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Guide to the Ku Klux Klan Tillamook, Oregon Chapter No. 8 Records, 1922-1929

Bx 046

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OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Ku Klux Klan Tillamook, Oregon Chapter No. 8 Records

Title:**Dates:**

1922-1929 (inclusive)

Quantity:

1.25 linear feet
4 containers

Languages:

Collection materials written in English.

Summary:

The Ku Klux Klan, Tillamook Chapter No. 8 was active from 1921 through 1938; its activities were mostly anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic. The collection contains correspondence, minutes, reports, membership lists and paraphernalia, financial records, an account ledger, and costume insignia. Included are some records pertaining to the Klan's Empire Mutual Life Insurance Company, a national organization.

HISTORICAL NOTE

After WWI the Ku Klux Klan, which had been largely suppressed since the 1870s, underwent a national resurgence under the leadership of William Joseph Simons. The re-established Klan retained its former goals of white supremacy and sectional patriotism, but added new targets of religious, cultural and social bigotry to its agenda. During the 1920s the Klan grew into the largest anti-Negro, anti-Semitic, anti-Roman Catholic and anti-immigrant organization in the history of the US. This growth reached Oregon in 1921 when out-of-state Klan organizers arrived in Medford and began enrolling members around the state. According to Eckard Vance Toy, "The peak of Klan power in Oregon was reached during 1922 and 1923 when the Klan's lobbyists and political organization applied continual pressure upon legislative and law enforcement officials. Klan influence was still important during the legislative assemblies of 1925 and 1927, but by then it had lost its hold over the people and even its own members" (Toy 34).

One of the major agenda items adopted by the Oregon Klan was the Compulsory Education Bill of 1922, which required all Oregon children to attend public schools and ordered the closure of all private and parochial schools. Although the bill was passed by popular vote, the US Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional in 1924 and the law never took effect.

Religion dominated the Klan's activities in Tillamook, although they were opposed by a vocal Roman Catholic minority. Recruits were found among local ministers and members of churches, most notably the Nazarene, Baptist, United Brethren and Christian; and among fraternal organizations including the Masons, the I.O.O.F., and the Elks. Klan membership in the early 1920s peaked at 600 to 800, although at any given time there were rarely more than 200 actively participating members. Nevertheless, from 1922 through 1932, most city, county and state officials from Tillamook were either Klansmen or former Klansmen. The mayor of Tillamook was a Klansman, as was the editor of the Tillamook Headlight; his newspaper often backed Klan positions.

By the end of the 1920s, however, the Tillamook Klan had lost much of its aggressive political power, and had deteriorated into "a social organization on the fringes of respectable fraternalism" (Toy 84). By 1938 the Depression, public disgust at Klan tactics, and lack of substantive issues had combined to render the Oregon Klan all but obsolete.

Work cited: Toy, Eckard Vance Jr. *The Ku Klux Klan in Oregon; Its Character and Program*. Thesis, M.A. University of Oregon: June 1959.

CONTENT DESCRIPTION

The collection includes correspondence, reports, minutes, membership materials, financial records, an account ledger, and costume insignia of the Ku Klux Klan, Tillamook Chapter No. 8. The majority of the records constitute membership materials and financial documents.

ARRANGEMENT

Collection is organized into eight series.

Series I: Correspondence contains letters pertaining to membership issues, including a letter from Empire Mutual, the Klan's multi-state life insurance company. The correspondence is housed in Box 1, Folders 2 and 3.

Series II: Reports contains membership and financial reports for three quarters of 1926; the reports list suspended and re-enlisted members by name, and summarize financial transactions. The reports are housed in Box 1, Folders 4 through 7.

Series III: Minutes contains a set of meeting minutes from January through August of 1928. These minutes are in Box 1, Folder 8.

Series IV: Membership Materials contains handwritten applications for membership (these ask for physical descriptions, church affiliations and other personal data), membership lists (including suspended members), and oath and loyalty questionnaires. These are housed in Box 1, Folders 9 through 19.

Series V: Financial Records contains bills and receipts from various financial transactions, and cancelled checks and bank statements. These are housed in Box 1, Folders 20 through 40 (see Series VIII for additional financial records).

Series VI: Miscellaneous contains assorted bulletins, notices, and pamphlets, including a resolution in support of a Senator and Representative who acted as "guardians of our interests," and material relating to the Klan's Empire Mutual Life Insurance Company. These items are in Box 2.

Series VII: Artifacts contains costume insignia (two cloth patches and one red silk sash) in Box 3.

Series VIII: Oversize houses an Account Ledger from 1923-1925 in Box 4.

USE OF THE COLLECTION

Restrictions on Access

Collection is open to the public.

Collection must be used in Special Collections & University Archives Reading Room.

Restrictions on Use

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of Item], Ku Klux Klan Tillamook, Oregon Chapter No. 8 records, Bx 046, Special Collections & University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries, Eugene, Oregon.

SUBJECTS

This collection is indexed under the following headings in the online catalog. Researchers desiring materials about related topics, persons, or places should search the catalog using these headings.

Ku Klux Klan (1915-). Oregon Chapter No. 8 (Tillamook, Or.)

Ku Klux Klan (1915-). Oregon Chapter No. 8 (Tillamook, Or.)--Records and correspondence

Ku Klux Klan (1915-)--Oregon--Tillamook

Membership lists--Oregon--Tillamook

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

The following section contains a detailed listing of the materials in the collection.

Box Folder

1 1

INVENTORY

SERIES I: CORRESPONDENCE

Container(s)		Description	Dates
Box	Folder		
1	2	Official Correspondence	1922-1929
	3	General Correspondence	1923-1927

SERIES II: REPORTS

Container(s)		Description	Dates
Box	Folder		
1	4	Kligrapp's Quarterly Report 1st	1926
	5	Kligrapp's Quarterly Report 2nd	1926
	6	Kligrapp's Quarterly Report 3rd	1926
	7	Loyalty and Kligrapp's Quarterly Report Blanks	

Series SERIES III: MINUTES

Container(s)		Description	Dates
Box	Folder		
1	8	Minutes (incomplete)	1928

SERIES IV: MEMBERSHIP MATERIALS

Container(s)		Description
Box	Folder	
1	9	Completed Petitions for Membership
	10	Handwritten Member List
	11	Membership and Dues Records
	12	Membership Lists and Dues Suspensions
	13	Suspend Non-Payment List
	14	Membership Application Blanks
	15	Krusaders Oath and Loyalty Questionnaire Blanks
16-18		Loyalty Questionnaire Blanks
	19	Membership Data Blanks

SERIES V: FINANCIAL RECORDS

Container(s)		Description	Dates
Box	Folder		
1	20	Business Bills	
	21	Electric Bills	
	22	Janitorial Work and Maintenance Bills	
	23	Miscellaneous Bills and Receipts	
	24	Paid Stubs	
	25	Klabec's Official Receipts	
	26	Statements of Account	1923-1926
	27	Deposit Slips	1926-1928
	28	Voided Checks	February 1924-June 1924
	29	Voided Checks	June 1924-July 1924
	30	Voided Checks	January 1925
	31	Voided Checks	February 1925
	32	Voided Checks	March 1925
	33	Voided Checks	April 1925
	34	Voided Checks	May 1925
	35	Voided Checks	June 1925
	36	Voided Checks	July 1925
	37	Voided Checks	September 1925
	38	Voided Checks	October 1925
	39	Voided Checks	November 1925-December 1925
	40	Voided Checks	1926

SERIES VI: MISCELLANEOUS

Container(s)		Description
Box	Folder	
2	1	Notices and Bulletins
	2	Empire Mutual Insurance (Insurance Bonds, Application blanks, Receipt, Premium Card)
	3-4	Pamphlets
	5	Supply Order Blanks

SERIES VII: ARTIFACTS

Container(s)		Description
Box	Folder	
3	1	Costume insignia (two cloth patches and one red silk sash)

SERIES VIII: OVERSIZE

Container(s)		Description	Dates
Box	Folder		
4	1	Account Ledger	1923-1925
