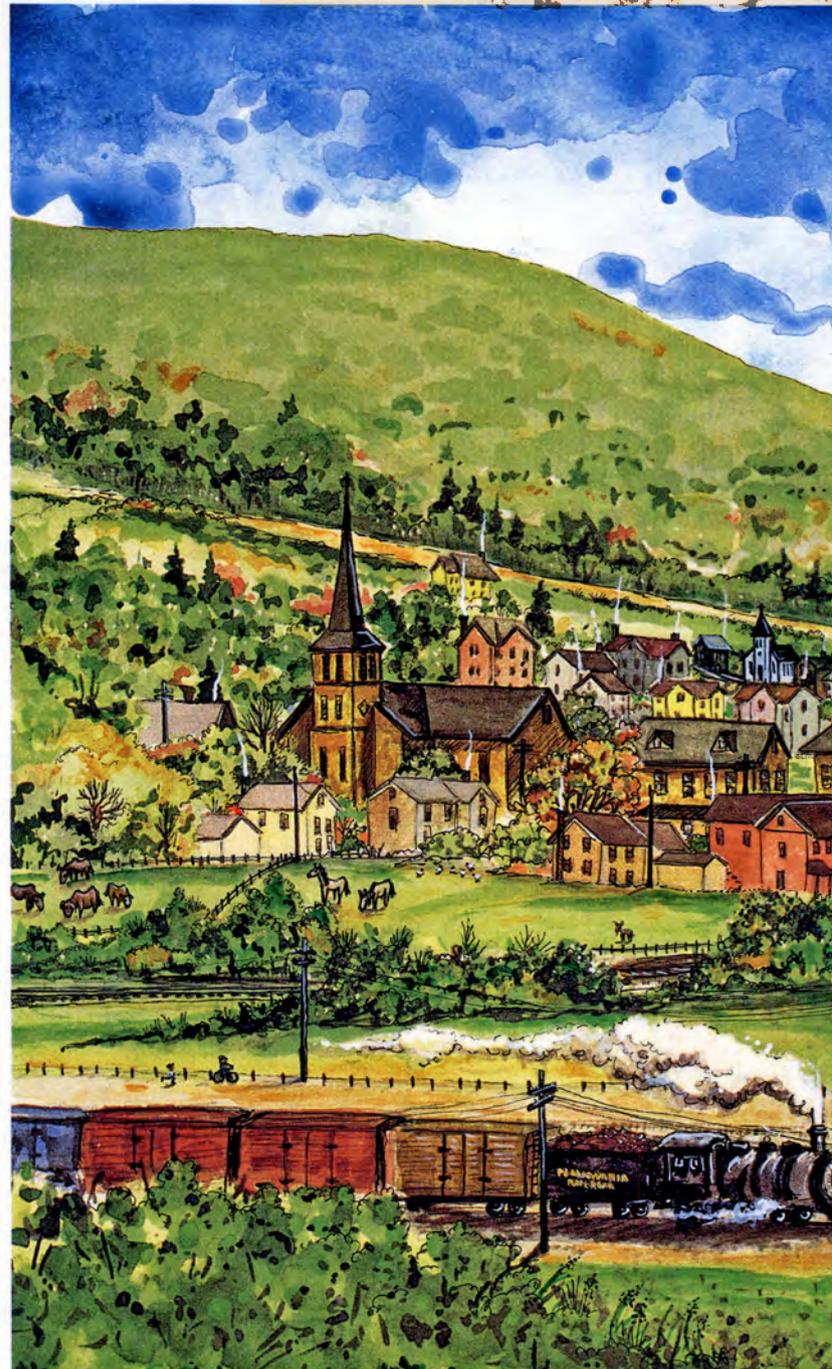


# THE Brave CHAOS

## AN ANALYSIS OF THE KU KLUX KLAN'S ATTACK ON LILLY, PENNSYLVANIA

By Nicholas Lasinsky

When the Klan comes knocking, what do you do? This was the question faced by the town of Lilly, Pennsylvania, nestled in the Appalachian Mountains in the western part of the state between Johnstown and Altoona, deep in the heart of coal mining country. On April 5, 1924, the town of less than 2,500 residents was faced with a line of train cars filled with Klan members sent to intimidate the largely Catholic and immigrant miner families and make a statement about who really controlled the small towns of industrial Pennsylvania. Yet Lilly would answer the challenge by fighting back, leading to at least three deaths, dozens of wounds, and jail sentences handed out to both sides.



Lilly, Pennsylvania

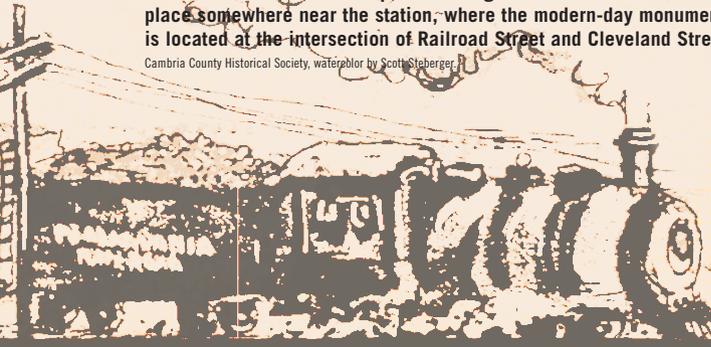


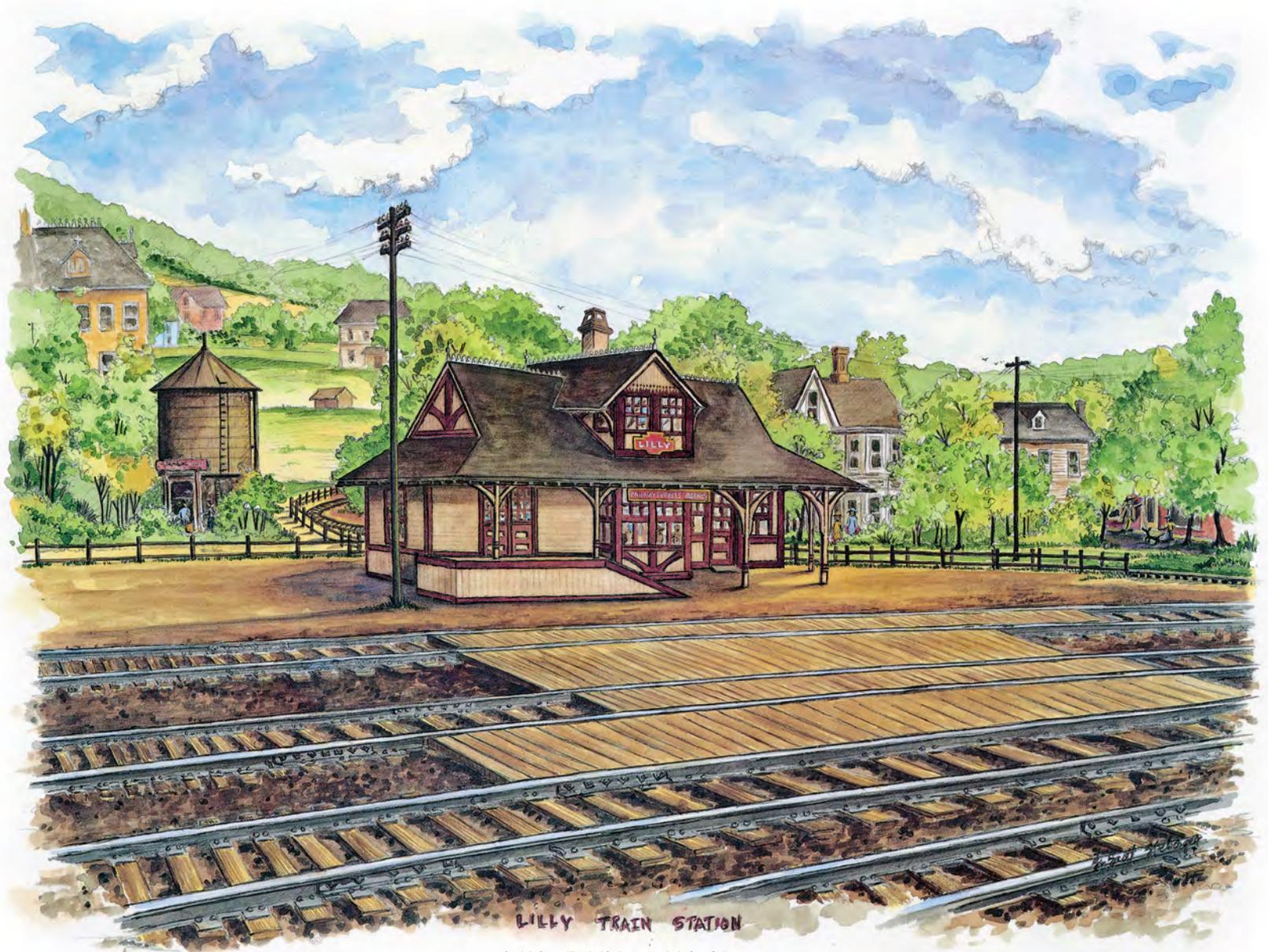


*Scott Steberger*

The Klan began its march up to Piper's Hill from the Lilly train station, then retreated back to the KKK Special after gunfire broke out. The firestorm likely took place somewhere near the station, where the modern-day monument to the incident is located at the intersection of Railroad Street and Cleveland Street.

Cambria County Historical Society, watercolor by Scott Steberger





LILLY TRAIN STATION

Cambria County Historical Society, watercolor by Scott Steberger.

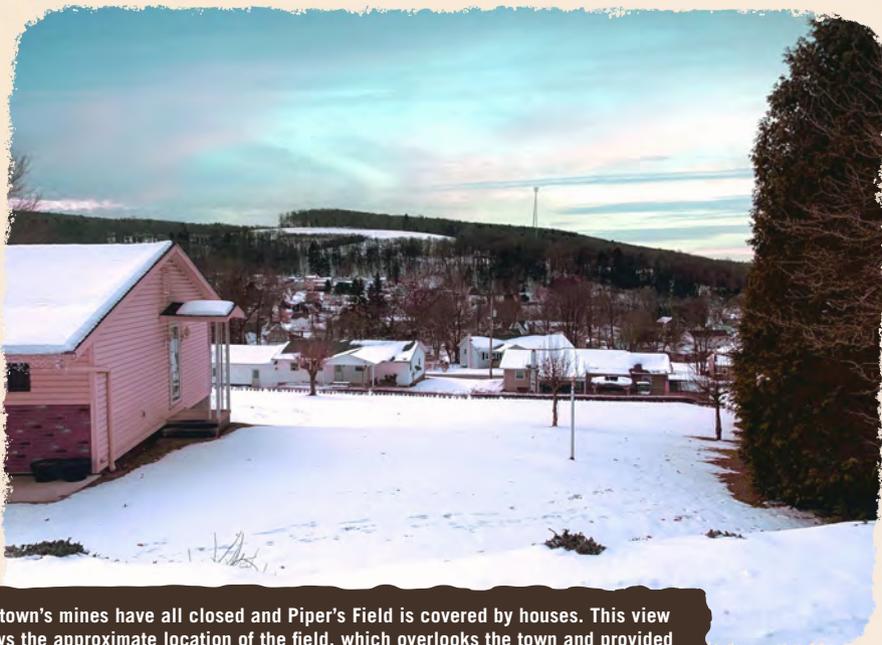
When studying immigrant groups, it is often tempting to focus on a broad level, working to tease out trends and widespread beliefs in the diverse masses. But it can also be useful to zoom in and focus on one incident to uncover fine-grained truths about what life was like for those working-class citizens who were deeply despised for their “race” and religion. This study is an attempt to do just that; it examines a single small town facing a threat of discrimination, and that town’s response to a challenge to their place in American society. It is an examination of the wider trends influencing that challenge, a study of the

nativist tensions of Western Pennsylvania in the early 20th century, and, most of all, it is an effort to parse through the incomplete and unruly retellings of that spring night and to understand the impulses and terrors of a community under attack.

A roiling local and national environment produced the assault against Lilly in 1924, even if the seemingly prosperous façade of the Roaring ’20s would tell a different story. Broadly, the United States was grappling with a fit of legislative xenophobia, culminating in the Immigration Act of 1924. The nation was gripped with a strong anti-immigrant

sentiment; as one historian writes, “Congress remained obsessed with the menace that eastern and southern Europeans, especially Jews and Italians, posed to the United States. Both houses of Congress were determined to eliminate that menace altogether if possible.”<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, the Immigration Act would become law on May 26, 1924, a mere month and a half after the Lilly attack. This hysteria at the national level was complimented and mirrored in the strength of the Ku Klux Klan. Indeed, as other historians described the situation, “The Ku Klux Klan ... strongly supported the 1924 bill which was signed into



The town's mines have all closed and Piper's Field is covered by houses. This view shows the approximate location of the field, which overlooks the town and provided a platform for the Klan to burn crosses and explode dynamite.

Photo by Nicholas Lasinsky.

law by Coolidge,” and that support could be traced to a burning hatred of the Catholic immigrants settled near the many “klavern” meeting houses founded throughout Pennsylvania and the north.<sup>2</sup>

After its resurgence in 1915, the Klan quickly took hold. A 1986 article in this magazine reported, “There were 125,000 Klansmen in the state by the end of 1924, and possibly 250,000 within the next two years.”<sup>3</sup> In Lilly’s county alone there were nine klaverns, and neighboring Altoona “might have had the highest number of Klansmen per capita of any city in the United States.”<sup>4</sup>

Why so much Klan activity in an apparently unassuming part of the state? A belt of Catholicism stretched through west-central Pennsylvania, mingling with Protestant denominations in towns like Altoona, Ebsburg, and Lilly. The original Catholic churches, established by missionaries in the late 18th century, were growing more powerful in the 1920s, fed by a constant stream of “racially impure” immigrants drawn to the region for the mining jobs it provided. Lilly itself had a rich history of Catholic immigration, as it was

originally settled by Irish, then filled with incoming Italian and Polish workers. One gruesome incident, involving “a group of Italian workers, who had been brought to America by the railroad companies” hints at the fabric of the town.<sup>5</sup> The local historical society newsletter recalled, “They were stacked three or four in bunk beds for sleeping [when] fire broke out in the building. The people rushed to the door, but then remembered that they had left the money that they were sending back to Italy in the building, and rushed back in. There they met those trying to get out, and 27 ... were burned in a pile.”<sup>6</sup> Desperate for their wages, drawn to Lilly for work, and buried in the local Catholic cemetery, these workers paint a portrait of most of the town’s residents: poor, dedicated immigrants, accustomed to tragedy, and willing to risk life and limb for the rewards of their time in America.

Though Lilly was composed of mostly Catholic, White ethnic groups, it also supported a vibrant Protestant community, which played a part in fomenting the religious conflicts of the town. As a local newspaper recounts, a few weeks before the KKK’s attack, “the Lilly

Lutheran Church parsonage was shot into, and the wife of the pastor, Elmer F. Brown had a narrow escape. A few nights later another shot was fired into the building... Dominick Naples and Antice Trangelero were arrested the next day & held in court ... as the men who fired the shots. Since that time, the town has been seething.”<sup>7</sup>

Thus, the moment was ripe for discord in the days before the attack: a nationwide bill targeting Eastern Europeans was being endorsed in Congress; the KKK exercised a strong grip on Western PA, with massive reserves of Klansmen in easy reach of the railroads leading into the town; and Lilly itself faced a fractured populace, with Polish and Italian immigrants grating against their Protestant neighbors. It was an unassuming place, but an ideal cauldron for the violence that erupted.

When studying this attack, it is crucial to recognize the holes and disparities in the sources; the Lilly riots, while significant, were mostly covered regionally, and all surviving witnesses are now deceased. Though some research has been done on the subject and excellent anecdotes do exist, it is important to remember the limits of recent articles, the gaps in the contemporary reporting done in local papers, and the shortcomings of oral testimony and human recollection of traumatic events. All that really exists are the flawed and fascinating pieces of memory and hearsay.

There was supposedly an incident involving the “dismissal of 6 or 7 union men by the local District No. 2; UMW OF A at a recent meeting for having admitted membership in the KKK,” though no union documentation exists to back up this claim.<sup>8</sup> Even so, the United Mine Workers had heavily unionized the area, and the incoming Catholic immigrants had undoubtedly taken jobs from Protestant workers. These tensions could have easily contributed to the Klan’s animosity toward Lilly. We will likely never know exactly why the Klan decided to attack this specific

STATE POLICE CONTROL LILLY AFTER FATAL KLAN BATTLE

“The attack itself was a coordinated affair.”

THE PITTSBURGH GAZETTE TIMES  
DEAD AND HURT IN KLAN RIOT



Upper, left to right—Floyd Paul, aged 25, and Philip Conrad, aged 25, who were killed Saturday night in the fight between residents of Lilly near Johnstown, and members of the Ku Klux Klan when the hooded knights marched through the town. Lower, left to right—Miss Anna and Miss Esther Hanna, sisters, who were among the injured. Miss Anna Hanna was bruised about the body and her sister suffered a broken leg when they and other women were trampled upon and badly beaten by townspeople. It is reported, when they cheered the marching Klansmen at Cleveland street and Portage road, Lilly, about four blocks from the railroad station where the big fight took place. Conrad, who was killed later, discovered Miss Esther Hanna lying on the street and carried her to a porch of a residence nearby.

STATE POLICE CONTROL LILLY AFTER FATAL KLAN BATTLE

Continued from First Page.  
they will be held without bail pending a completion of the investigation. The other two were released.  
Those really responsible for starting the riot were among the four being held, Sergt. Jimcousky stated, the Altoona district by automobile and regular trains.  
**Trouble Long Brewing.**  
The special train on which the Klansmen traveled was an accommodation which, after finishing its run

The men and women who died or were injured in the Lilly riot were poor, working-class citizens of the town, and thus did not have elaborate portraits. The best we have are grainy black and white headshots, or, in the case of Frank Miesko, nothing at all.

The Spirit of a Community (Lilly, PA: Lilly-Washington Historical Society, 2006), 40.

26 Held in Jail.

town—nobody was inclined to track down Klan members for an interview, and all such members are deceased now.

The only fragment of a clue we have about the Klan’s motivation comes from David Chalmers’ 1987 study of the KKK’s presence in the state, which described the violence of the group: “It burst forth in the little mining town of Lilly, where the Klan had twice tried to burn crosses. Klansmen converged upon Lilly by chartered trains ‘to give the Micks something to think about.’” This single reference to the Klan’s motivation hints at the superiority that they believed justified their attack; it would be construed as a display of strength, an assertion of their “true” Americanism, the righteous Protestants taunting the weakness of the inferior Irish “Micks.”

The attack itself was a coordinated affair. A 2006 article reported that the Johnstown KKK klavern “made plans to lease a Pennsylvania railroad train for the night, a train that became known as the ‘KKK Special.’ The train started in Pittsburgh and went directly to Johnstown, where a man by the name of Swank had ordered it.”<sup>10</sup> The Klan’s plan was simple: await the arrival of the train at their various stops and signal their identity as Klan members by holding brown packages containing their robes. Once the train arrived, they would march through Lilly, complete a cross burning ceremony, and board the same train, returning as they came.

By the time the KKK Special pulled into Lilly it had picked up most of its riders in Johnstown, making additional stops at stations like Wilmore and Portage. There was also a second train, the regularly scheduled 610, “which arrived in Lilly just after the KKK Special pulled in at 7:10 p.m., according to a journal kept by a railroad clerk.”<sup>11</sup> Sources differ as to the number of Klansmen who disembarked from the trains, with an extra layer of confusion because many sources neglect to mention the presence of a second train at all. The total number of Klansmen that arrived was likely between 350 and 450, an astonishing invasion for a town which at that time had a population of 2,300.

Once the Klan was off the trains, someone, likely a Protestant sympathizer, cut the power to the town, plunging Lilly into darkness. Morris Schullman recounted that “People up on (Smith Hill) saw them cutting the electrical lines at the substation.... The lights were out until (the Klan) returned to the station.”<sup>12</sup> In reading the sources, the Klan’s scare tactic was, at first, a resounding success. Mary Grace Campagna Burke, who was eight years old at the time of the attack, recalled that she and her sisters “ran to the window to see what was going on. All the streetlights were out. However, the whole town was dark, and lots of noise was coming toward us.... My oldest brother, Kelly, was downtown hiding in a sub-basement at the First National Bank. It is one of my most

vivid and frightening memories of being a child in Lilly.<sup>13</sup> Morris Schullman also recounted, “My dad (Louis) grabbed me by the neck and pulled me in (the store)... I got into the back of the house and heard the shooting.”<sup>14</sup>

There was an atmosphere of surprise and fear as the Klan began marching four by four up to a local mining field, a sense that the town was shrinking back into its shell, stashing away its young and vulnerable. The Klan quickly reached their destination and began preparing for the ceremony. The message broadcast by a legion of hooded members marching through the town had to be apparent: the Klan sought to sow fear in the people of Lilly and ignite terror and submission from the hill above their town.

Though Lilly was indeed struck with fear, the Klan’s activities seem to have also sparked a spirit of resistance, a spirit aided by the fact that the cross burning ceremony took about two

and a half hours—plenty of time for the townspeople to collect and ready themselves in preparation for the group’s march back to the Special.<sup>15</sup> One particular event gave them an opportunity for resistance. Art Yingling recounted that at “About 8 o’clock, a train came in going west.... A guy got off it with a bundle under his arm. The townspeople took it off him and tore it open. It was a robe, so they gave him a beating.”<sup>16</sup> There is no way to confirm Yingling’s story, but numerous sources do reference the beating of an individual Klansman; his account of the single traveler is plausible, considering the audacity it would have taken to pull out one Klansman from the general march, and the knowledge the town had gained by that point of the “plain brown packages” used to disguise the members’ robes.

Yingling’s testimony hints at a town bordering on the brink of eruption: “They were going to string him up on a boxcar.... But a (man from Lilly) talked them out of it. There were a lot of level-headed guys

in town that night, too.”<sup>17</sup> Another man, W.E. Rhone, told a local paper soon after the attack that “After the cross had been burned, there was great pandemonium on the street. Someone was yelling vile words in the gathering. They were pounding someone. I don’t know who, but someone hollered: ‘Hang him.’ ‘Kill him!’ ‘Let me get a crack at him, I haven’t had my chance yet!’”<sup>18</sup> Both Yingling and Rhone’s words hint at an intriguing question: were the townspeople to blame for initiating the violence that occurred that night?

Though the Klan had launched a campaign of intimidation, most sources seem to agree that the citizens of Lilly were the first to consider violence in retaliation, as with the potential lynching. Yet, from today’s perspective it can be difficult to see the citizen’s response against the terror they faced as anything other than courageous, especially against such a large force. Clearly the Klan seemed to be provoking trouble that night—or, at least, was attempting to make trouble themselves.



The graves of Frank Miesko, Philip Conrad, and Cloyd Paul are largely forgotten today. Miesko and Conrad are buried in Saint Brigid’s Cemetery in Lilly, while Paul is buried in the tiny Ford Cemetery of Mineral Point, PA, his stone in noticeably worse shape. One has to wonder if the difference in burial location is due to the fact that the first two men were Catholic, killed by the Klan, while Paul was Lutheran, and reportedly chopped wood for the Klan’s crosses.

Photo by Nicholas Lasinsky.



**There are no photographs of the actual attack, which was over quickly and took place in a town where few would have had the equipment for taking photos, let alone the courage to plunge into the dark and violence with a camera. Instead, the best we have are images like this taken afterward of Lilly resident Garaldine Smith tending to Harold Bradley, who was purportedly wounded in the riot.**

The Spirit of a Community (Lilly, PA: Lilly-Washington Historical Society, 2006), 40.

**The men convicted of rioting served their time in Cambria County's Old Stone Jail, an imposing building in the middle of Ebensburg notorious for its poor facilities for housing inmates.**

Cambria County Historical Society.

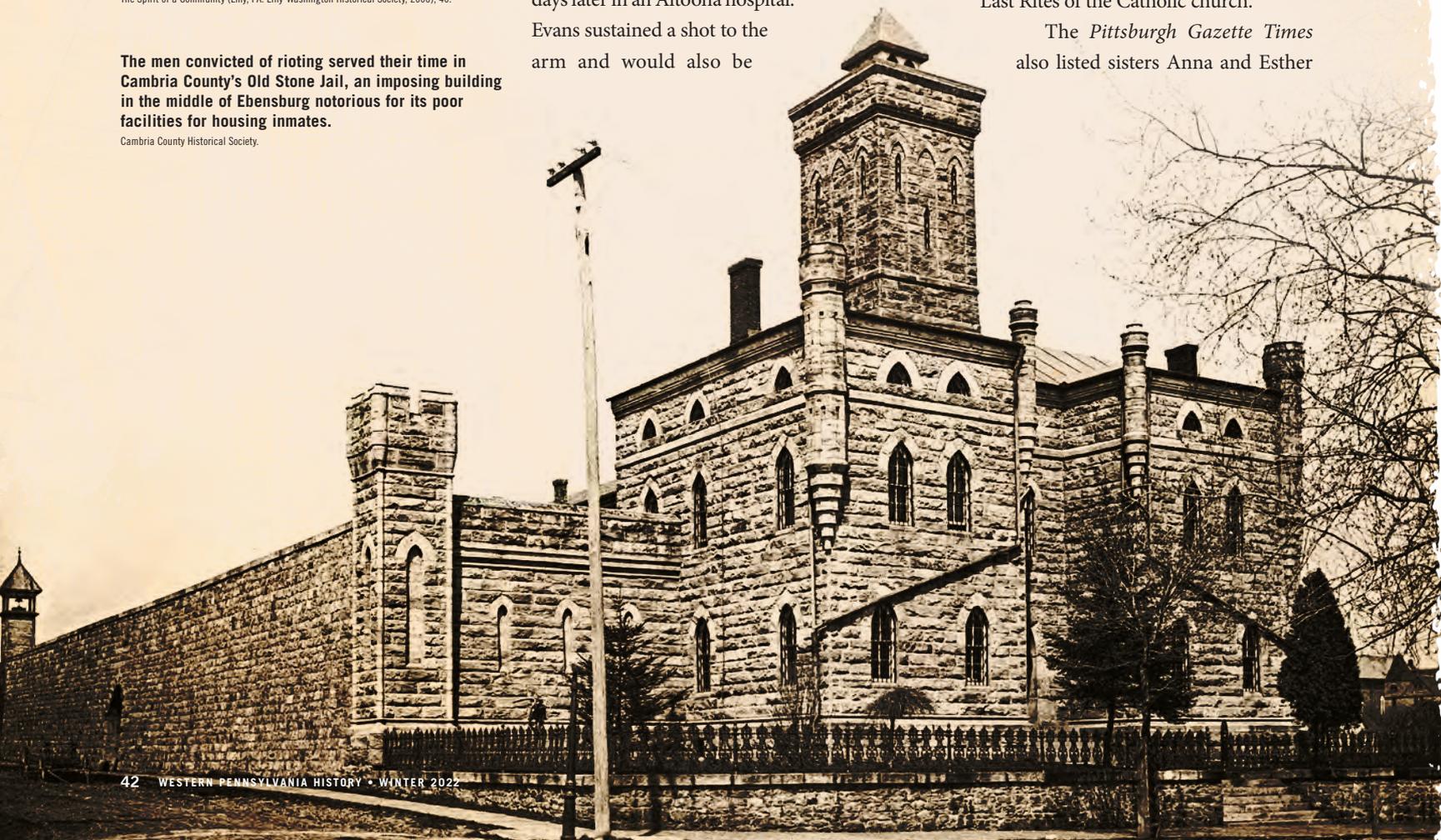
Resistance began at approximately 9:30 p.m., after the conclusion of the ceremony in the mining field. The Klan members began their march back down to the KKK Special, which some men in the town had contemplated smashing with coal cars from the local mine. Morris Schullman said "the town's people were throwing rocks at the Klansmen, then some young men turned a fire hose on them. That was when shots rang out."<sup>19</sup> Chaos erupted. Vicious disputes over who fired first would come to dominate subsequent trial proceedings, though a community history does offer one possible, if slightly sensationalized, story for how the shooting got started: "The small group of town youth turned the firehose on the KKK, and a man, later identified as Sam Evans of South Fork, left the ranks of the marchers, and went after them. The water pressure was insignificant, but Evans tried to wrestle the fire hose away from the lead man, Frank Miesko. Then a shot rang out!"<sup>20</sup> Miesko was hit in the abdomen and would die three days later in an Altoona hospital.

Evans sustained a shot to the arm and would also be

hospitalized. The gunfight was brief but dense, and the "trainmaster of the KKK Special ... testified that between 100 and 200 shots had been fired. He said the shooting lasted about 1 minute."<sup>21</sup> Rhone told the newspaper that "The firing became terrific. It came from all directions."<sup>22</sup>

When the dust had settled, three men of Lilly were dead: Cloyd Paul, Philip Conrad, and Frank Miesko. Some sources recount that "Cloyd and his brother were Klansmen who cut down trees that were later used as the crosses that night."<sup>23</sup> The oft-repeated anecdote about Paul chopping wood is difficult to prove or disprove, though he was a member of the local Lutheran church. Philip Conrad was, by all accounts, an innocent bystander who left a local basketball game to see what the commotion on the streets was after the power went out. He was likely struck by a stray bullet, and "Schullman remembers seeing [him] lying in a jewelry store later. A priest was administering the Last Rites of the Catholic church."<sup>24</sup>

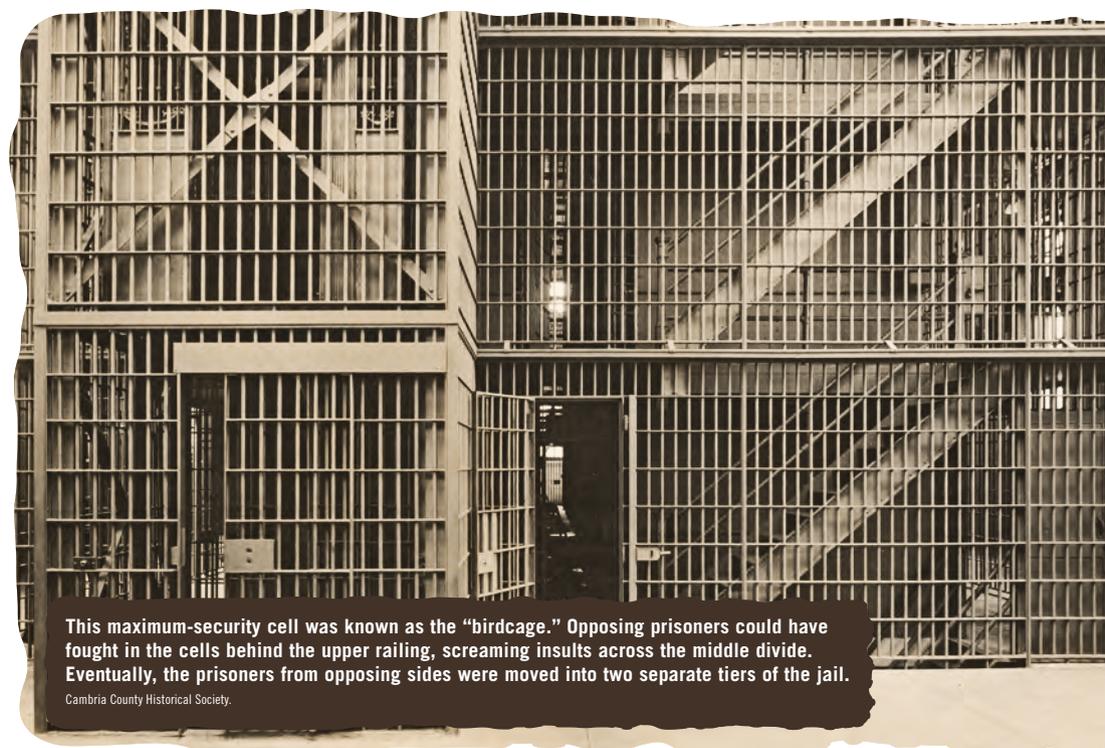
The *Pittsburgh Gazette Times* also listed sisters Anna and Esther



Hanna among the injured, reporting that Anna “was bruised about the body and her sister suffered a broken leg when they and other women were trampled upon and badly beaten by townspeople ... when they cheered the marching of Klansmen at Cleveland Street and Portage Road.”<sup>25</sup> This anecdote, though sparsely reported, is tantalizing in the contrasting picture it paints of the town as perhaps being more divided than history has recorded. Like Cloyd Paul, the Hanna sisters’ story demonstrates the possibility that some residents of Lilly welcomed the Klan’s advances.

The Klan’s casualties from this event are much harder to assess. It is inconceivable that they could have completely dodged the 200 shots that were reportedly fired, but the only source that includes any speculation on the Klan’s wounds is Lilly’s Bicentennial book: “Three KKK members were wounded and were also taken on board the KKK Special as it returned to Johnstown.... Two of the wounded Klansmen reportedly died shortly after the riot.”<sup>26</sup> What is certain is that dozens of people were hit in the exchange of gunfire, with at least three men dead, and more than 20 others seriously hurt.<sup>27</sup> The KKK Special pulled out of Lilly filled with men on the retreat, who reportedly threw their guns out of the windows on the journey back. They likely disembarked at some of the smaller towns on the way, as by the time the train pulled into Johnstown, state troopers waited to arrest those who still possessed the brown packages of robes or weapons. Many in Lilly were also quickly rounded up for disturbing the peace, though in the end only 13 residents and 26 Klansmen were detained.

The aftermath of the Lilly attack is deserving of an examination itself, but a few points are especially worth mentioning. Local judges chose to recuse themselves from the case, with the exception of Judge John E. Evans, who denied those arrested on both sides the opportunity for bail, asserting that “every one who takes part in a riot is a rioter.... Every man



This maximum-security cell was known as the “birdcage.” Opposing prisoners could have fought in the cells behind the upper railing, screaming insults across the middle divide. Eventually, the prisoners from opposing sides were moved into two separate tiers of the jail.

Cambria County Historical Society.

who stayed on the streets of Lilly made himself liable to arrest.”<sup>28</sup> Despite this seemingly balanced ruling, the judge also handed down an incredibly strong denunciation of the KKK, barring them from the courtroom, and delivering an opinion that The Barnesboro Star speculated “may have a nationwide effect on the activities of the Klan as at present conducted.”<sup>29</sup> Evans’ opinion “declared that for any body of men to assemble dressed in the cloaks and hoods as worn by the KKK to terrify the negroes of the South after the Civil War is guilty of unlawful assembly because such a gathering would have the only tendency of putting the people in fear” [emphasis in original].<sup>30</sup> It is a fascinating statement, and hints at a tiny bond between the Blacks of the south, and sympathetic Catholics and immigrants of the north, who were also terrorized by the KKK.

Though Evans’ ruling, while bold, clearly went unenforced in the larger south, there are other clues that the attack resonated with Black communities. In one opinion piece published

a week after the attack in the *Philadelphia Tribune*, a Black columnist arguing for local representation on the school board wrote that “The bigger this Jim Crow idea grows the more drastic must the remedy be. It seems reasonable, therefore, that colored and white people should begin now to eliminate Jim Crow schools before the reaction comes as that of the Ku Klux Klan in Lilly, Pa. last week.”<sup>31</sup> Another article in the *Tribune*, entitled “Emissary of the Devil,” argued that “It is foolish for American citizens to think that the reaction will only affect the Negro, the Jew, and the Catholic. As evidenced by the affair in Lilly, a wild mob recognizes nobody.... It is the duty of all good citizens of every race and every class to fight the Klan as they would the devil himself.”<sup>32</sup> These fascinating pieces, published in historically Black newspapers, suggest that African Americans saw the Lilly attack as a warning, and used it as an example of the terror that the KKK worked to sow beyond minority communities. In this way, the attack resonated far beyond the borders of Cambria County,

**“Yet about 70 years after the event, Lilly’s attitude toward that night seems to have shifted for the better.”**

acting as a cautionary tale for multiple communities as its lessons were preached in every corner of the state.

Yet news of the riot spread even further afield. For three weeks in April 1924, *The New York Times* carried regular coverage of the incident and the ensuing trial, with the paper noting on April 7 that “Lilly is quiet today, in full realization of its sorrow. But there is no repentance for the attack upon the klansmen. The majority of the citizens believe their rights had been invaded and refuse to believe responsibility rested with them.”<sup>33</sup> Perhaps most interestingly, the *Times* includes a quote from Frank Miesko, presumably taken before his death in an Altoona hospital: “The Klansmen all had pistols and were shooting in

every direction when the lights went out. The flashes from their pistols revealed their white garbs.’ Miasko [sic] declared that so far as he knew none of the townsfolk was armed.”<sup>34</sup> Such direct testimony on the event is valuable in itself, but the *Times* coverage is a significant indication that the events in Lilly prompted national curiosity and attention.

Ultimately, 26 Klansmen and 15 townspeople “were convicted of rioting and sentenced to two years in prison. They were released after serving a year and a day.”<sup>35</sup> Morris Schullman later claimed that “there was so much fighting inside the jail that the two factions had to be kept on separate tiers.... When the town’s men came back from their prison stay ... they were cheered. They were

looked up to.”<sup>36</sup> Yet this temporary celebration was quickly shrouded in silence. Paranoia about speaking to state troopers gripped the town for a period, as those involved feared that they too would be locked up as rioters.

Documentation of the Klan’s attack was inevitably biased by Lilly’s view of the event, and the historical record reflects the feelings of the townspeople about that night. After the initial coverage in local papers, sources dried up for 67 years, until 1991. One researcher, Hugh Conrad (the nephew of riot victim Philip Conrad), recalls that his father “never so much as whispered anything about the events of April 5, 1924, to us when we were growing up decades later. We were told that that topic was ‘off limits.’”<sup>37</sup> The incident quickly became seen



The Lilly memorial is maintained with fresh flowers, a testament to the town’s desire to honor its citizen’s actions on that night. Though the mural’s etching is beginning to flake, the symbolism of the united working-class joining hands to block the swarming Klan is still crystal clear.

Photo by Nicholas Lasinsky.



Dedicated in 2008, the memorial’s text is a dramatic portrayal of the events of that night. It is difficult to prove the plaque’s claim that the town’s actions kicked off the downfall of the Klan, but its strong language suggests that Lilly has come to be exceedingly proud of its confrontation with the hate group in 1924.

Photo by Nicholas Lasinsky.

as something better forgotten. Even today, many people speak with a sense of sorrow, a feeling that Lilly was scarred, and “never recovered its innocence after the hate crimes of April 5, 1924.”<sup>38</sup>

Yet about 70 years after the event, Lilly’s attitude toward that night seems to have shifted for the better. The cause of this shift could be attributed to the deaths of many of the men who were old enough to have taken part in the fight that night, though the resulting gap in firsthand accounts of participants is a tantalizing frustration to any potential researcher. Lilly effectively started trying to remember just as most of its populace had begun to forget. Nevertheless, a modest body of accounts like those of Schullman and Yingling, the teenagers and children of the town, were captured in local newspapers.

A flurry of interest in the event beginning in the 1990s and continuing into the present day culminated in the placement of a monument in Lilly in 2008 dedicated to the town’s “resistance to the Klan’s demonstration,” which proclaims that night in Lilly “to be the beginning of the end of the Klan’s advance in the north-eastern United States.” There is little evidence to support this claim, wonderful as it would have been if, upon hearing of Judge Evans’ strong opinion, the Klan had promptly and peacefully ceased all its demonstrations.

Today, the town of Lilly seems to have a quaint pride in its defeat of the Klan, especially its older members, whose parents were the prime participants. The monument is rather well maintained, with fresh flowers planted in pots at its base. Though the population of Lilly has shrunk to about 900, its pride in the events of April 5, 1924, have grown with time, leading to a bustle of original research, and an attempt to salvage and sort what local stretched tales and family recollections are left.

Though the attack on Lilly cannot be singlehandedly credited with turning back the Klan, it remains an impressive example of the resistance of Catholic immigrants to the

activities of the group, especially in the north. Although connections with Black resistance efforts are thin, and overt mentions of Lilly’s “racial” inferiority are nonexistent in the historical record, the incredible aggression of the Klan in the attack makes it reasonable to assume that they believed in their own superiority. Marching into a town of “Micks,” hoping to disrupt the evening of a community of poor miners, the Klan was met with fierce resistance, and retreated in disarray. The people of Lilly, it seems, do have something to be proud of, even if their growing pride in this ethnic history could be attributed to ethnicity’s function as “an aesthetic resource to be performed, enjoyed, and consumed, a site to advance symbolic capital and advance status,” as Anagnostou argues it to be.<sup>39</sup>

Still, there is something notable in the town’s reaction, something admirable in the people’s defense. Lilly’s residents confronted fear on the night of the riot, but that fear quickly crumbled in the wake of a brave chaos, melting into a whirlwind of retaliation, and giving their descendants something to be proud of today; it lends a grain of truth to the oft-repeated trope of “tough immigrants” who came to America in search of prosperity and were willing to run back into a burning building or to face about 450 Klansmen to get it. Studying incidents like this often unmasks the myth of the tough immigrant, but it can also reveal a truth in that generalization. Lilly’s residents were indeed tough—or at least, one suspects, the Klansmen must have thought so, as the KKK Special never returned. ❁

**Nicholas Lasinsky** studies history and English at Haverford College. He is a native of Cambria County and dedicates this article to Pap Bortel.

<sup>1</sup> Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017), 104.

<sup>2</sup> Frank Götze and Steven G. Koven, *American Immigration Policy: Confronting the Nation’s Challenges* (New York, NY: Springer, 2010), 133.

<sup>3</sup> Philip Jenkins, “The Ku Klux Klan in Pennsylvania, 1920–1940,” *The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 69, no. 2 (Pittsburgh: Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, 1986), 124. WPHM is

an earlier iteration of *Western Pennsylvania History* magazine.

- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>5</sup> “Tragedy in Lilly,” in *The Cambria County Historical Society Heritage* 23 no. 3 (Cambria County Historical Society, 2003), 3.
- <sup>6</sup> “Tragedy in Lilly,” 3.
- <sup>7</sup> “Fatal Rioting, Two are Dead,” *The Mountaineer Herald* (Ebensburg, PA), April 10, 1924.
- <sup>8</sup> “Fatal Rioting,” *The Mountaineer Herald*.
- <sup>9</sup> David M. Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism: The History of the Ku Klux Klan* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987), 239.
- <sup>10</sup> *The Spirit of a Community* (Lilly, PA: Lilly-Washington Historical Society, 2006), 39.
- <sup>11</sup> *The Spirit of a Community*, 39.
- <sup>12</sup> “Klan Killing Darkens Tiny Lilly’s Memories,” in *The Tribune Democrat* (Johnstown, PA), April 4, 1999.
- <sup>13</sup> *The Spirit of a Community*, 41.
- <sup>14</sup> “67 Years Ago, Klan Came to Lilly,” in *The Altoona Mirror* (Altoona, PA), April 5, 1991.
- <sup>15</sup> *The Spirit of a Community*, 39.
- <sup>16</sup> “Klan Killing Darkens,” *The Tribune Democrat*.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>18</sup> “Lilly Residents Returned to Jail,” in *The Mountaineer Herald* (Ebensburg, PA), April 17, 1924.
- <sup>19</sup> “67 Years Ago,” *The Altoona Mirror*.
- <sup>20</sup> *The Spirit of a Community*, 40.
- <sup>21</sup> “26 Klansmen Refused Trial, Decision by Judge John E. Evans,” in *The Barnesboro Star* (Northern Cambria, PA), April 10, 1924.
- <sup>22</sup> “Lilly Residents Returned to Jail,” *The Mountaineer Herald*.
- <sup>23</sup> *The Spirit of a Community*, 40.
- <sup>24</sup> “67 Years Ago,” *The Altoona Mirror*.
- <sup>25</sup> “Dead and Hurt in Klan Riot,” *The Pittsburgh Gazette Times* (Pittsburgh, PA), April 7, 1924.
- <sup>26</sup> *The Spirit of a Community*, 41.
- <sup>27</sup> “Lilly Residents Returned to Jail,” *The Mountaineer Herald*.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>29</sup> “26 Klansmen Refused Trial,” *The Barnesboro Star*.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>31</sup> “An Editorial: We Must Have a Member on the Board of Education,” *The Philadelphia Tribune* (Philadelphia, PA), April 12, 1924.
- <sup>32</sup> “An Emissary of the Devil,” *The Philadelphia Tribune* (Philadelphia, PA), April 12, 1924.
- <sup>33</sup> “25 Klansmen Face Trial for Murder,” *The New York Times* (New York, NY), April 7, 1924, 1.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.
- <sup>35</sup> “Klan Killing Darkens,” *The Tribune Democrat*.
- <sup>36</sup> “67 Years Ago,” *The Altoona Mirror*.
- <sup>37</sup> Hugh Conrad, “A Black Day in Lilly,” *The Tribune Democrat* (Johnstown, PA), April 5, 1999.
- <sup>38</sup> “Klan Killing Darkens,” *The Tribune Democrat*.
- <sup>39</sup> Yiorgos Anagnostou, “‘White Ethnicity’: A Reappraisal,” in *Italian American Review* 3 no. 2 (University of Illinois Press, 2013), 107.