

**KU KLUX KLAN. KNOX COUNTY  
KLAN NO. 14 (KNOXVILLE, TENN.)  
Knox County Klan No. 14 records, 1924-1925**

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### **Descriptive Summary**

**Creator:** Ku Klux Klan. Knox County Klan No. 14 (Knoxville, Tenn.)  
**Title:** Knox County Klan No. 14 records, 1924-1925  
**Call Number:** Manuscript Collection No. 147  
**Extent:** .75 linear ft. (2 boxes)  
**Abstract:** Records of the Ku Klux Klan, Knox County Klan No. 14 (Knoxville, Tenn.) including proposed amendments and additions to by-laws, correspondence, financial records, petitions and applications for membership, membership and dues records, and memorabilia.  
**Language:** Materials entirely in English.

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### **Administrative Information**

#### **Restrictions on Access**

Unrestricted access.

#### **Terms Governing Use and Reproduction**

All requests subject to limitations noted in departmental policies on reproduction.

#### **Source**

Unknown, 1946.

#### **Citation**

[after identification of item(s)], Ku Klux Klan. Knox County Klan No. 14 (Knoxville, Tenn.) records, , Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

#### **Processing**

Processed by DEW, 1978; reformatted by Naomi Nelson, November 2003.

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## Collection Description

### Biographical Note

Knoxville, Tennessee, destined to become a Ku Klux Klan stronghold in Southern Appalachia, saw its first Klansmen initiated in the spring of 1921. Membership increased steadily and by the fall of that year, the klavern was chartered as Knox County Klan No. 14. Five hundred strong at the time of the charter, the Knoxville Klan grew to more than two thousand members by the fall of 1923

Regular Monday night meetings were held at the klavern which stood at West Fourth Avenue and King Street. Special ceremonies (including outdoor initiations) often took place on Sharp's Ridge, a mountain northwest of Knoxville. Although its meetings and rituals were secret, the Knoxville Klan made itself known publicly in a variety of ways. Professional Klan speakers were brought in to deliver public lectures on Klankraft; well publicized donations were presented to World War I veterans and disadvantaged persons; and several large parades and demonstrations were staged.

The Knox County Klan's involvement in local politics was apparently slim. Though there were Klansmen in public office, the Klan never became a political issue as it often did in other communities. The Knoxville Klan did, however, lobby for clean elections, posting fifty Klansmen at voting precincts and printing placards that read "The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan Expect a Clean Election."

Ku Klux Klan Day at the East Tennessee Division of the State Fair on September 23, 1923, marked the high tide of Klan strength in Knoxville. More than thirty-five thousand Klansmen and their families attended the ceremonies, which had been touted in Klan publications as a four-state convention for Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky and Tennessee. The success of Klan Day was measured in the evening's initiation when eight hundred women and fifteen hundred men were enrolled into the Klan.

Over the next several years, membership in the Knox County Klan dwindled steadily. Attempts to attract new members by reducing the initiation fee were unsuccessful, and by 1928, membership stood at only 191. Biographical source: Kenneth T. Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-1930*, NY: Oxford University Press, 1967

### Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of the records of the Knox County Klan No. 14 during the years of its decline in the late 1920s. The records include proposed amendments and additions to by-laws, correspondence, financial records, petitions and applications for membership, membership and dues records, and memorabilia.

The proposed amendments and additions to the by-laws were not passed. The financial records and reports include the klavern's bank statement for 1927-1928 and the kligrapp's quarterly report for the first quarter of 1928.

The correspondence (1925-1930) is from the files of the klavern's kligrapp (secretary). Most of the letters are exchanges between the Knoxville klavern and the Office of the Grand Dragon, Realm of Tennessee, concerning routine chapter business (e.g., membership applications and transfers, dues, robes, celebrations and parades, and inter-chapter visiting.) The only letter

touching on politics concerns the Colorado Klan (18 February 1927). Some indication of the klavern's declining status is given in a letter of 12 May 1930 from the state headquarters suggesting that a special membership drive be mounted in order to rebuild the chapter. Among the correspondents are the following Klan leaders: M. S. Ross and J. R. Ozier, Grand Dragons, Realm of Tennessee; James Esdale, Grand Dragon, Realm of Alabama; Henry A. Grady, Grand Dragon, Realm of North Carolina; and H. Kyle Ramsey, Imperial Klaliff of the Invisible Order.

The petitions and applications for citizenship (in the Invisible Empire) were submitted by individuals to the Knox County Klan between 1924 and 1927. The petition (Form K-108) and application (Form K-115) are short pre-printed statements requesting membership which are signed by the applicant. The accompanying Form 1000 is a detailed questionnaire requesting personal information and the names and addresses of seven references. On the reverse of the form is space for two Klansmen "endorsers" to state anything they may know about the applicant. The collection includes 322 copies of Form 1000 in varying stages of completion. The Membership and Dues records (Form K-102) document a member's name, address, occupation, age, color of hair and eyes, height, weight, and marital status and record the monthly payment of dues. They cover the period from 1925 to 1928.

The memorabilia includes unused receipt booklets, a blank record book labeled "Klabee's Account," examples of attendance and merit cards, and an admission ticket to a Klan celebration on Armistice Day, 11 November 1926.

#### **Arrangement Note**

Arranged by record type.

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## Container List

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Content</b>
1	1	Proposed amendments and additions to by-laws, no date
1	2	Kligrapp correspondence files, 1925-1926
1	3	Kligrapp correspondence files, 1927-1930
1	4	Financial records
1	5	Applications for citizenship-B (103 items)
1	6	Applications for citizenship-C (117 items)
1	7	Applications for citizenship-D (24 items)
1	8	Applications for citizenship-E (36 items)
1	9	Applications for citizenship-F (34 items)
1	10	Applications for citizenship-G (79 items)
1	11	Applications for citizenship-H (127 items)
1	12	Applications for citizenship-I (2 items)
1	13	Applications for citizenship-J (38 items)
1	14	Applications for citizenship-K (31 items)
1	15	Applications for citizenship-L (63 items)
1	16	Applications for citizenship-M (109 items)
1	17	Applications for citizenship-N (29 items)
1	18	Applications for citizenship-O (1 item)
1	19	Applications for citizenship-S (4 items)
1	20	Applications for citizenship-T (2 items)
1	21	Applications for citizenship-W (1 item)
1	22	Applications for citizenship-notes, illegible applications (6 items)
2	1	Membership and dues record, 1925-1928 (156 items, including dividers)
2	2	Memorabilia

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