similar confrontations, "has convinced observers that the notorious 'Mollie Maguires' organization has been revived."⁷⁰

Klan periodicals and the local Pittsburgh area press also provided extensive coverage of Thomas Abbott's funeral, which took place in Washington County on August 28. Seven hundred robed Klansmen attended the funeral services in Atlasburg. Thousands of bystanders stood along the extended route of the funeral procession that passed through Canonsburg and McDonald to Robinson Run Church cemetery near Sturgeon (in southern Allegheny County). To honor the "true martyr to the cause," Hiram Evans established an Abbott "trust fund" to provide education for the slain Klansman's two young children. A thousand dollars from these contributions went toward funeral expenses. Money poured into an Abbott fund from all over the country, totaling more than \$10,000 within two months.⁷¹ Though Thomas Abbott's "martyrdom" remained prominent in Klan propaganda for recruitment purposes, his family would receive only about \$5,000 out of \$16,000 ultimately collected.⁷²

The Klan also used the attention associated with the Carnegie riot to promote a mass demonstration scheduled for Scottdale, Pennsylvania, for the Saturday following the Carnegie incident. Fifteen miles north of Uniontown, the town of six thousand stood in the midst of an area with a strong Klan presence. Nearby, however, the town of Everson contained a Catholic majority that controlled local government. Even more disconcerting to Klansmen, local youths had recently roughed up some Knights passing through Everson by automobile, stolen their regalia, and then staged a mock ceremony in town ridiculing the secret order.⁷³ The Pittsburgh *Chronicle Telegraph* and *Gazette Times* printed the official notice of the planned demonstration in their August 30 editions. "We fully expect a bigger gathering of Klansmen there than we had at Carnegie last week," one Klan official predicted.⁷⁴ In a

meeting with local Klan leaders, Sam Rich told the Exalted Cyclopes to "go prepared" to Scottdale.⁷⁵ Roy Barclay was informed that "[t]here was going to be trouble at Scottdale," and to bring weapons.⁷⁶ Three thousand Klansmen in "civilian" clothes were dispatched to the town for the September 1 rally. Some took up positions in windows and on roofs, and covered trucks with machine guns were parked on a nearby hill. A hundred sentries with rifles patrolled the Byron Kelly farm, the site of the ceremonies.⁷⁷ As one Klansman put it, the anger of local Knights "is rapidly mounting and reprisals of some sort against the persons responsible for halting the [Carnegie] parade—and for the fight, too—are almost certain to be made. We are all going to Scottdale next Saturday and we're going prepared for anything that might happen."⁷⁸

Forty thousand spectators and over ten thousand Klansmen showed up for the demonstration. The stage seemed set for another, possibly more explosive, pitched battle. Leading Klan officials wanted the parade to go on, but Scottdale Exalted Cyclops, James A. Miller, experienced a last-minute change of heart and argued against it. Discussions with state troopers led to a revised plan. After a thousand new members were initiated, fireworks set off, and a giant cross burned, Klansmen prepared for a one-mile march to Scottdale. Yet only about twelve hundred Knights paraded, and without wearing hoods, visors, and robes. With an escort of twenty plain-clothed state troopers at the front, they arrived in Scottdale nearly three hours after the scheduled starting time. The marchers, mainly new recruits accompanied by a few men unconcerned with having identities revealed, were greeted by a mere four thousand spectators. Tired of waiting, most visitors had returned home long before the midnight arrival. Unlike Carnegie the previous week, the day and night proved relatively peaceful for Scottdale residents. They witnessed no violence, only "a brand new record . . . for the number of wiener sandwiches, bottles of pop, and other delicacies sold in a twenty-four hour period."⁷⁹

Only upon their return to the Kelly farm did Klan leaders face the gun battle for which they had prepared. Four or five men fired a few shots at Klansmen from a swinging bridge leading to the farm from Everson, then faced heavy fire from Klan sentinels. At least one intruder was injured before Klansmen poured out of a corn field, heading for the nearby town. According to Exalted Cyclops Miller, a contingency order from Sam Rich instructed Knights to "go over the top and not leave a Catholic living in Scottdale or Everson." But state police officers rode down the street car line between the

field and Everson to head off the attack.⁸⁰ While shots rang out throughout the night on the parade grounds, the expected battle never materialized.⁸¹

When asked what happened at Scottdale, Roy Barclay later observed, "That was a disappointment. There was only a little skirmish."⁸² Without robes, hoods, and visors to protect their identity, few Knights would march, thus the orgy of violence expected by Klansmen never materialized. Yet when members of the secret order gathered by the thousands in Carnegie one week earlier, they knew tumultuous confrontation might await them, and they came armed for battle. Most cross-burnings, parades, and meetings proved relatively peaceful, even when masks were worn. But the threat was always there, and the appeal of danger and the potential for violent conflict helped swell the ranks of the Pennsylvania Realm of the Ku Klux Klan.

The case of the Invisible Order in western Pennsylvania is at odds with much recent scholarship on the role of Klan violence in the 1920s. Historians have often concluded that Klan membership declined because of mounting revulsion to its "terrorist tendencies," to quote David Chalmers.⁸³ Combined with the immoral and greedy actions of various Klan leaders and the over-reliance by recruiters on a few local issues to build support rapidly, among other factors, "public exposure of Klan atrocities" undid the secret order.⁸⁴ However, in western Pennsylvania, Klan membership exploded in the wake of its most violent phase. Hiram Evans predicted that the Carnegie riot would swell membership rolls in the Keystone State to half a million. This proved a bit too optimistic, though growth was impressive. Membership figures before the Carnegie incident are uncertain, but they numbered merely in the tens of thousands. By the end of 1924, Klan membership stood at 125,000. Then, in April of that year, the deadliest confrontation of the era caused by Klan actions in Pennsylvania occurred in the small mining town of Lilly, when Klansmen killed three residents and wounded more than a dozen people. The mainly one-sided gun battle took place following a cross-burning and march by robed and hooded Klansmen.⁸⁵ Over the next few months, Klan rolls doubled to reach a peak approaching 300,000. While other factors certainly help explain this dramatic surge, Grand Dragon Sam Rich's insight that riots brought in members appears all too keen.

Eighteen Klansmen did receive brief jail sentences for "affray and unlawful assemblage" for the Lilly shootings, but most floggings, kidnappings, and assaults perpetrated by the Klan in western Pennsylvania during the 1920s went unpunished. As throughout most of the country, few Klan members

were prosecuted for crimes of violence and intimidation.⁸⁶ Their opponents and victims were less often so lucky. In the Carnegie case, Klan officials continued to seek indictments against townspeople present at the disturbance even after the coroner's jury found insufficient evidence to charge anyone. In October 1923, sixteen Carnegie residents faced arrest for "inciting a riot," including McDermott, Burgess John Conley and Constable Ike Irving. When Emma E. Abbott, widow of the "martyred Klansman," preferred murder charges against Patrick McDermott, a friendly justice of the peace in nearby Collier Township, W. H. Prosser, obliged. McDermott was arrested a second time, and though no more evidence had come to light, went back to jail.⁸⁷

After posting \$25,000 bail on October 27, 1923, Patrick McDermott would wait two years before the murder case went to trial, a delay explained in part by the death of Emma Abbott in 1924. By then, all other indictments stemming from the incident had been dismissed, other than the charge against John Conley. On November 16, 1925, McDermott finally faced a jury, though it took a full day to choose twelve people owing to the extensive publicity about the riot and the opposition of some potential jurors to capital punishment.⁸⁸ Assistant District Attorney, George F. P. Langfitt, opened his case on the afternoon of Tuesday, November 17, with the deputy coroner and doctor who performed the autopsy testifying about the gunshot wound that led to Abbott's death. Carnegie chief of police, Christ Keisling, explained how Harry Albright came forward immediately on the night of the riot to name McDermott as the murderer. Keisling also reported that he only heard about a dozen gunshots during the battle. Klansmen B. F. Helings and B. L. Bickerton, who marched near Abbott, then identified McDermott as the gunman who fired the fatal shot. Helings did not see McDermott discharge the weapon, but noticed him "with the smoking revolver in his hand."⁸⁹ Bickerton claimed he observed McDermott fire at least three shots at the time Abbott fell.⁹⁰

The most important witness was Albright, however, who claimed he had known Paddy McDermott for fifteen years. He repeated the accusation made at the coroner's inquest two years before, that he saw McDermott take aim and drop Abbott with his first round. The witness claimed he then confronted the "cowardly" shooter face to face.⁹¹ Following the cross-examination of Albright by defense attorney, John S. Robb, Jr., the prosecution rested. For its part, Robb's case had three parts: character witnesses, eyewitnesses who contradicted the statements of Albright and the two Klansmen, and Patrick McDermott's own testimony. Fifteen people took the stand to suggest that

"McDermott's reputation for peace and good order was very good," including Conley, former county treasurer Frank J. Harris, and Roman Catholic priest, Rev. A. J. Brennan. The most interesting character witness came from the commonwealth's side of the table, when Robb recalled Police Chief Keisling to the stand. Whether the defense attorney suspected Keisling's membership in the Klan is uncertain, but the chief admitted under oath that McDermott "bore an excellent reputation."⁹²

Four Carnegie residents testified on November 18 and each identified a "short, stout young fellow without any coat on" as the man who fired shots at Klan marchers, who then fled with associates in an automobile. Edward J. Cunningham and Mary Hanzel, who provided detailed accounts during the coroner's inquest two years earlier, said that they did not recognize the assailant as a Carnegie resident.⁹³ McDermott himself then took the stand to provide a detailed account of his movements during the riot. He explained that he had heard of the confrontation at the Glendale bridge while talking to deputy sheriffs and detectives, then followed the officers to the scene. There he helped free the Klan automobile leading the parade, which was wedged against a curb, and gave "instructions to rescue an American flag which was being trampled in a gutter." Just as this occurred, the Klan marchers forced their way across the bridge and the battle began. Carried down the street with the crowd, McDermott claimed he fled, with hundreds of other frightened bystanders, to escape the extensive gunfire. He ducked into an alleyway off Third Street near his house, then went to his office as the conflict continued. The undertaker testified that he was "shocked" at his arrest later that night.⁹⁴

Prosecutor Langfitt's cross-examination of McDermott "lasted only a few minutes." The assistant DA asked the defendant if he knew of the planned Klan parade in Carnegie before the night of the riot, to which he offered a simple "yes." Langfitt then questioned McDermott about his testimony that he heard a thousand shots during the riot, though chief Keisling reported only a dozen. "I don't go by the [word of the] chief of police," responded the undertaker.⁹⁵

On the morning of Thursday, November 19, the two attorneys presented closing arguments. In a thirty-minute summation, Langfitt reviewed the evidence in the case, then rather oddly failed to ask the jury to "return a certain verdict, but pointed out that if they believed McDermott deliberately fired a shot into the crowd of Klansmen, they were justified in bringing in a verdict of murder in the first degree." He warned them to "stick to the evidence in

finding a verdict." Robb's closing argument focused on the extensive testimony pointing to McDermott's innocence. He attacked Albright as "a braggart and a blowhard" and Helings as "without a spark of honesty." He labelled the Klan as "a society that has no place in America." Judge E. H. Baird charged the jury in an unbiased manner, calling on the nine men and three women to convict Patrick McDermott if they believed the testimony of the three eyewitnesses. "But if you do not believe that McDermott fired the shots," the judge concluded, "then you should acquit."⁹⁶

At 2:30 in the afternoon, the jury retired to deliberate and were gone a mere forty-seven minutes. They returned with their decision, and as Patrick McDermott sat quiet and emotionless, the foreman reported a verdict of acquittal. Despite warnings by the judge, "men and women spectators . . . rose to their feet and broke into a demonstration of cheering and handclapping." While the undertaker sat motionless, "an excited throng" gathered around him to shake his hand. McDermott said simply: "I am glad it is all over. This charge hanging over my head has been a nightmare." Following the verdict, prosecutor Langfitt requested that the court dismiss all other charges against McDermott and John Conley, thus bringing to an end the legal aftermath of the Carnegie riot.⁹⁷

Two days before Patrick McDermott went on trial, a Klan leader whose recruitment policies helped cause the Carnegie episode faced a jury of his own in Noblesville, Indiana. That panel found David C. Stephenson guilty of second degree murder in the sensational Madge Oberholtzer case. A drunken Stephenson abducted and raped Oberholzer on the night of March 15, 1925, then denied her medical attention after she took poison. He received a life sentence.⁹⁸ The Pennsylvania Realm of the Ku Klux Klan would have its own share of embarrassing controversy soon afterward. In July 1926, Hiram Evans banished Grand Dragon Sam Rich for corruption and mismanagement. His temporary successor, W. L. Robinson, faced removal within weeks for "defiling the state office by [having] immoral relations with his stenographer."⁹⁹

Most studies of the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s see the Stephenson trial as the final straw in a pattern of "hypocrisy, greed, and dishonesty" that brought down the Invisible Order. As David H. Bennett concludes in his comprehensive study of American nativism, "Stephenson's violation of the symbolic crusade for purity, chastity, womanhood, and temperance was too much. As [Indiana] dissolved, the national empire of the Ku Klux Klan began to crumble elsewhere."¹⁰⁰ In Pennsylvania, membership melted away by the tens of

thousands throughout 1926, falling to about 72,000 by year's end. Emerson Loucks, in his organizational history published in 1936, argues that ineffective and corrupt leadership, particularly the Rich and Robinson scandals, represented the principal cause of the decline. "Revolt from within," in response to the greed and ambition of its leaders, "broke the Klan."¹⁰¹

Scandals certainly contributed to membership decline in Pennsylvania after 1925. But many historians, including Loucks, have overemphasized the comforting notion that "the genuine American sense of decency finally asserted itself," as Kenneth T. Jackson suggests about the decline of the Klan.¹⁰² The ranks of the organization in western Pennsylvania, in fact, swelled as long as violent conflict occurred. Newspaper stories and Klan propaganda about the Carnegie and Lilly incidents brought tens of thousands of new recruits into the organization between 1923 and 1925. "Ordinary people" flocked to the Klan, drawn by the excitement associated with potential danger, the satisfaction of forcefully humiliating Catholics and other enemies of "mainstream" America, and the comradeship of soldiers committed to the fight. Only when anti-mask ordinances and other efforts to reveal the identities of Klansmen achieved success did the Invisible Order struggle to deliver the thrills associated with public confrontation, intimidation, and physical force. Violent outrages, such as the Carnegie riot, ceased to occur as Klansmen lost the safety of hiding behind masks.

NOTES

1. Testimony of C.E. Briney, *The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan v. Rev. John F. Strayer, et al.* (Case 1897 in Equity), 275. In 1927, the Klan filed suit in U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania against banished "former" members of the order. The organization claimed exclusive use of the name, "Ku Klux Klan," and charged the defendants with unlawful possession "of certain property, robes and other regalia which are property of the plaintiff." The resulting testimony in court by Klansmen and former Klansmen provides a detailed glimpse into the operation of the national and Pennsylvania orders, most especially acts of intimidation and violence. A transcript of the proceedings is contained in the Records of the U.S. District Court for the Western District (21.40.5), U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, Mid Atlantic Region's Archives Facility, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Hereafter cited as Equity 1897.
2. Testimony of W.A. McElravy in Equity 1897, 257, 260.
3. Testimony of Roy F. Barclay in Equity 1897, 136-37. Hiram Evans's account of the decision to march is contained in his testimony at the trial, 637-39.
4. Kenneth T. Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 171.

5. David M. Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism: The First Century of the Ku Klux Klan, 1865–1965* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1965), 238–39.
6. Emerson Hunsberger Loucks, *The Ku Klux Klan in Pennsylvania: A Study in Nativism* (Harrisburg, PA: The Telegraph Press, 1936), 52–54. Coverage of the Carnegie riot in Philip Jenkins, “The Ku Klux Klan in Pennsylvania, 1920–1940,” *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 69 (April 1986): 121–37, is also brief. His excellent *Hoods and Shirts: The Extreme Right in Pennsylvania, 1925–1950* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997) begins coverage of Klan history two years after the Carnegie incident.
7. Useful recent overviews of the literature on the Klan may be found in Leonard J. Moore, “Historical Interpretations of the 1920’s Klan: The Traditional View and the Populist Revision,” *Journal of Social History* 24 (1990): 341–57; and the Historiographical Essay in Shawn Lay, *Hooded Knights on the Niagara: The Ku Klux Klan in Buffalo, New York* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 177–91.
8. Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820–1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 218.
9. David H. Bennett, *The Party of Fear: From Nativist Movements to the New Right in American History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), chap. 12. Bennett views some Klan actions as “irrelevant, inappropriate, and destructive,” but believes “their fears were grounded in reality,” 9.
10. *Ibid.*, 342, 353. See also Nancy MacLean, “The Leo Frank Case Reconsidered: Gender and Sexual Politics in the Making of Reactionary Populism,” *Journal of American History* 78 (1991): 920; and Stanley Coben, “Ordinary White Protestants: The KKK of the 1920s,” *Journal of Social History* 28 (1994): 155–64.
11. Leonard J. Moore, *Citizen Klansmen: The Ku Klux Klan in Indiana, 1921–1928* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991); William D. Jenkins, *Steel Valley Klan: The Ku Klux Klan in Ohio’s Mahoning Valley* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1990); Robert Alan Goldberg, *Hooded Empire: The Ku Klux Klan in Colorado* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981); Larry R. Gerlach, *Blazing Crosses in Zion: The Ku Klux Klan in Utah* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1982); Kathleen M. Blee, *Women of the Klan: Racism and Gender in the 1920s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Shawn Lay, *War, Revolution, and the Ku Klux Klan: A Study of Intolerance in a Border City* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1985); and Lay, *Hooded Knights on the Niagara*. See also Lay’s edited collection, *The Invisible Empire in the West: Toward a New Historical Appraisal of the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992).
12. Robert A. Goldberg, *Grassroots Resistance: Social Movements in Twentieth Century America* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1991), 2. Goldberg provides an excellent discussion of theories of social movements in chapter 1.
13. Rory McVeigh, “Structural Incentives for Conservative Mobilization: Power Devaluation and the Rise of the Ku Klux Klan, 1915–1925,” *Social Forces* 77 (1999): 1461–96.
14. Moore, “Historical Interpretations of the 1920’s Klan,” 342. One of the more interesting examinations of Klan popular growth is contained in Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). MacLean uses gender as a category of analysis to reveal how the rise of the southern Klan was in part inspired by a defense of patriarchy.
15. For the slow pace of recruitment in Pennsylvania, see Loucks, *Ku Klux Klan in Pennsylvania*, 25–29. The 125,000 figure for 1924 comes from Jenkins, “The Ku Klux Klan in Pennsylvania,” 123. He

places the number for 1925 at 250,000. Jenkins arrived at these figures, in part, following close scrutiny of Klan materials in the State Police Records in the Pennsylvania State Archives. See *Hoods and Shirts*, 66–74. In 1940, Klan records were stolen from Grand Dragon Samuel Stough's home and some time later given to the Pennsylvania State Police anonymously. These records do not include comprehensive membership lists, but do reveal raw numbers from each klavern for 1925. Ku Klux Klan General Files, 1923–1940 (#30.18), Records of the Pennsylvania State Police, RG-30, Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg (hereafter cited as Pennsylvania Klan Records). The 300,000 figure for 1925 comes from Testimony of Roy F. Barclay in Equity 1897, 118–19, and Joseph R. Shoemaker, 101–3. Shoemaker was the secretary and treasurer of the Ku Klux Klan in 1925, and his accounting reflected the Klan's own figures, 240,000, which was likely an intentional underreporting. One root of the court case that revealed these numbers was D.C. Stephenson's charge, supported by Shoemaker, Barclay, and others, that Sam Rich intentionally underreported membership numbers by 60,000 to pocket membership fees.

16. Jenkins, *Hoods and Shirts*, 71–72.
17. Colin Flint, using klavern numbers from Pennsylvania for the 1920s, shows that Klan membership was generally higher per capita in rural counties. "Right-wing Resistance to the Process of American Hegemony: The Changing Political Geography of Nativism in Pennsylvania, 1920–1998," *Political Geography* 20 (2001): 763–86.
18. Kenneth D. Wald, "The Visible Empire: The Ku Klux Klan as an Electoral Movement," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 11 (1980): 271–34.
19. David J. Goldberg, "Unmasking the Ku Klux Klan: The Northern Movement Against the KKK, 1920–1925," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 15 (1996): 43–44. Goldberg also claims that a mob "ran the Klan out of the coal mining town of Lilly, Pennsylvania (killing two Klan members)," but it was the Klan who did most of the shooting, and the dead were all townspeople, not Klansmen. In an equally misleading statement, Kenneth T. Jackson cites the Carnegie riot as evidence that Klansmen were "more often the victim than instigators of foul play," *Ku Klux Klan in the City*, 242.
20. Coben, "Ordinary White Protestants," 164.
21. Judge J. Thomson, Oral Opinion of the Court, in Equity 1897, 672–73.
22. Stephenson's own account of his role as King Kleagle is in the Deposition of David C. Stephenson in Equity 1897, 5–7. Sam Rich was technically the "Acting" Grand Dragon of Pennsylvania.
23. M. William Lutholz, *Grand Dragon: D.C. Stephenson and the Ku Klux Klan in Indiana* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1991), 61–64; Loucks, *Ku Klux Klan in Pennsylvania*, 49–52.
24. Robert Moats Miller, "The Ku Klux Klan," in *Change and Continuity in Twentieth Century America: The 1920s*, ed. John Braeman et al. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1968), 252; Jackson, *Ku Klux Klan in the City*, 17–18; John M. Craig and Timothy H. Silver, "'Tolerance of the Intolerant': J.A.C. Chandler and the Ku Klux Klan at William and Mary," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 84 (1985): 214–15.
25. Testimony of Roy Barclay in Equity 1897, 176; on the desire for riots on the part of Evans and Rich, see Shoemaker's testimony, 109–10.
26. In 1924, these military units were organized formally as "Klavaliers." See *The Klan in Action: Leadership, Responsibility, Organization, and Methods* (n.p.: Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc, [1924]), 31–32, in Ku Klux Klan Publications, 1924–1940, box 3, Pennsylvania Klan Records.

27. Testimony of Roy Barclay in Equity 1897, 139–40; testimony of Harry E. A. McNeel, *ibid.*, 315–16; testimony of Charles E. Smeltzer, *ibid.*, 281–82;
28. Michael E. McGerr, *The Decline of Popular Politics: The American North, 1865–1928* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).
29. John Moffatt Mecklin, *The Ku Klux Klan: A Study of the American Mind* (New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1924) focused on the link between Klan strength and the dullness of small town life, a theme commonly echoed by historians of the movement. Richard Hofstadter probably got it right when he suggested a “need for romance and the exotic may have heightened their hatred of Catholicism,” in *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), 294.
30. Quote attributed to Hiram Evans, testimony of Edward G. Jenkins in Equity 1897, 413.
31. Paul A. Gilje, *Rioting in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 6–8, 138.
32. Hugh Davis Graham and Ted Robert Gurr, eds., *The History of Violence in America: Historical and Comparative Perspectives* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1969). This report was submitted to the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence.
33. V. Robert Agostino, *A Track Through Time: A Centennial History of Carnegie, Pa., 1894–1994* (Pittsburgh: Wolfson Publishing, 1994). Between 1900 and 1930, the population increased by 5,000.
34. In the words of Assistant District Attorney Fred C. McCutcheon, “there was no legal statute preventing men parading, wearing hoods, nor was there anything in the statutes to prevent marching so long as authorities were reasonably certain no trouble would result.” Quoted in the *Pittsburgh Gazette Times*, August 28, 1923.
35. Testimony of Roy Barclay in Equity 1897, 135.
36. Testimony of Harry E.A. McNeel, *ibid.*, 310–11.
37. Deposition of Harry E.A. McNeel, *State of Indiana v. the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan* (Case 41769 in Marion County Circuit Court), reel 201, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis.
38. *Gazette Times*, August 26, 1923; *Pittsburgh Press*, August 27, 1923; testimony of C.E. Briney in Equity 1897, 272.
39. Testimony of John F. Conley, Coroner’s Inquest Held on the Body of Thomas R. Abbott, September 28–29, 1923, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 56; testimony of Christ H. Keisling, *ibid.*, 57–58. A copy of the coroner’s inquest is contained in Ku Klux Klan General Correspondence, box 2, Pennsylvania Klan Records. The Klan reprinted the inquest in its entirety in *The Martyred Klansman* (Pittsburgh: Patriotic American Publishing Co., 1923), 11–65. On the arrests, including the names of those charged, see the *Gazette Times*, August 27, 1923. They were each fined ten dollars.
40. This comes from Keisling’s testimony at the preliminary hearing of John Conley, who would later be charged with (though never tried for) inciting the riot. The surviving court records on the case do not include the testimony, but the Klan reprinted it in *The Martyred Klansman*, 80.
41. Testimony of John F. Conley, Coroner’s Inquest, 53–54.
42. *Gazette Times*, August 26, 1923, sect. 1, p. 2 and sect. 2, p. 8. The latter page includes photographs of the ceremony before the parade. See also, *Press*, August 26, 1923, sec.1, p.1.
43. *Press*, August 26, 1923, sect. 1, p.1.
44. *Gazette Times*, August 27, 1923. Klan leaders claimed afterward that visors were up, but there is considerable evidence that they were down. See testimony of Harry E.A. McNeel in Equity 1897, 314; *Press*, August 26 and August 27, 1923; *Pittsburgh Chronicle Telegraph*, August 27, 1923.

45. A spectator counted between 3,500 and 3,700 marchers, testimony of Grace Martin, Coroner's Inquest, 104. Confusion about which Klan official tried to address the crowd resulted from Barclay wearing Rich's robe.
46. Ibid., 105; testimony of Joseph H. Dye (county detective), *ibid.*, 6. Detailed accounts of the confrontation appear in the *Chronicle Telegraph*, August 27, 1923; *Press*, August 27, 1923; *Pittsburgh Sun*, August 23, 1923; and *Gazette Times*, August 27, 1923.
47. Testimony of John J. Dillon, Coroner's Inquest, 71.
48. Ibid., 72; testimony of Ira Irving, *ibid.*, 64; testimony of B.L. Bickerton (klansman), *ibid.*, 126; testimony of C.R. Miner, *ibid.*, 134; testimony of R.F. Myers, *ibid.*, 90; *Chronicle Telegraph*, August 27, 1923. One Klan official heeded Dillon's order and left with about fifty Knights.
49. Testimony of Roy Barclay in Equity 1897, 137-38.
50. Testimony of Henry C. Howard in Equity 1897, 552; testimony of Grace Martin, Coroner's Inquest, 105; testimony of C.R. Miner, *ibid.*, 13; *Chronicle Telegraph*, August 27, 1923; *Gazette Times*, August 26, 1923. Barclay and two other Klan officials, including Howard, were in the first line.
51. *Press*, August 27, 1923. The *Gazette Times*, August 26, reported that "bitter fist fights and rough and tumble battles" occurred and that coal was secured by both sides from a railroad car on the tracks of the Pennsylvania Railroad.
52. Testimony of Ira Irving, Coroner's Inquest, 63-67; *Gazette Times*, August 27, 1923; testimony of C.E. Briney in Equity 1897, 274.
53. The testimony of Robert L. McMillen, Allegheny County detective, Coroner's Inquest, 10-16, who was at the scene during the riot, provides a thorough account of the last stages of the riot. See also testimony of Charles R. McKenna, *ibid.*, 77-78; testimony of Edward J. Cunningham, *ibid.*, 121; testimony of Mary Hanzel, *ibid.*, 154-56. The most detailed newspaper accounts of the killing are in the *Gazette Times* and the *Chronicle Telegraph* for August 27, 1923.
54. Testimony of Dr. F.B. Jones, Jr., Coroner's Inquest, 20.
55. *Gazette Times*, August 27, 1923, and the *Chronicle Telegraph*, August 27, 1923.
56. *Gazette Times*, August 27, 1923.
57. "200 revolvers of high class make," reported the *Chronicle Telegraph* on August 27, "were picked up in the district." See also testimony of Frank J. Morgan (city detective), Coroner's Inquest, 132.
58. *Gazette Times*, August 27, 1923.
59. Testimony of Harry Albright, Coroner's Inquest, 21; testimony of B.F. Helings, Jr., *ibid.*, 31.
60. Testimony of Joseph H. Dye, Coroner's Inquest, 51; testimony of R.S. Meyers, *ibid.*, 91; testimony of Edward J. Cunningham, *ibid.*, 121; testimony of B.I. Bickerton, *ibid.*, 127; testimony of C.I. Minor, *ibid.*, 135; testimony of Mary Hanzel, *ibid.*, 154.
61. Testimony of Charles R. McKenna, Coroner's Inquest, 77-78; testimony of Edward Hines, *ibid.*, 94; testimony of R.S. Meyers, *ibid.*, 91.
62. Deposition of Harry E.A. McNeel, *State of Indiana v. the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan*.
63. "Carnegie, Pa., Mob Martyrs Klan Hero and Violates All Rights of Americanism," *Imperial Night-Hawk*, August 29, 1923, 5. For Evans's denial that he made the statement about 25,000 recruits, see his testimony in Equity 1897, 639-40.
64. *Sun*, August 27, 1923; *Chronicle Telegraph*, August 27, 1923. "The Klan as the Victim of Mob Violence," *Literary Digest*, September 8, 1923, 12-13.

65. "Pennsylvanians are Flocking to the Klan," *Imperial Night-Hawk*, September 5, 1923, 7.
66. "Wizard Tells About Assaults on Klan," *Imperial Night-Hawk*, September 12, 1923, 1.
67. *The Martyred Klansman* (Pittsburgh: Patriotic American Publishing Co., 1923), 9.
68. "Carnegie, Pa., Mob Martyrs Klan Hero," *Imperial Night-Hawk*, 5; "A Few Facts About the Carnegie Murder," *ibid.*, September 5, 1923, 5; "Klansmen Asked to Aid Widow and Babies of Man Who Died For the Cause," *ibid.*, September 19, 1923, 1.
69. "Contributions Bring Abbott Trust Fund to Total of \$10,637.98," *Imperial Night-Hawk*, November 27, 1923, 7.
70. "Attacks on Americans by Vicious Fanatics Proves Need for Secret Order to Uphold U.S. Constitution," *Dawn*, September 8, 1923, 6.
71. "Many Thousands Pay Silent Tribute to Klansman Murdered at Carnegie," *Imperial Night-Hawk*, September 5, 1923, 2, 7; *Gazette Times*, August 29, 1923. "Contributions Bring Abbott Trust Fund to Total of \$10,637.98," *Imperial Night-Hawk*, November 27, 1923, 7.
72. The monies raised were never placed into a "trust fund," *per se*, but went into the national Klan's general treasury. Roy Herbert [Grand Titan] to Samuel Stough [Pennsylvania Grand Dragon], November 22, 1936 and April 18, 1937, Ku Klux Klan General Correspondence, box 2, Pennsylvania Klan Records. Abbott's photograph with the title "Pennsylvania's first martyr" can be found, for example, in *Program of the Pennsylvania Reunion Held on Gettysburg Battlefield, September 19 and 20, 1925*, box 3, Ku Klux Klan Publications, Pennsylvania Klan Records.
73. Loucks, *Ku Klux Klan in Pennsylvania*, 54.
74. *Chronicle Telegraph*, August 31, 1923. A Klan gathering of eight thousand took place in Ellwood City, north of Pittsburgh, the same day as the Scottdale demonstration. Eight hundred new members were initiated and five hundred Klansmen marched through Ellwood City without incident, *New Castle News*, September 4, 1923.
75. Testimony of Norville Coulter Hoge in Equity 1897, 332. An Exalted Cyclops was the head of a klavern.
76. Testimony of Roy Barclay, *ibid.*, 139–40.
77. Loucks, *Ku Klux Klan in Pennsylvania*, 55.
78. *Sun*, August 28, 1923.
79. *Gazette Times*, September 3, 1923.
80. Testimony of James A. Miller in Equity 1897, 208–18. Miller claimed the shoot-out led to a fatality, but there seems little evidence to support this. On the incident, see also the *Gazette Times*, September 2, 1923; Loucks, *Ku Klux Klan in Pennsylvania*, 56.
81. Deposition of Roy F. Barclay, *State of Indiana v. the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan*.
82. Testimony of Roy Barclay in Equity 1897, 140.
83. Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism*, 296; see pp. 295–299 for a thorough discussion of the role of violence.
84. Quotation from Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 175. Carol Medlicott observes, "the seeds of [the Klan's] popular demise were being sewn by its inability to achieve ideological consensus at its chosen scale of mobilization, the local landscape of middle America. Klan chapters gained footholds in towns and small cities by focusing on one or more causes among a rather broad spectrum of issues that the Klan purported to oppose"; see "One Social Milieu, Paradoxical Responses: A Geographical

- Reexamination of the Ku Klux Klan and the Daughters of the American Revolution in the Early Twentieth Century," in *Spaces of Hate: Geographies of Discrimination and Intolerance in the U.S.A.*, ed. Colin Flint (New York: Routledge, 2003), 40.
85. The Lilly incident is described in great detail in the testimony contained in the resulting trial, *Commonwealth v. Neff, et al.* (1924), Cambria County Courthouse, Ebensburg, Pennsylvania. See also the pages of the *Johnstown Tribune* and the *Johnstown Democrat* for April 7–10 and June 10–18, 1924. For the verdict, see the *Democrat* and the *Tribune*, June 2, 1924. The case received a great deal of press coverage in western Pennsylvania and nationally. The most detailed account of the Lilly incident to date is contained in Elizabeth Ricketts, "Italian Americans, Catholics, and the Ku Klux Klan: A Clash of Ethnicity and Culture in the Lilly Riot of 1924," *Topic: A Journal of the Liberal Arts* [Washington and Jefferson College] 52 (2002): 62–75.
 86. Under orders from state leader Sam Rich, a Burgettstown man was kidnapped and tarred and feathered for "annoying" a house guest, a child was kidnapped from his grandparents' home in the city of Pittsburgh, and a black man hanged (though not fatally) in Beaver. Testimony of Roy Barclay in Equity 1897, 120–32; 159–65; deposition of Roy F. Barclay, *State of Indiana v. the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan*.
 87. *Martyred Klansman*, 66; *Commonwealth of Pennsylvania v. Patrick J. McDermott*, Court of Oyer and Terminer, Allegheny County (No. 155, February Sessions, 1924), Allegheny County Courthouse, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
 88. *Commonwealth v. McDermott*. Extant court records are housed in the Allegheny County courthouse but do not include the trial transcript. The Pittsburgh newspapers covered the trial thoroughly, however, and much of the testimony can be gleaned from this coverage. On the opening of the trial and the jury selection process, see *Pittsburgh Post*, November 16 and 17, 1925; *Chronicle Telegraph*, November 16, 1925; *Sun*, November 16, 1925; *Gazette Times*, November 17, 1925.
 89. *Chronicle Telegraph*, November 17, 1925.
 90. *Sun*, November 17, 1925.
 91. *Post*, November 18, 1925.
 92. *Gazette Times*, November 19, 1925; *Pittsburgh Post*, November 18, 1925.
 93. *Press*, November 18, 1925; *Pittsburgh Post*, November 19, 1925; *Pittsburgh Chronicle Telegraph*, November 18, 1925.
 94. *Chronicle Telegraph*, November 18, 1925; *Press*, November 18, 1925.
 95. *Chronicle Telegraph*, November 18, 1925.
 96. *Sun*, November 19, 1925; *Post*, November 20, 1925.
 97. *Gazette Times*, November 20, 1925; *Sun*, November 19, 1925.
 98. Lutholz's *Grand Dragon* provides a detailed account of the trial, chapters 25–31.
 99. Loucks, *Ku Klux Klan in Pennsylvania*, 186.
 100. Bennett, *Party of Fear*, 235.
 101. Loucks, *Ku Klux Klan in Pennsylvania*, 165. Loucks was certainly in a good position in 1936 to reach such a judgment. He interviewed and corresponded with hundreds of former Klansmen and enjoyed access to some private records no subsequent historian has seen. But studies of the workings of organizations tend to overemphasize decisions, mistakes, and foibles of their leaders. The fact is, scandal and hypocrisy were ever-present and often highly public within the Klan of the 1920s. Before 1926,

Edward Clarke and Elizabeth Tyler were dismissed from the Klan for immoral behavior, William Simmons filed lawsuits alleging countless wrongdoings against the order after his removal (and accused Evans of sending an assassin to kill him), and violent outrages like the Mer Rouge murders captured newspaper headlines throughout the country. On the latter incident, see Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism*, 60–64.

102. Jackson, *Ku Klux Klan in the City*, 255.