

Speaker 1 ([00:00](#)):

So, what was the first sense? Uh, how did, how did you get interested in the clan in the EOP?

Speaker 2 ([00:07](#)):

Well, I'm not an, not an upper peninsula native and I came here from California. So I was kind of new to the history of the upper peninsula. And kind of from the very beginning, I was always asking questions about, uh, what was going on other than mining, because you always hear about copper mining and iron mining. And I began to go down these trails to see what other activities were going on in the upper peninsula. And the, the other thing that happened was that I back in the 1970s, late seventies, I gave a series of lectures on the upper peninsula in American history. And so I would parallel the development of for instance, the fur trade, uh, with the colonial period in American history and found that this is where it was happening. And so I did this with the rest of American history up to the present.

Speaker 2 ([01:03](#)):

And as I started doing that, I found that you had these national events, world war one, the KKK in the twenties, uh, world war II. And so on, things like that, uh, that had a, uh, that, that had a part in the upper peninsula. There were, these things were happening in the upper peninsula part of the problem. Maybe I should just kind of repeat or go over this again. Um, with the upper peninsula, a lot of people natives feel that the upper peninsula is isolated, that we're isolated from the large cities, Detroit, Chicago, and so on. And I to kind of put an end to that, I came up with this idea of a lecture on the upper peninsula in American history. And so as I went through that development of that lecture, I found that there were all these events of national significance that had a counterpart in the upper peninsula.

Speaker 2 ([02:01](#)):

And as I went through it, I found that the Klan was active. Now that happened. And I can, I can tell you almost the exact date. It happened in 1976. I didn't know the clan existed in the upper peninsula. A few people did. And it happened that the bicentennial issue of the mining journal carried a, um, section on the history of Marquette and lo and behold, I opened the paper and here is the clan, 1926 marching down front street in the heart of Marquette. And at that point I said, Whoa, uh, this, even the clan fits into this view of the upper peninsula, having participated in the events of the nation. And that's kind of where I first got, uh, was alerted to the fact. And then subsequently I started digging for more information. Do you want me to talk about that or,

Speaker 1 ([02:56](#)):

Well, let's talk about, yeah. What did you find? When did the Klan come here? What, what, what did you find?

Speaker 2 ([03:02](#)):

Well, I started, I started digging through newspapers and, um, well, wait a minute, let me start over. I started, uh, first I started talking to people about the clan and many people Marquette really didn't want to talk about it. It was very, very interesting. Uh, it seemed that even today, many years later, uh, there's a certain fear, uh, connected with the Clinton. They did not want to talk about it. Uh, we even had an, a woman do an interview at about that time. She was in her eighties and, uh, put a 20 year hold on her tape. So she had some sort of a fear to, to have done that. I had some sort of a fear that the Klan was going to retaliate or something. So I began to, but I did get bits of information from people. Uh, it was all

accurate, but a little tidbits, a sentence from this one little more from another, and then you just had to start gathering it.

Speaker 2 (04:04):

And then I went through the newspapers and tried to coordinate when there was a major Klan event in the United States, a March or something. And was there a similar event in the upper peninsula? And one thing I found was that the Klan usually March usually had their, their main event around labor day, either on labor day or they would have a, uh, a clan meeting, uh, uh, at, around that time. And so I began to look at the newspaper. It was a needle in the haystack research, and I started to look at the newspaper, uh, around those dates. And sure enough, uh, starting in about 1925, 1926, the clan didn't last too long in the upper peninsula. I began to find information about the clan

Speaker 1 (04:56):

And where did the Klan come in? I, we had talked briefly about it came in from Wisconsin and, and, and below, but on tape. How, how, how did you, in fact, I think it was 24 in iron mountain. Yeah. So tell, tell me about, about the, the it's. It looks like a pincers movement almost, but right.

Speaker 2 (05:14):

Uh, it SI from the, uh, from the newspaper articles and, and as I pieced it together, I found that the Klan was, uh, at least burning across on Christmas Eve in iron mountain, in front of a Catholic church in 1924. And that was a little, well, a few months earlier, it was sort of on its way, but it was coming up through Wisconsin and then I would, uh, the clan then would come up through Michigan as well, because it'd be part of the state, uh, state clan, the state organization. And in 1925, you began to have the clan very active in, uh, well, throughout the upper peninsula, not only in Marquette, but all through the upper peninsula, what kinds events were hosted

Speaker 1 (05:58):

Up here? Uh, what, what happened? Where do you think?

Speaker 2 (06:02):

Well, they had in a, in an out, in a farmer's field in, in 1925, they had a, a kind of a rally that went on for several days up in the, up in the, uh, Gany area, um, over in, uh, iron County where there was a lot of clan activity. Uh, they had a, uh, convention, a convocation, um, out there. And so various communities had, uh, had events. And, uh, they usually talked about having, um, Oh hundreds, possibly thousands of people attending. And usually the numbers were way off. They were, they were a lot lower than anticipated. Uh, you had, uh, you had parades in the city, you know, in the, in the different communities. Uh, I would say just about every community had a Klan parade. You had cross burnings, uh, uh, for instance, up in Baltic, which is a mining location, uh, an old timer pointed out that they had cross burnings around on the Hills, around the community, not in the community, however, over in, uh, Muna saying, uh, there are numerous stories of the clan, uh, lighting, uh, BR uh, there over, over immunity wait a minute. Um, old timers have told me that over in munici where you had a large, uh, Polish immigrant population, uh, crosses would be lit opposite the movie theater in an empty lot. And so when the children of these immigrants, the immigrants came out of the movie, they were faced with this fiery burning cross right in front of them. Um, and there were other, uh, there were other activities around the, around the upper peninsula, a similar nature, the burning of crosses the parades and so on.

Speaker 1 ([07:54](#)):

Who were the members of the Klan? And what did they get together to do? Who are those people? Well,

Speaker 2 ([08:02](#)):

Nationally, the clan had a variety of folk guy, depending on where they were at. Uh, they were usually anti black anti-Catholic anti-Jewish, uh, you'd find in the upper peninsula. We had very few black people, very few Jewish people, uh, quite a few Catholic immigrants. And, uh, but there probably be more Catholics and there would be clients members. So it was kind of an odd situation, the upper peninsula, but from what I can glean the clan in the upper peninsula was concerned about prohibition. They were against the production of alcohol, a lot of, uh, or a number of the people that, that whose names surface, uh, for instance, even the hall in Marquette where the clan met, had previously been a finished temperance hall. So he hadn't that connection. However, you find that when you talk about prohibition promoting prohibition, uh, who are you going to be against, who is violating the prohibition laws?

Speaker 2 ([09:16](#)):

Well, they're usually immigrants. Uh, so you're going to find, uh, talions making wine. You're going to find Croatians making wine poles, making wine, uh, or in many cases, hard liquor. There was a lot of moonshining that went on. Uh, there was a lot of moonshining that went on. And for instance, in iron County, there's a joke that says there's more copper referring to the parts of the stills. There's more copper in the ground than there ever was iron ore. And there are all sorts of stories of upper peninsula moonshine, uh, uh, being sold at extravagant rates because of the quality and so on in Chicago. So the Klan did have a, a reason for existence in terms of being against the moonshiners. Uh, however, those moonshiners then fit into the, their pattern. Uh, they are immigrants and in most cases, Catholics, so the anticline sentiment then went beyond just the pro the, the concern for prohibition, but it also draws in the immigrants and the Catholics. And so you have that tie in, and that seems to be, uh, the major concern of the clan in the upper peninsula, from what I can, what I can gather.

Speaker 1 ([10:39](#)):

Well, and the Italians I saw from your, from your list that you had done a lot with the Pisano club right up here, this would be a group of, of, of Italians Paisano means what peasant or, or

Speaker 2 ([10:51](#)):

Compatriots. Yeah, buddy compatriots. Yeah.

Speaker 1 ([10:54](#)):

So you got the price. I don't club, a group of attack. Is this a recent incarnation, or was this an ancient club as well?

Speaker 2 ([11:00](#)):

No, this is kind of a, a resurrected club from, from the past, but at one time, for instance, the upper peninsula had over the years, the last hundred years, about 130 Italian clubs, only Italian clubs. And then the other ethnic groups could have as many. And the Italians were not the largest ethnic group, the fins would be, and they would have obviously a lot more clubs. Uh, but you had the, uh, you had these

various ethnic, uh, organizations mutual, beneficial societies, uh, throughout most of the, uh, the communities in the upper peninsula.

Speaker 1 ([11:36](#)):

And they could have been S Cornish or, or Finnish or Swedish or Italian. And how, how did the, how did the fins get on with the Italians by and large?

Speaker 2 ([11:47](#)):

Oh, the various ethnic groups, uh, got along rather, well, uh, there's one story told, uh, which is probably very true, uh, that the, uh, group of Italians, uh, were working with thins, uh, in, uh, in the mine. And they ended up learning a finish in the process just by the interaction. And since they stayed in rather close communities in mining locations, the fins and the Italians would speak, uh, the languages they knew. And then at some point, an Italian had to go to court or had to plug into the American community and found that what he thought was English. He was speaking, the finish was actually finished and he had never learned English. So he had that kind of a tie in, uh, the women would share recipes. They would, uh, even if they couldn't speak, they would, they would interact. So there was the commonly, uh, there was the, the common, uh, immigrant experience that everybody sort of pulled together on.

Speaker 2 ([12:51](#)):

And so they, the various ethnic groups tended to get along rather, rather, well, uh, sometimes you'd find the Irish and the Cornish, uh, would get on each other's, uh, on each other's case, especially after some time in a, in a saloon, but, uh, usually, uh, conditions, uh, usually conditions, uh, between the ethnic groups was rather a favorable. The Klan would, would have sought to disrupt that well you're yes, yes. You're going to find that the clan will, um, draw some of the, the, uh, Protestant immigrants into its fold by pointing out that the Klan, uh, that the Klan was protecting, uh, well here, we could say white Protestant jobs. And so if you became a member of the clan, this would help keep the Catholic immigrants from getting your job or your, your son's job or something. So there's where you began to make, make inroads into the, the, uh, the rather, um, uh, what do I want to say here?

Speaker 2 ([14:08](#)):

Um, well, you, you would, uh, you would cut into the peaceful relations that you had between the various ethnic groups. And there are stories of, uh, uh, immigrant, uh, I mean, uh, there are, there are stories of, uh, various immigrants, Swedes, Finns, et cetera, that, and some were rather, uh, hostile to Catholics. It wasn't, uh, it was an ethnic paradise here, uh, but people were hostile to Catholics and then join the clan as immigrants. But there wasn't so much being a hundred percent American, but it was being a hundred percent Protestant. And even though you're an immigrant, you're a Sweden and Norwegian to finish something, you were then welcomed by the clan.

Speaker 1 ([14:59](#)):

But if you were darker skinned, if you were an Italian or a pole or Mediterranean, God help you,

Speaker 2 ([15:06](#)):

Uh, that would, uh, yes, uh, well, uh, darker skinned say darker skinned Italians would be South Italians in the upper peninsula. We didn't have many of them. Most of the Italians up here, contrary to what happens around the country, uh, the bulk of the Italians and the upper peninsula from Northern Italy. So they would be blonde and, and, uh, uh, or, or light, uh, wait a minute, um, close to German. Uh, yeah.

Um, most of the Italians in the upper peninsula were from Northern Italy, uh, light, a light hair, uh, blue eyes, and, uh, physically would, would fit into the rest of the population.

Speaker 1 ([15:46](#)):

Now, one of the things that we had talked about was the publication of this newspaper. Can you tell me the story of the client paper here in the upper peninsula? What happened?

Speaker 2 ([15:59](#)):

Okay. Around 19, uh, around 1925, which was in the, um, in the midst of Klan activity in the, or the hype, uh, in 1925 at really the high point of clan activity in the upper peninsula, a local newspaper in Sue, Saint Marie, um, failed, and the clan, uh, purchased it and called it the Clover land telegram, and this newspaper, uh, was published for a short period of time, uh, out of Sue Saint Marie, uh, to cover Klan activities around the upper peninsula. So the, the idea was to have a U P wide wait a minute. The idea was to have an upper peninsula wide, uh, newspaper, Klan newspaper. And they talked about having the real news, uh, clan oriented news, what they considered the real news, and they encourage people to buy the newspaper, to take out annual subscriptions, uh, to buy stock in the company. Uh, so there was a real promotion effort to get this newspaper going in the upper peninsula, but it lasted for a short amount of time, maybe through 1925 and then folded

Speaker 1 ([17:18](#)):

Yeah. Circulation at its high point a couple of towns.

Speaker 2 ([17:21](#)):

So I, I don't have an idea if they

Speaker 1 ([17:24](#)):

Okay. Now

Speaker 2 ([17:26](#)):

Why would say, yeah, I would say, uh, the circulation, uh, as we've got going, would've probably been several thousand. Yeah.

Speaker 1 ([17:34](#)):

Well, we, we may not have records for it or they know it will be a whole story in and of itself. Right. Wow. Now what you talked about cross burnings marches, rallies, couple day rallies, usually around labor day, did the clan, uh, take part in any violence that was directly linked to it? Uh, where there murders attacks thuggery

Speaker 2 ([17:57](#)):

There's no, from my research, I haven't found any indication of any violent, uh, activities of the Klan. Um, uh, her,

Speaker 1 ([18:09](#)):

Would you like to answer that? No. Alright, go off here. How are you doing by the way? Cool.

Speaker 2 ([18:18](#)):

No, I mean, this is, yeah. I mean, as long as you don't want exact, uh, at two 30 in the morning, this or that, I don't know why we're fine. I don't think so. We'll we'll know, we'll take that right from the now and then you'll have the, you'll have the rest to go with. So, uh, let's see, uh, from my research I've, I really haven't run across any incidents of violence against, um, wait a minute. Um, give yourself a beat. Okay. Wait a minute.

Speaker 1 ([18:47](#)):

Cause otherwise you, you you're. I made a mistake.

Speaker 2 ([18:51](#)):

Okay. From my research, I really haven't found any indications of the clan using violence against local people in the upper peninsula. Um, no murders, no lynchings, uh, nothing of that. Uh, there were actual incidents where, uh, clan members, uh, fired Catholic workers. Uh, there was an incident up in a railroad up in the, in the launce area, in the 1920s, uh, uh, and people working for Ford motor company and the Catholics were let go. And then the, um, probably manager found out about it and reinstated the, uh, uh, the Catholics, um, that was about, uh, that's. Uh, that was probably about the worst incident. Um, there were other stories that, uh, uh, Catholics couldn't get jobs. They were discriminated against. There was a thing called colored blindness. They would, uh, they would give them some kind of a physical checkup and they couldn't, uh, couldn't pass it and, uh, didn't pass it. And, uh, they didn't get the job. And so there were, there were incidents like that. Unfortunately, we don't have, you know, we don't have a good record of a lot of them. Again, a lot of this information is, uh, I don't want to say hearsay, but, um, it's a, you know, uh, one you're hearing about one you're hearing about one incident that occurred.

Speaker 1 ([20:31](#)):

It's pretty ephemeral. I mean, this stuff just vanishes, right, right. Nope. What happened to the client? Why did we, do you, you have the clan that's active in politics up here in the 1928 election. I mean, Al Smith is a, is, is a great Satan as it were of our day. Uh, what happened? And maybe I should go back, let me, let me go. Did the clan get active politically?

Speaker 2 ([20:56](#)):

The Klan was it, uh, the Klan was active politically in the upper peninsula. Uh, there was an election, uh, in a statewide election in the 1920s against parochial schools. And it seems the clan, or at least spokespeople for the clan, not, and not mentioning them, um, are very active. You see this in the newspapers and ads in the newspapers. Uh, there was, uh, a local election in the 1920s that is, uh, very difficult to follow, but, and editorial talks about, uh, people, uh, focusing, not so much on the candidate and the candidates political views, but focusing on where the candidates grandfather was baptized. And so from these little snippets of information that come through from Marquette County, uh, there, there was some political involvement of the Klan in local elections. And if it happened in Marquette County, it was probably happening in other communities as well.

Speaker 1 ([22:12](#)):

Aye. Going over your materials, uh, we found a, uh, an apocryphal note about, uh, some young teenagers riding in 1916 in a parade. This may well have been the first inkling, uh, or presale of, of clan activity. Can you tell me a little bit about that?

Speaker 2 ([22:33](#)):

All we felt we'd have to do, we'd have to do more, more research on it. We did find a note from the mining journal that the Klan, uh, was active in the upper peninsula in, in a minor, uh, form in 1916. But there, there I'd want to, before he'd say anything on camera, I'd want to take a look at the, uh, paper and that it could go and do that probably quickly.

Speaker 1 ([22:59](#)):

What about what happened to the clan? Where, where did it go? It was here. Where did it go?

Speaker 2 ([23:04](#)):

The clan kind of, uh, falls apart along with the national movement. And I think it just, uh, it was never, that was never that strong, uh, in the upper peninsula. I mean, it was here and it was active, uh, and, uh, I don't think it had that much in the various communities. It was there, but it wasn't overwhelming and it didn't dominate, uh, the politics and so on. And I think as it starts unraveling on, on a national level, uh, local members, local leadership, uh, saw that it was totally inappropriate and, and wasn't working and, uh, just kind of roll up with the, with the client around the country. So it falls into the, uh, into that, uh, into that category of just coming apart with the, with the national client

Speaker 1 ([23:58](#)):

And with the client in, um, in disarray nationally, I ended up here as well. Uh, there came into the vacuum, the black Legion did the black Legion make its presence known here?

Speaker 2 ([24:11](#)):

Well, I've only heard of one incident of the black Legion, uh, being active in the upper peninsula. And the story that I've heard took place over in Google city, uh, in the Eastern end of the upper peninsula. And there was a fellow there, a French Canadian fellow who was involved in, uh moonshining and I guess he and his brothers out of st. Nakedness, uh, supplied the Eastern end of the upper peninsula and, um, the, uh, the black Legion, or at least according to the family tradition, uh, the black Legion when after this individual. And it's not really too clear if it was due to his moonshining, if it was due that he didn't the fact he didn't want to join them, or he had probably witnessed some violence, a murder or something, and they wanted to silence him. But anyway, this fellow was frightened enough to take about a month working his way through the woods to go from ghouly city to a place called carp river, North of st.

Speaker 2 ([25:17](#)):

Agnes. And when he finally got home and he was quite, uh, quite satisfied because he was now surrounded by a very large, uh, nuclear family and then his other relatives and a lot of friends and for many, many, uh, well for, for many months afterwards, any noise, any, uh, um, unknown sound, uh, got him to reach for a shotgun, figuring the black Legion was going to come after him in his home. Uh, this never happened. And this is really the only incident that I've ever heard of, of the black Legion active in the upper peninsula.

Speaker 1 ([25:59](#)):

Tell me about Monsignor spell Gathy, uh, what he told you that this, this is a man who evidently can't speak for himself right now about this, right. Is there, does he have good days, bad days or are they all bad days?

Speaker 2 ([26:13](#)):

I think he's just kind of in his head, he had a massive heart attack, uh, last, last spring, or maybe it was even longer. And then he was out like for months and months and months. And he went from being rather alert and active to, uh, um, being close to vegetable. Like that's, that's why I don't think we'd really get anything out of, out of him. But, um, uh, this, uh, this individual, uh, Monsignor David is spelled Gotti, uh, grew up in, up in the Gany and he remembers in 1926, uh, he and a friend, uh, were at the parade of the clan. And, uh, the general indication was that, uh, this was kind of another local group that was marching. And they used to have the UOP and other places had these various fraternal organizations with parades and convocations and whatnot. And he remembers kind of watching the March with their, uh, their, uh, uh, robes and hoods. And he and a friend were up in, in that were hiding in the trees, above them, as they paraded below the, uh, blow on the street. I guess they were throwing acorns from the, uh, from the Oak tree on the, on the parade. It didn't cause any problem. Uh, but that was the time when they marched in Nagani and then had a three day convocation out on a local farm farmer's field, uh, in the, uh, in labor day of 1926.

Speaker 1 ([27:46](#)):

And Leo [inaudible]. Could you tell me about how you got the story from Leo Kotel and what he had?

Speaker 2 ([27:53](#)):

Okay. Uh, Leo [inaudible] was a French Canadian French Canadian background, and he and his family had a grocery store, uh, down on Washington street, which is the main street and Marquette. And, um, from his bedroom, he could look out the window and he saw a place called Liberty hall. Liberty hall was the, uh, finish, started out as the finished social hall in Marquette. As time went on, the fins broke into two groups. You had what were known as the religious fins and the red fins and the religious fins. Uh, we're obviously religiously oriented, uh, temperance people and the Redfins were socialists. Some of them were probably communists. They were into drinking and the two groups broke apart. And so at some point, the religious spins moved their operation, just kind of around the corner and they opened up Alto hall and, uh, um, um, Leo, uh, talks about then Alto hall developing as the finished temperance hall.

Speaker 2 ([29:07](#)):

Uh, and it's kind of curious that when the clan, uh, gets active in the 1920s it's headquarters is Alto hall, the old finished temperance, uh, temperance hall, and then subsequently, uh, this hall, uh, becomes the church for a number of religious groups that have as part of their mission, uh, templates. And so it's kind of interesting that the, um, that this structure that is so connected with the temperance movement is also headquarters of the Klan in the 1920s. And that's why I was saying the, um, that connection between the clan and, and temperature. Uh, but, um, uh, Leo talked about, uh, cross burnings that he witnessed. He was there in, in 1926 when they were marching in the Gany and, uh, he remembers cross burnings and so on that were connected with the parade and the convocation that that was going on. And, um, Okay. That's yeah, that'd be about it.

Speaker 1 ([30:15](#)):

Yeah. Well, and didn't he go to big Bay? Didn't he fell off the big day for one

Speaker 2 ([30:19](#)):



And, well, he, uh, he, uh, wait a minute. Um, Leo Cody, uh, was kind of around the area and he talked about, um, uh, the clan, some clan activity up in the big Bay area. Uh, he talked about clan activity in the rock area, which is South of Marquette. Uh, and again, he's a type of informant that gives you these little snippets, these little pieces of information about clan activity. When you pull this all together, you have rather remarkable picture of the activity of the clan throughout the upper peninsula.

Speaker 1 ([30:55](#)):

And what does that picture look like?

Speaker 2 ([30:57](#)):

Well, the picture of the clan in the upper peninsula is that it was here. It was very active and it pretty much, uh, was active in most communities in the upper peninsula. Most of your larger, and even some of the smaller communities had Klan activity. So here you think the upper peninsula is kind of isolated by the straits of Mackinaw, uh, from the rest of Michigan and something like the Klan wouldn't, um, migrate this far North, and no, it was here, it was alive and well, and it even had a newspaper at least for a short period of time, uh, which kind of gives you an idea of what they're anticipating. They're obviously anticipating a very, very active, strong clan, uh, throughout the region, and probably had certain indications from membership and, and, uh, enthusiasm, at least in the beginning that this was what was going to happen. Uh, fortunately that didn't occur.

Speaker 1 ([31:53](#)):

What is the impact, you know, as, as a historian and as a, as a social historian, as a historian of ideas, perhaps even as this director of this, uh, center for UPC studies, what, what does the clan mean to the upper peninsula?

Speaker 2 ([32:14](#)):

Well, I, uh, let me, let me also do, wait a minute. Do you want me to talk about the, the Klan activity in Wisconsin today, or do you want to catch that at the end afterwards? Okay. So particularly during the 20, what is this period of this first blush? Well, during the, uh, during the 1920s, in terms of the, of the role of the clan, uh, and in the upper peninsula, I think, uh, it, it, um, shows us that, uh, the, the history of the upper peninsula is intertwined with the history of the nation and some of these events as unpleasant as they are like the Klan movement. And so on, uh, becomes part of the upper peninsula. We're not that isolated, these ideas spread. Uh, the other part of it is that, uh, the, uh, role of the Klan in the upper peninsula is kind of unique because we were missing certain, uh, anticline elements, African-Americans the Jews.

Speaker 2 ([33:14](#)):

Uh, and, um, and you had a situation kind of a, a friendly, peaceful situation between, uh, the Catholic immigrants and the Protestant immigrants, but even then the clan, uh, does make some headway. It has a rather unique focus, uh, the prohibition focus, uh, and it also comes in and disrupts the, the peaceful interaction of these various ethnic groups. So, um, you find that even in the upper peninsula, the Klan was, was here and, uh, was disruptive, uh, and was not the, uh, the All-American unified organization that had tried to, um, promote itself as that. It's actually a very, uh, anti, uh, un-American, uh, organization, uh, pulling all these people apart that had been together. So I think that's important and it's important for the people in the, uh, when the state of Michigan and also in the upper peninsula to realize that even here in a kind of a, uh, an isolated area, that's the way most people will view the upper

peninsula. Uh, but even in the upper peninsula, which is isolated, uh, the Klan was active. And I think that story has to be told, uh, so that people are aware of this, and fortunately it didn't get violent. We don't have a lot of, uh, stories of violence and lynchings and killings and so on or beatings. Uh, but I, I think it's very, very important to, uh, to make this known to the public of the local public and to the, uh, public at large.

Speaker 1 ([34:52](#)):

One of the reactions when we tell people we're doing stuff on the clan, isn't here in Michigan, when we told him we were going to VP, they said, well, so one of the things we had covered briefly is the idea that there are other organizations that will cover for the Klan. We'd talked about the, the, uh, Finnish religious, uh, and this Liberty hall. Uh, do you know of any other organizations like, uh, Methodist men, or I know in, in, in central Michigan, uh, the Oddfellows were often the cover for the client. Uh, but do you know anything about covering organizations here? The orange men in Bickford?

Speaker 2 ([35:28](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. There were, uh,

Speaker 2 ([35:34](#)):

You have in, uh, in the upper peninsula have groups like the odd fellows and for instance, many members, well, I don't know if I should actually say this because I, Hmm. I don't know. You can kind of do what you want with it. Um, I'm sorta clearing myself on tape. Um, you, you did find for instance, that there, there are connections, for instance, in the upper peninsula with the, with the Oddfellows. I mean, you had the Oddfellows in the upper peninsula. Uh, many of these, many of the members were for instance, Cornish, Methodist, Cornish, uh, immigrants, um, didn't get along. Well, the Cornish didn't get along well with the, with the Irish. Was there some tension there, there, uh, there were other groups like the Orangeman in Pickford who tended to be very, and obviously very anti Irish, uh, very, at other times, hostile to, uh, attack immigrants, living in Sioux, Saint Marie when they pass through there would be catcalls and whatnot, uh, to these people.

Speaker 2 ([36:45](#)):

Uh, so you have, you have the, the organizations that could fit into the thinking of the clan, they would fit in very, very well. And you find, I think a lot of times you're going to have to look at other areas, other religious groups in the state of Michigan, uh, and then, uh, project that group on the upper peninsula with those people in the upper peninsula follow a similar course of action. And I think you'd have to say, yes, they would. And so you find there were various Protestant churches that were active, uh, the ministers and so on were very active in the clan. And I think you would have had, well, uh, you had various, uh, uh, you had various ministers in various Protestant denominations, or wait a minute. Um, there were ministers and various Protestant denominations that were active in the, in the clan and promoted the clan. And this went on downstate where we actually have, uh, evidence of this occurring. And you had this guy, you would have had this going on in the upper peninsula as well.

Speaker 1 ([37:57](#)):

Well, why don't we just go back and touch on something for an expansion of the idea of isolation in the upper peninsula. Let's take Marquette in the 19 teens and 1920s. What, what did this community look like? I mean, in terms of rail service, newspaper, access, Telegraph, um, movies, magazines, what, how, how isolated was this place? Not, I guess my I'm almost leading you that it wasn't

Speaker 2 ([38:24](#)):

Right. Um, with, uh, concerning the question of isolation, the isolation is more in the minds of the local population and not so much in the reality. Uh, the reality of the upper peninsula in the 1920s was that you had overnight rail service between Marquette Ishpeming and Chicago. Uh, so for instance, uh, and, and your new, uh, wait a minute, uh, the actual, the, the, uh, idea of, of, uh, let's see, we got through that, most of that, um, the, uh, isolation, uh, the idea of isolation of the upper peninsulas, kind of the idea of the local people that they are isolated from the rest of the country, in reality, in the upper peninsula, in the 1920s, you would find that you had, uh, excellent rail service, overnight rail service to Chicago. That meant that, uh, uh, ideas, uh, news, newspapers, uh, sheet music, uh, whatever you needed was here within 24 hours.

Speaker 2 ([39:41](#)):

So you have to keep that in mind. Uh, you also had excellent, uh, you had excellent, uh, Telegraph service at the time. Uh, you had radio stations that were beginning, uh, in the 1920s, even Northern Michigan university, played around with the development of a radio station, uh, so that these innovations were making it to the upper peninsula highways were by the 1920s. There were, uh, highways connecting various communities. Sometimes there were across gravel and sand, but they were, they had made their, um, their presence known and were being used. So in the 1920s, the upper peninsula was not as truly isolated as people thought it was in birth of a nation, played here and birth of a nation, played in the upper peninsula and went through various, uh, uh, you know, major runs. And, uh, there were newspaper, uh, recently I saw a newspaper articles, uh, or, or an ad.

Speaker 2 ([40:40](#)):

Unfortunately, I can't remember where it was, but it was in a, an ad in a, uh, in a, uh, upper peninsula community pointing out that it was going to be the last, the last few days of birth of a nation, uh, was, uh, you know, it was going to be shown. Uh, so yes, it was here. It made it with everything else. It got here overnight from Chicago. Now, now the, the other thing I was going to talk about was the Klan. Now, there were a number of, I forget now the dates, but they're in the late nineties, they had a Klan rally and, Oh, shoot in iron. I was in iron County, silver Nate, over the newspaper clippings there, but anyway, they had a Klan rally up here that was poorly, I could say, in the Western upper pen. Would that be good enough that early? Okay. Yeah. Okay. So what about the client in recent years?

Speaker 2 ([41:35](#)):

Uh, in the, uh, the, uh, there in, in recent years, it doesn't seem to be a clan operating, uh, Klan movement Opry in recent years, it doesn't seem to be a Klan movement operating in the upper peninsula. However, across the state line in Northern Wisconsin, uh, the clan seems to be rather active. Uh, and, uh, Oh, a few years ago they had a Klan rally in the Western upper peninsula. And, uh, uh, there was, uh, it ended up being, I think there were more state police and, and, uh, and local deputies than there were, uh, clan members. And there was a large, uh, uh, outrage from the, from the crowd, the, the, uh, uh, anti Klan crowd. Uh, and that was like the last, uh, incident of a clan being, uh, or at least showing its presence in the upper peninsula.

Speaker 1 ([42:30](#)):

And you had talked about a student who was doing an independent directed study, right. Who came up with an interesting result. This guy was a teacher. And can you tell me that story?

Speaker 2 ([42:40](#)):

Okay. Uh, Oh, a few years ago I had a student who did an independent study for me, and he studied the clan in iron County, or probably we should go back to the, uh, I had this student who wanted to do an independent study, and I mentioned, uh, the clan that he might want to do something about the clan in iron County, his home County. And he then related to me that he was teaching in Florence, Wisconsin, and that he found that the students there were, uh, had on their backpacks and whatnot, uh, the Confederate logo. And he was quite surprised that they would have this Confederate logo this far North, and then, uh, the students told them, um, um, without any embarrassment, uh, that this was the logo of their grandfathers and so on, who were members of the Klan and, and fathers and so on, who were members of the clan in Wisconsin, and that they were very proud of this, of this heritage.

Speaker 2 ([43:45](#)):

Uh, so the clan is active in Northern Wisconsin. Um, how much of that pushes over across the border? No one had that. There isn't any information, no one has done a study of that, but, uh, it's close by and, uh, alive and well and very active. And in, I should point out you were just kind of mentioning, and I'll just add this. You probably, you won't have any use for it. But back in the early back in the early nineties, uh, Indians in Northern Wisconsin, unfortunately they, for, for the study, they weren't in upper Michigan Indians in Northern we're, uh, um, um, spear fishing in the spring for short, short period of time. And, uh, the clan and the, uh, posse Comitatus is active there. Let me take off on the clan, uh, started all sorts of harassment of the native Americans. And the word went out that the native Americans were going to spear every fish in the lakes that, uh, um, sports fishing would come to an end and that there was going to be a collapse of the tourist economy in, in, uh, Northern, Northern Wisconsin.

Speaker 2 ([45:13](#)):

And the, um, this didn't didn't happen. Uh, the amount of fish that the native Americans took was minuscule. Uh, but part of this, uh, got into kind of a larger picture of the development of modern tourism in Northern Wisconsin. Uh, what had happened in Northern Wisconsin is, is, um, uh, connected, physically connected with high speed roads, interstate type highways with the large cities of Southern Wisconsin. And, um, what had happened in Northern Wisconsin was that the mama, Papa motels and restaurants had fallen prey to national chains. And it seems that as these mama Papa places went out of business, they had to look to somebody to have caused this problem. They didn't look to themselves that maybe they should have kept their, their, uh, facility up and modernized and so on. And so they went after the Indians and they said that the Indians had caused their demise because they were spear fishing.

Speaker 2 ([46:28](#)):

And then this became sort of an un-American activity. And then this quickly brought in the clan, the posse common Tatas and so on. And for a number of years, you had a lot of, a lot of, uh, hostility and trouble violence and so on. Uh, then the state of Wisconsin, uh, took action to educate the, uh, the public, uh, and had, uh, working with native Americans had conferences and so on. And in recent years that hostility has seemed to have declined. You don't hear about it, you don't see it in the papers. You don't hear a great deal about it. Uh, but again, you had these, uh, these high school kids that were very proud of their clan heritage in Florence, Wisconsin, which is right across the border from, you know, the iron mountain area.

Speaker 1 ([47:19](#)):

And you said there, there are still some you encounter some students who come from the farms in the woods of the upper peninsula who are very surprised to see black people when they show yes,

Speaker 2 ([47:30](#)):

Even in the, in the 21st century, you would think that a, this wouldn't be a phenomenon, but it's, it's, it's there. And you'll find, uh, uh, students and kids in general that, uh, that come from a small town, small town, uh, upper peninsula, uh, we'll be kind of surprised at, uh, at African-Americans and seeing them for the first time and, and, uh, really very, very surprised at that.

Speaker 1 ([47:59](#)):

You were really here at the right time to catch the tail end of the stories of the client. I mean, what, what, what are you looking forward to in your clan research, the researchers? What, what is there yet to discover here? Who knows?

Speaker 2 ([48:13](#)):

Well, I th uh, part of the, uh, part of the problem with dealing with any topic and upper peninsula history is that this is a large area. So you have 15 counties. And so what you have are really 15 stories of the clan, and I've only tapped the Marquette area, the iron mountain area, I've come across little bits and pieces of the clan active up in the copper, uh, copper country. And so there are really the rest of the counties. There's still a lot of work to be done, and I've just scratched the surface of it, but you could look at newspapers for 1924 through 26. Uh, probably a wealth of information could be obtained from the PSU evening news on that seems to be an area where the Klan was very active and that's an area I haven't, I haven't gotten into, uh, but probably checking some of the, uh, some of the issues, uh, methodically going through the, uh, the issues of the, uh, SU evening news, you'd find a wealth of information about the clans activities.

Speaker 1 ([49:20](#)):

Well, we've talked about that, the members, the numbers of members of clients. So what are the estimates, how many people were involved in the claim, the minutes.

Speaker 2 ([49:27](#)):

Okay. Uh, part of the problem in terms of answering that question is that it seems a clan did a very good job destroying its records, and you don't readily find membership lists. So what you have to go with is, uh, figures that appear in newspapers, and, uh, I've even gone to counting the numbers of heads that appear in a Marge say in Marquette. Now the, uh, iron County is said to have had the largest concentration of Klan members in the upper peninsula back in the 1920s, um, probably a thousand plus or so, uh, usually this shows up in the number of people that attend a, a convention of Klan members, but then you're also talking about outsiders coming in, people from Wisconsin, other UPC counties, uh, in Marquette, uh, when they had a Klan March on labor day, 1926, uh, there were, I could count at least a portion of the group that appears about 150 plan members in the March. So you're probably talking about several hundred per community per larger community, uh, in the upper peninsula.

Speaker 1 ([50:45](#)):

Now we had talked about the, the, the purpose of the clan, certainly there's Protestantism. So they're against the Catholics, but, and they were against liquor, but, uh, was there something else that the Klan struck out against dancing?

Speaker 2 ([51:01](#)):

Uh, the, uh, the connect, the, the Klan was, as we've seen the Klan was for prohibition. So against the, making the production of liquor, uh, the consumption of alcoholic beverages and they down in the iron mountain and also in the iron, uh, iron County area, uh, the clan was against dance halls and they would put up, uh, warnings. They would take out ads in the paper and put up warnings that if so-and-so didn't close his dance hall or didn't regulate it, uh, the I'm going to go over this again. Um, the clan would put ads in local newspapers and warn local, uh, dance hall owners that if they didn't, um, uh, clean up their act, uh, didn't change their ways, uh, that the clan would come in and take action and close them down. Um, never really heard of that was, was carried out. Uh, there are, there are other stories kind of connected with the closing down of, of, uh, dance halls that some of the local sheriff Sheriff's deputies, uh, were Klan members and, uh, got involved in enforcing the law, sometimes closing, uh, dance halls over in that area when he had no legal right to, uh, to do that, possibly some of the anti dance hall, uh, some of the anti dance hall, uh, concerns of the clan were that they were probably selling liquor, uh, on the side, uh, selling moonshine to the, uh, to the people coming to the, to the dance hall.

Speaker 2 ([52:49](#)):

That was, that would kind of make sense. So at that point, you'd come full circle. Then the Dan saw is, uh, the center of this lewd behavior, because it's also connected with drinking. However, the ads, the, the information that appears in the, uh, iron mountain, uh, excuse me, uh, the information that appears, uh, out of iron County doesn't make the connection that the dance halls were actually selling liquor. It's just kind of lewd and disgraceful behavior that's going on. I don't know if that was some separate behavior, uh, other than the actual dancing that was going on. I don't know if they were against the dances of the 1920s, but the dance hall was an object of their ire.

Speaker 1 ([53:32](#)):

I would also imagine that perhaps houses of prostitution would, uh, would be on their hit list and Marquette had a fair number of those. Didn't it?

Speaker 2 ([53:43](#)):

When you, when you get into talking about prostitution, get into another little known study, uh, in the, in the upper peninsula, uh, I've had, I just recently had a student do a paper using, uh, the police records and she did a fantastic paper. Um, and it was, what would she found was kind of low key. Uh, and, uh, we really don't have, I really can't talk about that because we don't have, we don't have the, um, the information available. You can just say in general, you had a lot of miners, you had a lot of lumberjacks and, uh, they were probably serviced by prostitutes. I mean, that would just be a general conclusion. You could come to some stories about prostitution in Sini, little lumber camp Sini to the, to the East of Marquette, but again, a lot of hearsay, uh, tidbits of information connected with individuals that you talk to.

Speaker 1 ([54:47](#)):

And we had finally, uh, the most recent client activity. Uh, you finally put a, put a place in a date too, which was, uh, 1997. And in Ironwood, if you wanted to hit that again,

Speaker 2 ([54:58](#)):

Right? The, the, the most recent clan activity in the upper peninsula was a rally held in Ironwood, um, in, uh, September of 1997. And, uh, there were very few people that, uh, attended. I mean, there were very

few Klans members that attended, and it was, I think a lot of it was to just irritate the local community. These were people from neighboring Wisconsin. They really had no reason for being in Michigan. Uh, and, uh, they got quite a vociferous, uh, outcry from the local population. People from, uh, many communities in the Western upper peninsula descended on, uh, Ironwood and the state police and deputies, uh, local deputies and so on were on hand to keep the two groups from, uh, clashing. But I think there was just a handful of clan members that attended. It was mostly to kind of irritate the people in, uh, in Ironwood and maybe to just show them that there is a Klan presence, whatever it is, small as it might be, there is a Klan presence, uh, presence in the, in the area still, still, you know, anything else that is, I think about it. Okay.

Speaker 1 ([56:11](#)):

We got it. It's wrapped.