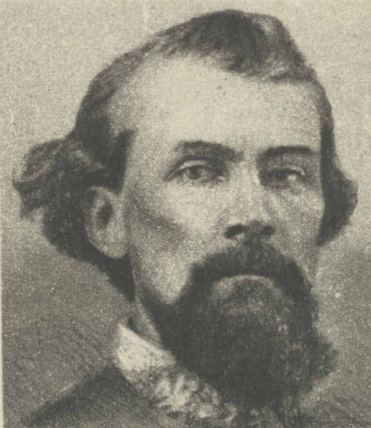


# Goblins and Ghouls - Sordid Story of Klan

## Floggings, Murders, and Other Crimes Have Marked Its History

By JOHN A. MENAUGH

ON THE EVENING of May 6, 1866, a group of young men, some of them confederate veterans of the civil war, met in a lawyer's office in Pulaski, Giles county, Tennessee, for the purpose of organizing a club. It was a manifestation of the eternal youthful desire for amusement in a mysterious way. The club was to be purely of a social nature. It was to be a secret society. In casting about for a name for their organization the young men hit upon the word *kuklos*, which in Greek means circle. This was slightly changed to Ku Klux, and another word, *klan*, was added, obviously for alliteration. Thus the Ku Klux Klan was founded.



Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest, grand wizard of the original klan.

through the countryside at night dressed in hooded gowns of white. They discovered that they could keep the newly emancipated Negroes of the south in a state of fear by their mysterious comings and goings. The Negroes thought the strange night riders were ghosts of confederate soldiers slain in the war.

Pulaski is just north of the southern border of Tennessee. Across the state line lies Alabama, whence comes former United States Senator Hugo L. Black, whom President Roosevelt elevated to the Supreme court and who is charged in recent newspaper revelations with membership in the Ku Klux Klan.

It should be understood, however, that the organization founded in Pulaski, Tenn., and the one in which Black has been branded with membership, were two separate and distinct bodies. Between the death of the first and the birth of the second was a wide gap of about forty years.

Although the modern klan borrowed the regalia of the original and imitated the first in many ways, the two were quite dissimilar in aims and practices. The first klan's alleged fundamental purpose, after its revision in 1867, was to save the south for the southern people. The purpose of the second klan, judging by what it ultimately developed into, was to build up a powerful political machine. It took from the first an antagonism to the Negro. From the

A klansman, garbed in white, would ride up to a freedman's cabin in the middle of the night, call the occupant out, and demand a drink of water. The drink would be poured into a water bag concealed under the gown of the klansman, and he then would demand a full pail of water, which also would be poured into the hidden water-bag.

"That's the first real drink I've had since I was killed," the night rider would shout as he rode away in the night. No wonder the simple black man was terror stricken.

Other klansmen would appear before Negroes at night "carrying their heads" before them on the pommels of their saddles. Still others would employ skeleton hands with which they would shake hands with the frightened Negroes. In every locality in

definitely set up as its duties self-protection against the Negroes and opposition to the reconstruction laws. In other words, the klan meant to save the south for the southerner. It was the beginning of a revolution against Negro suffrage, against carpet bag government.

The klan needed a leader. Heretofore its separate bodies, or dens, had acted more or less independently. There arose the necessity of cooperation between dens and a director for the whole program. Gen. Nathan B. Forrest, famous cavalry leader of the confederacy, was selected for the job soon after the Nashville convention.

Forrest was an organizer of considerable ability. He knew the value of widespread publicity. One of his first general orders after taking the job of Grand Wizard called for klan parades in every city in the south on the 4th of July, 1867. The klansmen, in full regalia, rode the streets that day as a pledge to the people of the south that their rights would be protected. So capable was Forrest as a leader that men by the thousands flocked to the dens of the klan. The membership in Tennessee alone was brought up to 40,000, that of the whole south to 550,000.

The entire membership of the klan, through the plan set up after the Nashville meeting, was organized into the "Invisible Empire of the South." Forrest was the Grand Wizard of the empire, which took in the states of Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, Missouri, Mississippi, Kentucky, and Tennessee. Each state was designated as a realm, and the chief officer of the realm was the Grand Dragon. Realms, or states, were divided into dominions, each made up of sev-



White-robed figures meet again in Georgia in 1937 to help keep alive the Ku Klux Klan.

(Associated Press photo.)

Although these tales were imaginary, they gave a pretty good idea of the activities of the Ku Klux Klan. The cruel and bad side of the situation, however, is omitted in most novels woven about the subject.

Almost everywhere in the south ex-slaves were flogged by orders of the klan and by klansmen. Northern sympathizers also on some occasions were whipped and given coats of tar. Buildings were put to the torch, and here and there a murder was committed. The actual perpetrators of the crimes usually vanished into the night and were not called to account. One of the blackest marks against the klan was its opposition to the establishment of public schools for Negro children. Often the school buildings were burned, and in some instances the teachers, who usually came from the north, were intimidated and driven away.

Although the klan was responsible for many lawless acts in the south, it was by no means

his legislature into session and caused a drastic act to be passed, under the terms of which association or connection with the klan was punishable by a fine of \$500 and imprisonment for not less than five years. Under Brownlow's severe law many men were arrested, there were convictions, and every known member of the klan was virtually outlawed. Despite this, the klan continued to operate for about six months more under the leadership of Gen. Forrest. In February, 1869, Gov. Brownlow proclaimed martial law in several Tennessee counties. That was the day before his term of office expired.

With Brownlow out of the state and on his way to the United States senate, with the prospect of a less drastic government in Tennessee, and on the belief that the Ku Klux Klan, having fairly well served its purpose, was growing out of hand, Forrest decided to officially disband the organization. That was late in the month of February, 1869. But the klan actually did not die then. Klansmen continued to ride at night in some localities, and depredations were reported from various points. In some instances the local bodies came under the control of desperate leaders, prototypes of the modern gangsters, who turned them into bandit bands that preyed on all classes of citizens.

Early in 1871 outrages in the south were the subject of debates in both houses of congress, and in March a senate committee presented both majority and minority reports on the results of an investigation carried on in North Carolina. In April and May of that year were passed by congress the first and the second anti-Ku Klux bills, respectively. In the autumn the President enforced with troops these legal restrictions against klansmen and others of secret societies antagonistic to the government. Hundreds were brought to trial.



(Kadel & Herbert photo.) William J. Simmons, organizer and imperial wizard of the modern klan.

the only secret organization that resorted to violence. Concurrently with the Invisible Empire of the South there flourished in the southern states a number of other similar societies. Among these were the Knights of the White Camellia, a society founded in New Orleans, which actually had a greater membership than the klan; the White League, the Invisible Circle, the White Brotherhood, the Constitutional Union Guards, the Pale Faces, and a number of other minor groups. It became the practice in the north to speak of these all together as constituting the Ku Klux conspiracy.

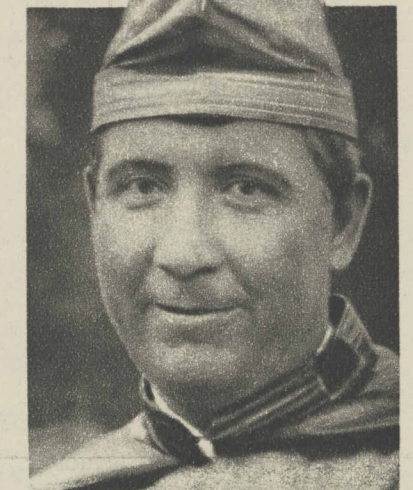
So intense became the struggle between the klansmen and the government of reconstruction, particularly in Tennessee, that in September, 1868, Gov. W. G. Brownlow of Tennessee called

visible Empire of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc., was on its way.

The founder of the second klan was William Joseph Simmons, preacher, traveling salesman, and organizer of fraternal societies. His klan he described as a "high class, mystic, social, patriotic, benevolent association," and its purposes, he explained, were to foster the sacred duty of protecting womanhood, to instill the idea of the "Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man," and to uphold the principle of "white supremacy"—in short, to promote "real patriotism" and "pure Americanism."

From the old klan the organization founded by Simmons borrowed the fear-inspiring regalia of the night rider—a white gown and a white hood. In the white hood holes were cut so that the wearer could peer out to see his way about and enjoy visually the fright that his ghostly presence was sure to engender in scary people. From the old klan also was taken some of the original nomenclature. The supreme boss of the new organization took the title of Imperial Wizard. Sometimes he was known as Emperor of the Invisible Empire, and at other times merely as His Majesty. The secret constitution of the order is said to have provided that the Imperial Wizard hold office for life.

Many of the names associated with the organization began with the letter "K." The field men



Dr. Hiram W. Evans, who supplanted William J. Simmons as imperial wizard of the modern klan.

were called Kleagles. They reported to a King Kleagle. The separate groups, which in the older organization were called dens, went by the name of klaverns. This was a corruption of the word cavern, made by sticking an "l" behind the initial letter. The ritual of the order was the kloran, a corruption of the word koran, the name of the holy book of the Mohammedans. Klaliff, the designation of certain of the officers, was a corruption of the word calliph, the name of the supreme ruler of the Moslem world. Each state was under the domination of a Grand Dragon, as was the case with the klan of reconstruction days. A system of code words employed among klansmen was known as klonversation. The chaplain of a klavern was a Kludd. Some other officers were Klokards, Kligrapps, Klabees, Klargogs, and Klexters. The ruler of a klavern was an Exalted Cyclops. Candidates approaching the sacred altar to be "naturalized" into the klan were known as Aliens. They were in charge of a Night Hawk.

The obligation, or oath, of the klan originated by Simmons is said to have been a lengthy affair, divided into four sections under the headings of "Obedience," "Secrecy," "Fidelity," and "Klanishness." Of every (Continued on page eight.)



The fiery cross flickers on a kneeling group of "aliens"—initiates taking the oath before becoming klansmen.

Know Nothing movement of 1844-'56 and the American Protective association of 1887-'97 it inherited opposition to Roman Catholicism. To these it added a measure of antagonism to the Jews.

As mentioned before, the young men of Pulaski organized a club simply for amusement. Life was dull in the little Tennessee town. They wanted something to do of evenings, an outlet for their enthusiasm. They did not know that they were starting a movement that would spread over the entire south. Youths in other towns in Tennessee and in Alabama and Georgia heard of the Ku Klux Klan of Pulaski, and soon similar clubs were being formed. By the winter of 1866 there were Ku Klux organizations, called dens, in a great number of towns.

Members of the klan readily took to its strange secrets. Mystery surrounded their every movement. They rode horses

which a former slave had committed some crime or had become offensive to the whites, a program of Ku Klux intimidation was carried out. Being ignorant and highly superstitious, the blacks were easily scared. But the whole Ku Klux business might have died out quickly had it not been for the arrival in the southern states of the "carpet baggers" from the north and the activities of the scalawags, southern whites who were supporters of the reconstruction government.

In March, 1867, the reconstruction acts were passed by congress, and the following month actual reconstruction work was begun. The effects of this legislation were to take control of the south away from the southern people and place it in the hands of men from the north. These men at once set about organizing the Negroes for political purposes. This naturally aroused the south to a white heat. Perhaps the most notorious of the organizations set up by the carpet baggers was the Loyal League, the membership of which included both Negroes and white men. Crime increased throughout the south. There was a reign of lawlessness. In the midst of this the Ku Klux Klan underwent a change, its members were transformed into a band of regulators for the purpose of handling the alarming situation.

At Nashville, Tenn., in May, 1867, a secret convention of the klan was held, the by-laws of the order were revised to meet conditions, and the organization

eral counties. Over the dominion as chief officer was the Grand Titan. Counties were known in the klan divisions of the empire as provinces, and each province had as its chief a Grand Giant. The smallest division of the empire was the den. The highest officer of the den was the Grand Cyclops. Directly under the Grand Wizard were ten Genii. Other officers of the order bore fantastic names, such as Hydras, Furies, Goblins, Night Hawks, Magi, Monks, and Turks. Private members were called Ghouls.

With its organization perfected, the klan went about the business of righting so-called wrongs. Particularly favored in this business were the families of dead confederate soldiers. Another object of attention from the klansmen were alleged unlawful seizures. And trials, otherwise than by juries, generally brought forth reprisals from the hooded bands. Exploits of the mysterious night riders have been made the subject of many works of fiction, in the majority of which the klansmen have been heroic figures. In a recent best seller, "Gone With the Wind," white robed riders are made the defenders of womanhood in the city of Atlanta. Thomas Nelson Page wrote a book some years ago called "Red Rock," in which the klansmen played a thrilling part. And then there was the novel by Thomas Dixon Jr., "The Clansman," which was made the basis of the movie "The Birth of a Nation."



(Acme photo.) Hugo I. Black—storm center of a recent Klan expose.



Unmasked, an estimated 15,000 klansmen parade down Pennsylvania avenue in Washington, D. C., during the national klan convention in 1926.