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A Klan ceremony in London, Ontario in late 1925 as featured in the London Advertiser. Ku Klux Klan robes in Canada differed from those in the United States by including a maple leaf opposite the cross insignia.

The Ku Klux Klan in London, Ontario¹

John Lisowski

The Ku Klux Klan was founded on Christmas Eve, 1865, in Pulaski, Tennessee, by six white former Confederate Army officers,² after General Robert E. Lee had surrendered the Confederate Army at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865. The group's name is said to have been derived from the Greek word "Kuklos," meaning circle. It is believed that they added the word "Klan" in honour of their common Scottish ancestry, spelling the word "clan" with a "K" for alliterative effect. In 1915 the group re-named itself the "Knights of the Ku Klux Klan".

In its heyday during the 1920s the Ku Klux Klan claimed a national membership of more than six million, some in prominent positions. The group even claimed President Woodrow Wilson as a Klansman but his membership has never been conclusively proven. The claim is based on the fact that an excerpt from his book, *History of the American People*, which was first published in 1901, in which he wrote that "The white men were roused by a mere instinct of self-preservation...until at last there had sprung into existence a great Ku Klux Klan, a veritable empire of the South, to protect the Southern country," had appeared in D. W Griffith's movie, *Birth of a Nation*, originally named *The Clansman*. This sentiment is not surprising when one learns that Wilson grew up in a slave-owning household.

Allegedly intended as a social club, the Ku Klux Klan rapidly evolved into an instrument of terror when its members began to realize that their ghostly white robes, conical hoods and midnight cross-burnings terrified the local populace, especially some of the more superstitious blacks.³ What started out as simple intimidation and property damage, quickly degenerated into violence – rape, pillage, beatings and murder. Although the Ku Klux Klan focused most of its attention on recently emancipated blacks, perceived "Negro-loving"

whites, usually white Republicans, were also targeted. Summary trials were held by the Ku Klux Klan and sentences imposed. In many instances victims were hanged without even the semblance of a farcical trial. Eventually the U.S. Government decided to step in. Faced with prosecution, imprisonment, and even execution for their crimes, many members of the Ku Klux Klan fled north to Canada. One of their destinations was London, Ontario, where a number of former expatriated political refugees from the South had settled. One such individual was Dr. James Rufus Bratton, a former South Carolinian.

Dr. Bratton, a member of an old and highly respected family, had practiced medicine in York County, South Carolina, for fifteen years before the attack on Fort Sumter across the water from Charleston launched the American Civil War. During the war he had served as a surgeon with the 5th South Carolina Volunteers, General Michah Jenkins Brigade. The passage of the Fourteenth Amendment⁴ by the United States Government on July 8, 1868, resulted in a legislature a majority of whose members were recently freed Negro slaves. In effect, the slaves were now the masters. To most die-hard Southerners this was an abomination. Although throughout his sojourn in London, Dr. Bratton maintained he was not involved with the Ku Klux Klan, other sources tell a different story.

In his recent book, *Carpetbaggers, Cavalry and the Ku Klux Klan*, published in 2007, author J. Michael Martinez recounts how a Ku Klux Klan raid in 1871 led by Dr. Bratton ended with the lynching of James Williams, a black man.⁵ James Williams was a former slave who had fled north but who had returned to South Carolina after the end of the Civil War and had been appointed Militia Captain for York County, South Carolina. In a speech he gave in the Town of Yorkville in March 1871, Williams had threatened that if the Ku Klux Klan ever came

into the county very few, if any, of its members would return home. Insulted by what they perceived to be disrespect for their organization, the Klansmen, led by Dr. Bratton, decided to show Williams and other “uppity” blacks in South Carolina that such threats would not be tolerated.

On March 6, 1871, an estimated 70 Klansmen arrived at the Williams home in the dead of night, led by Bratton who was 49 at the time. According to M.S. Carroll, a Klansman who subsequently wrote of the event in his journal, Williams was eventually found, after an extensive search, hiding under the floor boards of his home. With his terrified wife Rose looking on, the Klansmen dragged him out of his hiding place, put a rope around his neck and forced him to climb a nearby tree. Tying the rope to a limb some 10 or 12 feet above the ground, they tried to push him off to his death but he hung on, literally for dear life. Exasperated with the delay, one of the Klansmen, Robert Cladwell, climbed up the tree and began hacking at Williams’ fingers with a knife until he let go and plunged to an agonizing death by strangulation. Realizing that they would be hunted by federal law enforcement officers, Bratton and some of the other participants fled the state.

Bratton, travelling under the alias of James Simpson, arrived in London on May 21, 1872. He went to the home of Gabriel Manigault, a transplanted Southerner himself, on the east side of Alma Street, now a cul-de-sac, but which at that time was a one-block street between St. James and Grosvenor Streets immediately south of present-day St. Joseph’s Hospital. Unable to provide accommodation for Bratton in his small home, Manigault referred him to the home of Sarah Hill, a widow who lived on the west side of Wellington Street just south of Grosvenor.⁶ He warned Bratton to be on the lookout for American agents who were known to frequently visit the city. Convinced he was now safe, other than maintaining his alias, Bratton failed to take any other precautions and walked freely about the city.

Exactly two weeks later, on the afternoon of June 4, 1872, at approximately 4:30 p.m., as eight-year-old Mary Alice Overholt was walking along Wellington Street just north of Grosvenor Street, she saw a man, later identified as Dr. James Rufus Bratton, emerge from the large gravel pit (present-day Doidge Park) that was located on the south-east

corner of Wellington and Cheapside Streets. She watched him approach a man who had alighted from a nearby cab driven by Robert T. Bates. Bates would later identify his fare as Isaac Bell Cornwall, London’s Deputy Clerk of the Peace, acting as an agent of Governor Scott of South Carolina.



Dr. James Rufus Bratton

He would describe how Bratton and Cornwall exchanged words and then the two men began to struggle with Cornwall ending up on top of Bratton. Another cab arrived on the scene shortly thereafter and a second man, later identified as an American detective named Joseph G. Hester, jumped out, helped Cornwall subdue and handcuff Bratton and force him into the cab. The little girl’s description of the kidnapping led authorities to conclude that chloroform had been used to subdue him. Edwin M. Moore, proprietor of the Tecumseh House which stood on the south-west corner of Richmond and York Streets, would later reveal that Hester had

registered at his hotel some six weeks earlier. Realizing even at her young age that something was definitely wrong, Mary Alice ran to the home of Euphemia Dixon on Wellington Street just north of Grosvenor and told her what she has seen. Mrs. Dixon hurried to her door just in time to see Cornwall force Bratton into Bates' cab and drive away. Bates was ordered to drive to Clarence Street south of the Grand Trunk (now Canadian National Railway) railway tracks. Because the train they intended to board was late, they had to wait approximately 45 minutes for it to arrive. Bates reported that he watched Cornwall lead Bratton onto the train, his hands still handcuffed, before driving away. It was learned later that Bratton was taken across the border into Detroit from where he was transported to South Carolina.⁷

News of the incident reached Ottawa where it was brought up in the House of Commons on June 11, 1872. Sir John A. Macdonald, the Prime Minister at the time, announced that he had communicated Canada's outrage at this violation of its sovereignty and had lodged complaints not only with the British Parliament in London, England, which allegedly led to Queen Victoria's personal intervention, but also with the office of the British Ambassador in Washington, D.C., accusing the United States Government of having failed to proceed through proper extradition channels as required by international law. Canada demanded Dr. Bratton's immediate release and return to Canada. Ironically, it was the very same laws that protected former black slaves who had fled to Canada from being returned to the United States. Anxious to defuse a politically dangerous international incident, the United States Government ordered Bratton's release. Bratton, in the meantime, had appeared before Judge Bryan on June 10, 1872, in a South Carolina court and was charged with participating in the raid that had ended with the lynching of James Williams in March 1871 and had been released on \$12,000.00 bond.

London Police arrested Isaac Cornwall and incarcerated him in the cells at the London Police Station. A preliminary hearing was held on June 13, 1872, at which Gabriel Manigault, Edwin M. Moore the former proprietor of the Tecumseh House, Sarah Hill with whom Bratton had lodged, Robert T. Bates the cab driver who had brought Cornwall to the gravel pit and the little girl, Mary Alice Overholt,

who had witnessed his abduction, all testified. At the conclusion of the hearing Cornwall, represented by W. H. Bartram, was committed for trial by Magistrate Laurence Lawrason. There is no indication whether he remained in custody or whether he was released on bail. George Walker, the conductor on the train which had carried Bratton to Detroit, revealed that the warrant Hester had produced was not for the arrest of Dr. Bratton but for the arrest of James William Avery, another South Carolinian from Yorkville.

Cornwall's trial began two days later before County Court Judge William Elliot. The courtroom was nearly filled with spectators. After cabbie Bates repeated his earlier evidence at the preliminary hearing and had left the stand, the Judge called for the next witness. The door opened and in walked a thin man of dark complexion, black hair and beard and standing five foot ten. To everyone's surprise, he turned out to be the kidnapped doctor himself. He had arrived in London the previous day. Dr. Bratton confirmed the known circumstances surrounding his kidnapping and then proceeded to tell the rest of the story. He stated that after arriving in Detroit he was taken to a Detroit Police Station where he was detained until midnight when he was taken by Hester to the railway station and placed on a train bound for Columbia, South Carolina. At the conclusion of Bratton's evidence, Judge Elliott sentenced Cornwall to three years imprisonment at Kingston Penitentiary for his role in the kidnapping, apparently not accepting his defence that he had been duped by Hester into assisting him to apprehend the wrong man.

Dr. Bratton was eventually joined by his wife and six children and continued to practice medicine in London for some years. He lived at 262 Piccadilly Street⁸, the third house on the north side of Piccadilly just west of Wellington Street,⁹ which still stands, and maintained an office at 133 Dundas Street, later moving it to 194 Dundas Street. Throughout his stay in London he continued to deny any involvement in the Ku Klux Klan.

In a pamphlet entitled "*A Statement of Dr. Bratton's Case, being explanatory of The Ku Klux Prosecutions in the Southern States*," published in 1872, Dr. Bratton's London solicitors, Becher, Barker and Street, stated that they wished to dispel the "many idle rumors and false statements having

been put forth as to the charges against this gentleman.”¹⁰ They insisted that Dr. Bratton was a political refugee and should not be “confounded with the ordinary fugitives from justice frequently escaping across the frontier.”¹¹ The pamphlet undoubtedly persuaded Londoners to view Dr. Bratton in a positive light. Since Canada prided itself on being a safe haven for fleeing slaves, given Dr. Bratton’s alleged membership in a group whose atrocities were well publicized, some have subsequently questioned why the good people of London would have continued to use his services. It appears that Londoners decided to overlook these allegations and instead chose to take advantage of the vast experience he had gained as a medical doctor and surgeon in the Confederate Army during the American Civil War under harsh and horrifying circumstances.



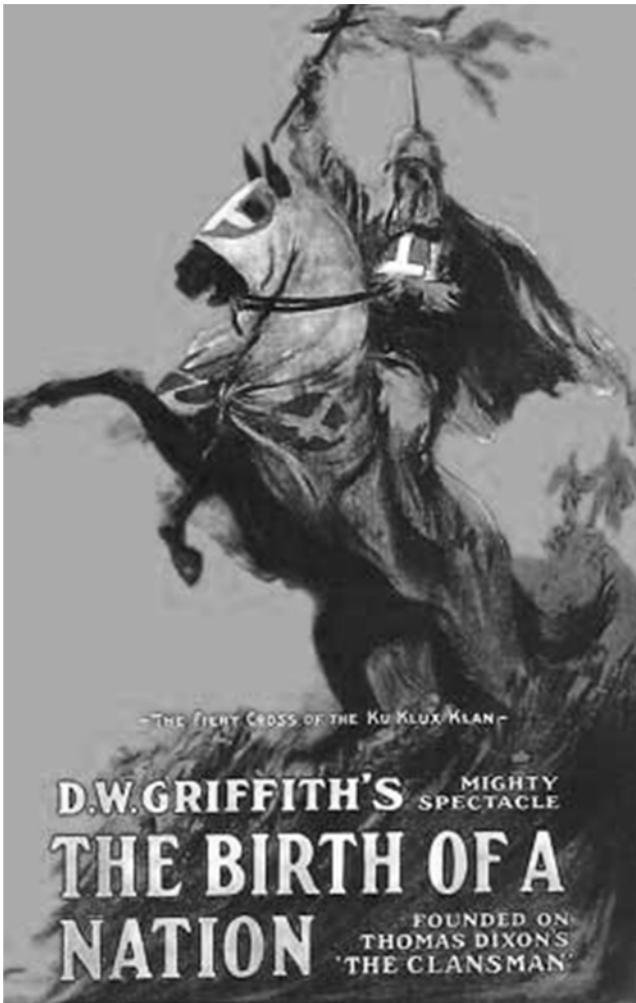
Mary Rebecca Bratton (Massey)

In addressing the allegation that Dr. Bratton had been present at the lynching of Captain James Williams, his solicitors pointed out that the Southerners were compelled to act against Williams not only because he had burned two small villages, Yorkville and Chesterville, but also because he had threatened “to Ku-Klux the white ladies and children.”¹² Although conceding that it had been proven in a South Carolina courtroom that during the night of March 5, 1871, a group of white men had in fact hanged Williams, they pointed out that no witnesses had come forth to identify Dr. Bratton as a participant in the hanging. They were obviously not aware of Carroll’s journal entries.

Dr. Bratton returned to South Carolina with his family sometime after 1879, the fact that President Ulysses S. Grant had granted amnesty in 1876 to former Klansmen probably having something to do with it.¹³ He was never prosecuted for the lynching death of Captain Williams, very likely because of the prominence of his family and witnesses’ fear of retribution. Bratton died on September 1, 1897, in his 76th year and was buried in the Bethesda Presbyterian Church Cemetery in his home town of Yorkville, South Carolina. The *London Free Press* printed a tribute to him in its September 14, 1897 issue, recalling his stay in London in the 1870s and his prominence in Masonic activities in the city. The Bratton home was razed in 1956. A plaque erected at the site by the York County Historical Commission in 1977, commemorates the fact that Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy, spent the night of April 27, 1865 in the home on his flight from the Confederate capital at Richmond, Virginia, following the surrender of the Confederate Army.

Some believe that Dr. Bratton’s life was the inspiration for D. W. (David Wark) Griffith’s “*The Clansman*,” the first full-length motion picture ever made. The silent movie, which premiered on February 8, 1915, was based on Thomas Dixon’s novel *The Clansman*, and was explicitly racist. It glorified the supremacist views of the original Klan and undoubtedly revived and popularized the group. Much of the modern Klan’s symbols, rituals and dress, such as the white robes with the conical hat, as well as the burning of crosses were derived from the film, yet another example of life imitating art. Griffith defended his controversial film by saying he demanded “the liberty to show the dark side of

wrong, that we may illuminate the bright side of virtue.”¹⁴ Nevertheless, he changed the name of the film from *The Clansman* to *Birth of a Nation*, three months later. It is not surprising that the movie portrayed the South in a favourable light since Griffith’s father, Jacob Wark Griffith, a Kentucky Colonel who commanded the 1st Kentucky Cavalry in the Confederate Army during the Civil War, undoubtedly filled his son’s head “with nostalgic tales of dashing, gray-clad cavaliers defending the antebellum way of life.”¹⁵



Original movie poster 1915.

Not surprisingly, Southerners who were members of the Ku Klux Klan and who had emigrated to Canada, actively attempted to recruit new members to their “cause”. The Ku Klux Klan made a serious push to recruit new members in the London area in the years 1925 and 1926. The one and only attempt, at least the only overt one, to form

a London Klan took place in April 1925. Perhaps not surprisingly, no subsequent recruitment meetings were reported in local newspapers. After all, given the secrecy surrounding the group, new members may have been recruited at secret meetings that were not publicized. The *London Advertiser* quoted an unidentified London Police Officer as saying that “London would not tolerate such perpetrators as have been reported in Southern American cities. As soon as Ku Klux organizers present themselves in the city, they will be speedily apprehended.”¹⁶ The *London Free Press*, however, quoted Chief Robert Birrell as saying that “We have no more right to interfere with their plans than we have to stop the organization of any other society. So long as they maintain order and in no way violate the laws of the land, they are at liberty to organize or hold meetings.”¹⁷

On April 23, 1925, The *London Advertiser* reported that the Ku Klux Klan of Kanada would hold its maiden meeting in the Ulster Hall, Duffield Block, south-west corner of Dundas and Clarence, at 8 p.m. that evening. Invitations to select individuals in London and area to attend the meeting and join the “brotherhood” had been posted in Toronto. Although The *London Advertiser* reported that a number of London’s Police Officers had been assigned to the Block to maintain order, the *London Free Press* again quoted Chief Birrell as saying police officers would not be assigned to the meeting for any reason.

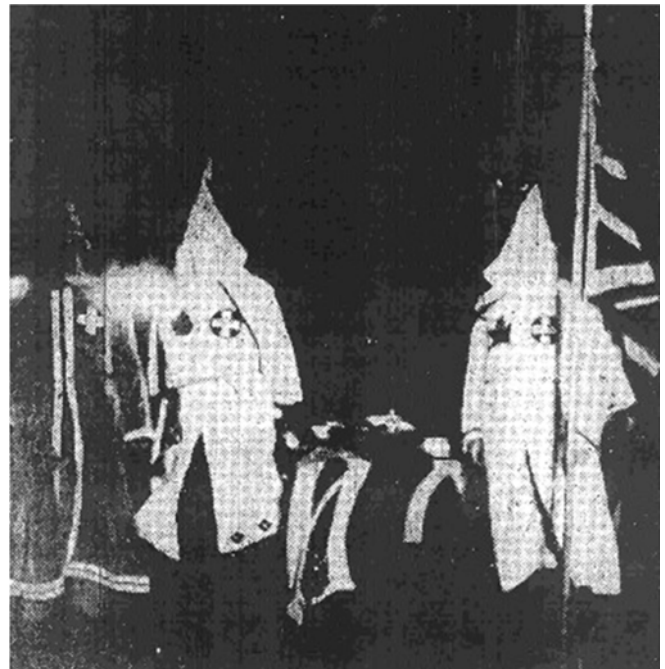
A reporter for the *London Advertiser* gained admission to the meeting by presenting a card given to him by one of the persons who had received one of the invitations to attend the meeting. The motto at the top of the card, “NON SILBA SED ANTHAR”, means “Not for one’s self, but for others.” The following day he reported that only the man stationed at the innermost door to the meeting had been completely hooded in the well-known regalia of the Ku Klux Klan and that of the approximately 75 persons who had attended the meeting, only 50 paid the initiation fee of \$10. The unidentified chief speaker at the meeting, who claimed to be a minister and an ex-president of one of the leading universities in the United States, described the group as “racial, economic and religious, in that it seeks to maintain the purity of the white race, to wrest from the Jews the control of the economic situation, and to uphold Protestant



The London Evening Free Press headlines the first Canadian Ku Klux burial in London, Ontario.²⁰ Courtesy of Western Archives, Western University, London Free Press negatives collection.

principles as opposed to 'the Roman Hierarchy'.¹⁸ He claimed that the greatest sin, in the Klan's judgment, was not murder or arson, but the "pouring of white blood into the veins of mud races." Secrecy was considered essential so that the enemies of the Ku Klux Klan "did not know what we are doing, where we are doing it and how we are doing it."¹⁹

Later that year, on August 2, 1925, at a rally of more than two hundred people on Federal Square²¹, Dr. J. H. Hawkins, claiming to be the Klan's "Imperial Klailiff,"²² proclaimed the beliefs of the Kanadian Klan: "We are a white man's organization and we do not admit Jews and colored people to our ranks. God did not intend to create any new race by the mingling of white and colored blood, and so we do not accept the colored races."²³ In Canada, the Klan, although still targeting blacks, also denounced Jews, Roman Catholics and immigrants. One of the Klan leaders, Dr. C. W. Fowler, a former New Yorker, addressed the crowd, saying, among other things, that the Klan's "three chief purposes are to keep the white race pure, to strive for the economic betterment of the Gentiles and to work for the organization of Protestants in behalf of Protestant civilization."²⁴ He insisted that the Klan did not take the law into its own hands,



The Klan gathering at the Dorchester fairgrounds, on the left is the imperial Kleigrapp, gowned in purple with gold braid. The other two are King Kleagles, distinguished by their scarlet hoods. On the front of the robes with the cross are maple leafs which distinguish the Kanadian Klan. London Free Press, Oct. 15, 1925. Courtesy of Western Archives, Western University, London Free Press negatives collection.

saying “How else than by legislation can we successfully obtain our ends?”²⁵ An estimated sixty Klan policemen were on hand to ensure the crowd behaved in an orderly fashion.

On August 3, 1925, the *London Free Press* quoted London’s Mayor, George Wenige, as saying, “London needs no Ku Klux Klan or other order that seeks to gain unjust ends by a cowardly parade of masks and mystery. As Mayor of London, I will use all the power of my office to rid the city of the verminous missionaries of an order that seeks to terrify citizens who may differ from these so-called Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in race, colour, religion, or ability to succeed.”²⁶ Two London Police Officers had attended but did not intervene as the meeting went off without incident. Oddly, the meeting concluded with a prayer to Allah, “May the peace of Allah rest upon you.”

On October 15, 1925, the *London Advertiser* revealed that more than 1,000 men and women from all over Western Ontario, some in white hoods and some simply wearing masks, had attended the first open air gathering by the Ku Klux Klan in Canada at the Donnybrook Fairgrounds in Dorchester the previous evening. A reported one hundred new candidates were sworn in as new members. Four crosses, varying in size from a small crossbar to one 50 feet in height with a 15-foot crossbar, were set afire.

The following year, on January 21, 1926, the headline in the *London Free Press* announced that what was believed to have been the very first time in Canadian history that members of the Ku Klux Klan had attended the burial services of one of its members and performed the last rites, had taken place in London, Ontario, the previous day. The paper reported that more than twenty robed and hooded members of the Ku Klux Klan of Kanada had attended the funeral of Alexander Milliken, a member of the Drumbo Klan, at Woodland Cemetery in London. Milliken had been previously employed as a watchman at the Canadian Pacific Railway Richmond Street crossing in London. They marched in single file around the open grave, led by the King Kleagle²⁷ carrying an electric fiery cross²⁸ and a sword, singing the well-known hymn “Nearer My God to Thee.” After saluting the Union Jack they dispersed. Only family and a few close friends were allowed to attend.

The following year a group of hooded Klansmen tried to proceed en masse through the

chapel of the Hyatt Avenue United Church in London to show their appreciation for the anti-Catholic sentiment earlier expressed by Rev. B. (Benny) C. Eckhardt, a lay preacher from Nilestown.²⁹ The Rev. R.J. McCormick refused to allow the Klansmen entry into the church unless they first removed their hoods and gowns.

An earlier suspected but never proven incident of Klan activity in London was the burning of the Harrison home in South London. Thomas Harrison and his wife Isabella were runaway slaves, he from Kentucky, she from Missouri, who had arrived in London, Ontario, via the underground railway, where they met and eventually married in 1854. The family’s home, where Richard Berry Harrison, their fourth son, was born on September 29, 1864, was located on the west side of Wellington Street just north of the South Branch of the Thames River.

Richard Harrison first became interested in the theatre when he was given a job selling copies of the *London Advertiser*, an early London newspaper, outside the city’s theatres. This gave him an opportunity to speak with some of the actors



Richard Harrison on Clark’s Bridge gazes at the location where his family’s former home stood.³⁰



Copy of The Freedom of the City certificate given to Richard Harrison by the City of London, on October 29, 1934 when he was honoured by the City and appeared as the guest of honour at the London Rotary Club luncheon.

Non Silba Sed Anthar

BELIEVING IN THE PRINCIPLES ANNOUNCED BELOW, AND WISHING TO AFFILIATE MYSELF WITH REAL PATRIOTS OF LIKE FAITH AND CONVICTIONS, I HEREBY REQUEST FULL INFORMATION REGARDING THE PATRIOTIC ORDER WHOSE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES ARE NAMED BELOW AND ALSO REQUEST AN INTERVIEW.

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Protestantism | Freedom of Speech and Press |
| White Supremacy | Selective and Restrictive Immigration |
| Gentile Economic Freedom | Law and Order |
| Just Laws and Liberty | Higher Moral Standard |
| Pure Patriotism | Our Public Schools |
| Separation of Church & State | Freedom from Mob Violence |

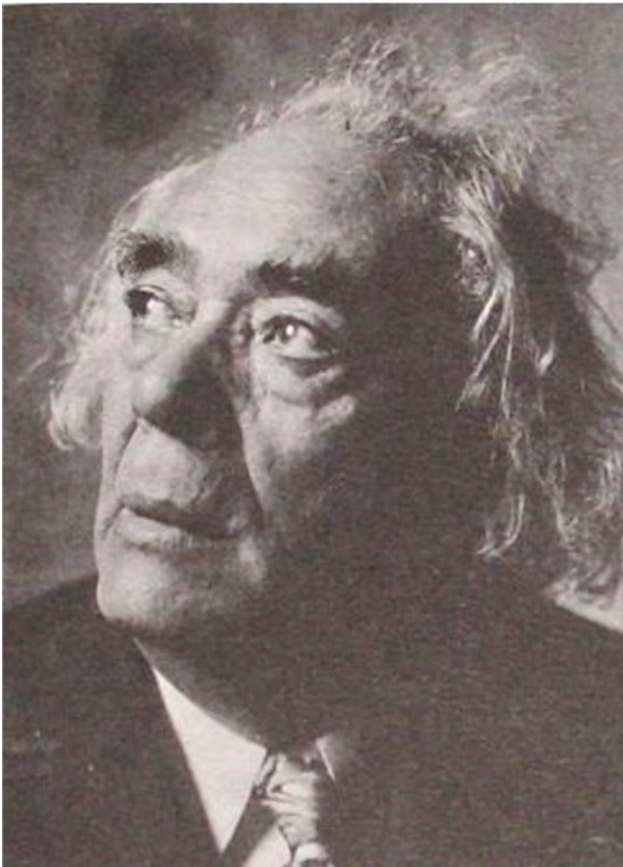
NAME
ADDRESS
ST. NO. **PHONE NO.**

I AM A WHITE, GENTILE, PROTESTANT, AND WILL BETRAY NO CONFIDENCE.

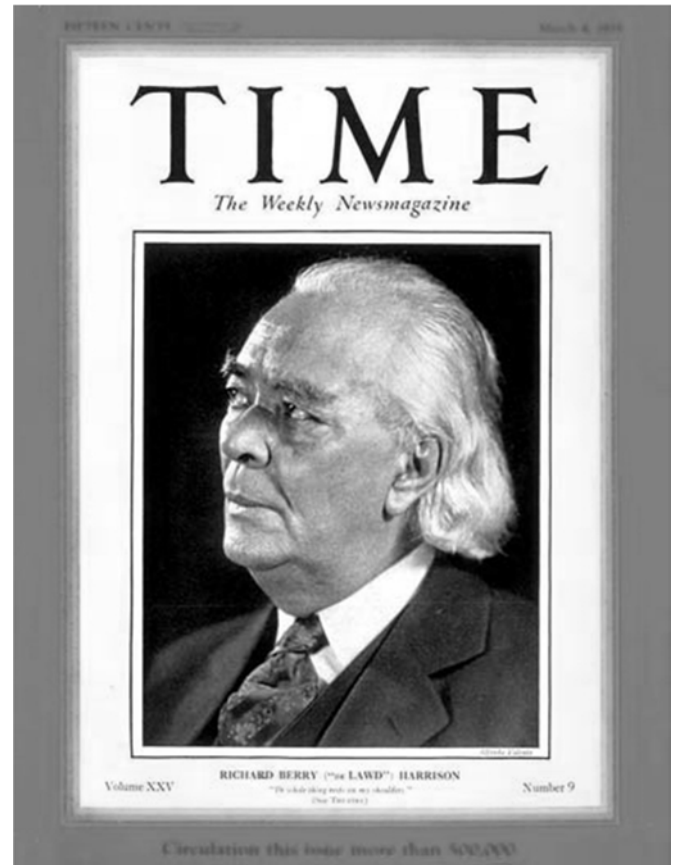
Reproduction of the card used for admission to London's first Klan meeting on April 23, 1925. The motto at the top of the card, "NON SILBA SED ANTHAR", means "Not for one's self, but for others."

and also earned him enough money to occasionally purchase a cheap seat for some of the performances, thereby awakening a life-long love affair with the theatre. The family eventually moved to Detroit, Michigan, circa 1880. There he attended the Detroit Training School of Dramatic Art, from which he graduated in 1887.

Like most actors, he struggled to make a living. It was not until he had reached the age of 65 in late 1929 that he was asked to play the role of God in playwright Marc Connelly's new play, *The Green Pastures*. Based on the first two books of the Old Testament, the play was written in the mispronounced broken-English stereotypically attributed to slaves that would clearly be labeled as racist today. Harrison's initial reservations about performing in a play with racial stereotypes "that might make Negroes feel I'd let them down," were eventually overcome and on February 26, 1930, he made his first appearance as "de Lawd" on the stage of the Mansfield Theatre on Broadway. The play was an instant success and gave him the fame that many actors never achieve in their lifetimes.



Richard Harrison.



Richard Harrison, shortly before his death.

Four years later, on October 29, 1934, his company pulled into the CPR station in London to give a performance of "de Lawd" at the Grand Theatre. Upon his arrival he was given the Freedom of the City and was the guest of honour at the London Rotary Club luncheon. As he was touring his old boyhood haunts along the river he recounted the story of how a gang of thugs calling themselves the Klux Klan had burned his family home to the ground only hours after they had left for Detroit. His sardonic wit was revealed when he was quoted as saying, "Fifty-four years ago they gave us a great celebration when we left London. They burned our house down."³¹

In 1935, on the afternoon of what would have been his 1,658th consecutive performance as "de Lawd," Harrison informed the producers that he was too ill to perform that night. Two weeks later, on March 14, 1935, and ten days after his photograph appeared on the front cover of TIME magazine, he died of a stroke at the age of seventy.

He was buried in Lincoln Cemetery in Blue Island, Cook County, Illinois. Sixty-eight years later, in the month of February 2003, Mayor Anne Marie DeCicco would unveil a historical plaque re-naming Nelson Park at the foot of Clarence Street as Richard Berry Harrison Park in his honour as part of London's Black History Month celebrations. The plaque is located just west of where his childhood home had stood.

The Ku Klux Klan slowly faded from London history, although undoubtedly some hardcore members continued to secretly subscribe to its theories of white racial superiority. In recent years, Martin Weiche, who had served as a Luftwaffe pilot during the Second World War and who was a former President of the Canadian National Socialist Party which was inspired by Nazi ideology, openly described himself as a racist and a Nazi, and occasionally permitted Ku Klux Klan cross and swastika-burning rallies to be held on his 12-acre farm known as "The Berghof," (the name of Hitler's former retreat in the Bavarian Alps) on Gainsborough Road just west of the hamlet of Hyde Park.³² A cross-burning on his property in 1993 attended by approximately 40 people dressed in Klan regalia led the Ontario Government to consider amending the Ontario Human Rights Code to ban such activities.³³ Weiche died on September 2, 2011, at the age of 90.

Although there are several well-known white supremacists residing in London, they have not attracted attention by burning crosses. However, in the early morning hours of July 23, 2006, Dave Lucenti, described in the following day's issue of the *London Free Press* as "a white, self-employed and straight contractor,"³⁴ awoke to find a metre-and-a-half cross on his lawn that had been burned elsewhere. Suspicions were raised that this may have been an attempt to resurrect the cross-burning practices of the Ku Klux Klan, however, no evidence was found to support that conclusion and it is believed this was simply a feeble prank by individuals with too much time on their hands. The London Police hate-crime unit investigated the incident but no charges were laid because no particular individual or group appeared to have been targeted and no damage was done to the property.

Regardless of whether this incident was intended as a racial gesture, the city of London continued its long history of intolerance for this kind

of act, reminding those who may attempt such a stunt that London is and remains a city where all citizens should feel welcomed and safe, no matter their religion, skin colour or culture.



Constable Ken Steeves checks out the charred remains of a wooden cross left on the front lawn of Dave Lucenti's home in south-east London.³⁵

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Endnotes

¹ All information contained in this article was obtained from the June 29, 1925, August 3, 1925, September 2, 1925, October 15, 1925, January 21, 1926, February 7, 1999, and July 24, 2006, issues of the London Free Press and the October 18 and 19, 1922, and October 30, 1937, issues of the London Advertiser, unless otherwise stated.

² The founding members of the Ku Klux Klan were Calvin E. Jones, John Booker Kennedy, Frank O. McCord, Captain John C. Lester, Richard R. Reed and Major James R. Crowe.

³ The *London Free Press* printed an Associated Press article in its April 10, 1965, issue in which Joe Tom Kennedy, the 78-year-old nephew of John Booker Kennedy, one of the co-founders of the KKK, was quoted as saying that the formation of the KKK "all started as a prank by some fun-loving, restless young bachelors home from the American Civil War." He went on to say that they though it hilarious to gallop through town on their horses dressed in white robes and terrifying the people of the town, especially the superstitious former slaves.

⁴ The Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution was adopted on July 9, 1868. Among its provisions, it overturned the 1857 decision by the United States Supreme Court in *Dred Scott v. Sandford* which held that blacks could not be citizens of the United States, it prohibited state and local governments from depriving persons of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, and it required each state to provide equal protection under the law to all people, eventually resulting in to the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision in 1954 which led to the abolition of racial segregation in American educational institutions.

⁵ Martinez, J. Michael, *Carpetbaggers, Cavalry and the Ku Klux Klan*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706, 2007.

⁶ London City Directory, 1875-6.

⁷ Although in agreement with the main points surrounding Dr. Bratton's kidnapping, the account by Jerry Lee West in his book, *The Reconstruction Ku Klux Klan in York County, South Carolina, 1865-1977*, Jefferson (N.C.) : McFarland & Co., 2002, differs on some minor points.

⁸ Presently the new home of Oxford Book Shop Limited.

⁹ London City Directory, 1876-77. Neither the house number for Manigault or Hill is known because house numbers were not published in London Directories at the time.

¹⁰ Becher, Barker and Street, Barristers, London, Ontario, *A Statement of Dr. Bratton's Case, being explanatory of The Ku Klux Prosecutions in the Southern States*, pg. 2. Printed by the "Free Press" Steam Book and Job Printing Co., 1872, London, Ontario. University of Western Ontario Archives, Call No. DBWRC, JX4292, P6.579, 1872.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., pg. 15

¹³ Martinez, J. Michael, op. cit.

¹⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Birth_of_a_Nation

¹⁵ <http://www.historynet.com/the-birth-of-a-nation-when-hollywood-glorified-the-klk.htm> "The Birth of a Nation": When Hollywood Glorified the KKK, Published Online: June 12, 2006.

¹⁶ *London Advertiser*, April 22, 1925.

¹⁷ *London Free Press*, April 23, 1925.

¹⁸ *London Advertiser*, April 24, 1925.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ *London Free Press*, January 21, 1926.

²¹ Federal Square was situated in the block bounded by Dundas, Waterloo, King and Wellington Streets, and was located just west of the Armouries.

²² Usually the second in command of a local Klavern.

²³ *London Free Press* August 3, 1925.

²⁴ *London Advertiser*, October 15, 1925.

²⁵ *London Advertiser*, January 21, 1926.

²⁶ *London Free Press*, August 3, 1925.

²⁷ The Kleagle was the chief recruiting officer for a local Klavern.

²⁸ *London Free Press*, October 30, 1924.

²⁹ Joseph O'Neil, a local history advocate, brought to the writer's attention the fact that it is perhaps the "grandest of ironies" that Beth Emmanuel Church at 430 Grey Street in London, a predominantly black church, still uses a "fiery electric cross" exactly like the one used in the Klan funeral.

³⁰ For many years he had a church on Elizabeth Street, just north of Dundas Street. He was also a member of the London Auxiliary Police for several years.

³¹ Ibid.

³² *The Globe and Mail*, November 10, 1980.

³³ *Toronto Star*, May 12, 1993.

³⁴ *London Free Press*, July 24, 2006.

³⁵ Ibid.