

= Hiram Wesley Evans =

Hiram Wesley Evans (September 26 , 1881 ? September 14 , 1966) was Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan , an American white supremacist group , from 1922 to 1939 . A native of Alabama , Evans attended Vanderbilt University and became a dentist . He operated a small , moderately successful practice in Texas until 1920 , when he joined the Klan 's Dallas chapter . He quickly rose through the ranks and was part of a group that ousted William Joseph Simmons from the position of Imperial Wizard , the national leader , in November 1922 . Evans succeeded him and sought to transform the group into a political power .

Although Evans had led the kidnapping and torture of a black man while leader of the Dallas Klan , as Imperial Wizard he publicly discouraged vigilante actions , fearing that they would hinder his attempts to gain political influence . In 1923 , Evans presided over the largest Klan gathering in history , attended by over 200 @, @ 000 , and endorsed several successful candidates in 1924 elections . He moved the Klan 's headquarters from Atlanta to Washington , D.C. , and organized a march of 30 @, @ 000 members ? the largest march in the organization 's history ? on Pennsylvania Avenue . Evans ' efforts notwithstanding , the Klan was buffeted by damaging publicity in the early 1920s , partially because of leadership struggles between Evans and his rivals , which hindered his political efforts . In the 1930s , the Great Depression significantly decreased the Klan 's income , prompting Evans to work for a construction company to supplement his pay . He resigned his position with the Klan in 1939 , after disavowing anti @-@ Catholicism . He was succeeded by his chief of staff , James A. Colescott . The next year , Evans faced accusations of involvement in a government corruption scandal in Georgia ; he was fined \$ 15 @, @ 000 after legal proceedings .

Evans sought to promote a form of nativist , Protestant nationalism . In addition to his white supremacist ideology , he fiercely condemned Catholicism , unionism , and communism , which were associated with recent immigrants from eastern and southern Europe . He argued that Jews formed a non @-@ American culture and resisted assimilation , although he denied being an anti @-@ Semite . Historians credit Evans with refocusing the Klan on political activities and recruiting outside the Southern United States ; the Klan grew most in the Midwest and industrial cities . However , they note that the political influence and membership gains he sought were transitory . Some commentators argue that Evans was more focused on money and power than any particular ideology .

= = Early life and education = =

Hiram Wesley Evans was born in Ashland , Alabama , on September 26 , 1881 , and moved to Hubbard , Texas , with his family as a child . The son of Hiram Martin Evans , a judge , and his wife , Georgia Evans , the younger Evans graduated from Vanderbilt University . Shortly after , he became a dentist , receiving his license in 1900 . He married Bam Hill in 1923 ; they had three children together .

Evans established a small , moderately successful dentistry practice in downtown Dallas that provided inexpensive services . Rumors later arose that his dental qualifications were " a bit shady " . A Protestant , Evans attended a church belonging to the Disciples of Christ denomination . He was also a Freemason . Evans described himself as " the most average man in America " . Of average height and somewhat overweight , Evans was well dressed , a skilled speaker , and very ambitious .

= = Initial Klan service = =

Conceived by its founders as a continuation of the Reconstruction @-@ era Klan (controversially linked to General Nathan Bedford Forrest) , the revived Ku Klux Klan had been established in Atlanta in 1915 . Evans joined in 1920 , leaving his dental practice so that he could dedicate all his time to the group . In 1921 , Evans was elected as " exalted cyclops " , a recruiting position sometimes referred to as kleagle , in the Dallas Klan No. 66 . When he was elected , the Dallas Klan

had recently received a " self @-@ ruling charter " from the Atlanta @-@ based leadership and was the group 's largest chapter . That same year , Evans was appointed to the position of " great titan " (executive) of the " Realm of Texas " and proceeded to lead a successful membership drive for the state 's Klan .

Evans initially supported violence against minorities , remembering a lynching he witnessed as a child . With the Texas Klan , he sought to create " black squads " to attack minorities . He joined several Klan members in kidnapping and torturing a black bellhop , ostensibly because they suspected he was involved in pandering prostitutes . Atlanta @-@ based leaders pressured Evans to curb racial violence in Dallas ; around that time , the Texas Klan had received significant negative publicity after castrating an African @-@ American doctor . Although Evans was not morally opposed to violence against minorities , he publicly condemned vigilante activity because he feared that it would attract government scrutiny and hinder potential Klan @-@ backed political campaigning . This change of stance led the leader of the Houston Klan to accuse him of hypocrisy . Although Evans later took credit for a decrease in lynchings in the Southern United States during the 1920s , several Klan members claimed that he surreptitiously encouraged ? and presided over ? acts of violence against minorities .

In 1921 , Evans was assigned to oversee the Klan 's national membership drive at the behest of their publicists , Elizabeth Tyler and Edward Young Clarke . In 1922 , the group 's leadership made Evans the " Imperial kligrapp " , a role similar to national secretary , in which capacity he oversaw operations in 13 states . He received a base salary of \$ 7 @,@ 500 and traveled throughout the country , regularly meeting with local Klan leaders .

= = Early national leadership = =

In 1922 , Evans joined a group of Klan activists , including Tyler , Clarke , and D. C. Stephenson , in a " coup " against William Joseph Simmons , the group 's leader . They deceived Simmons into agreeing to a reorganization of the Klan that removed his practical control ; Simmons said that they had claimed that if he remained the Imperial Wizard of the Klan , discord would hamper the organization . Evans gained power and was formally ensconced as Imperial Wizard of the Klan at a November 1922 " Klovokation " in Atlanta , Georgia . Although a legal battle between Evans and Simmons ensued , during which time Simmons was titular " emperor " , Evans retained control . He initially said that he had been unaware of a pending coup until after his selection . However , by the end of their feud , he described Simmons as the " leader of Bolshevik Klansmen betraying the movement " and later expelled the former leader .

As leader of the Klan , Evans advanced a form of nativist , white supremacy that cast Protestantism as a fundamental part of American patriotism . To Evans , whiteness and Protestantism were equally valued , and sometimes conflated : he said the Klan supported the " uncontaminated growth of Anglo @-@ Saxon civilization " . He maintained that white Protestants had the exclusive right to govern the U.S. because of their descent from early colonists , whom he described as fleeing Europe for the U.S. to escape its societal bounds . He admitted that many Klan members were of rural , uneducated backgrounds but argued that power should be given to " the common people of America " . In a pamphlet entitled *Ideals of the Ku Klux Klan* , Evans described the Klan as follows :

This is a white man 's organization .

This is a gentile organization .

It is an American organization .

It is a Protestant organization .

Under Evans , the Klan supported a mix of right- and left @-@ wing political positions , which were described by Thomas Pegram of Loyola University Maryland as " too much of a patchwork to be considered an ideological system " . Klan literature spoke highly of politicians such as Woodrow Wilson , William Jennings Bryan , and Grover Cleveland . Evans borrowed numerous concepts from the writings of Lothrop Stoddard and Madison Grant , American writers of the period who promoted eugenics and scientific racism , and attempted to cast his platforms as based in science . Evans attacked immigrants by arguing that they would promote ideologies such as anarchism and

communism , were threats to national unity , and were involved with bootlegging during Prohibition . He considered immigrants " ignorant , superstitious , religious devotees " intent on earning money in the U.S. before retiring to their homelands . However , he supported immigration of those he deemed " Nordic " .

Evans also argued against miscegenation and Catholic and Jewish immigration , on the grounds that they were threats to genetic " good stock " , a racial division which was then widely supported among white Americans . Evans opposed Catholicism because he believed that the Catholic Church sought to take control of the U.S. government ; he also questioned American Catholics ' loyalty to their country , writing that they were subject to their priests , and , as such , to the entire Roman Catholic hierarchy and the Pope . In other writings he expressed fears that the Catholic Church , in alliance with Jews and non @-@ white Protestant groups , was becoming increasingly active in politics and thus blurring the separation of church and state .

Under Evans ' leadership , the Klan became active in Indiana and Illinois , rather than focusing on the Southeastern U.S. as it had done in the past . It also grew in Michigan , where 40 @,@ 000 members , more than half its total , lived in Detroit . It became characterized as an organization prominent in urban areas of the Midwest , where it attracted native @-@ born Americans competing for industrial jobs with recent immigrants . It also attracted members in Nebraska , Colorado , Oregon and Washington .

Evans appointed Stephenson , his early collaborator , as kleagle and Grand Dragon of Indiana . The relationship between the two leaders quickly became acrimonious ; Stephenson clashed with Evans over the distribution of membership fees and became embittered after Evans refused to help fund the purchase of a school in Indiana . Although Stephenson believed that Evans deliberately thwarted his attempt to purchase the school to limit his power , Evans unexpectedly promoted Stephenson to Grand Dragon of the " northern realm " in July 1923 . The historian Leonard Joseph Moore of McGill University contends that Evans paid particular attention to the Indiana Klan out of financial self @-@ interest : it was then the largest state branch .

The political scientist Arnold S. Rice writes that Evans also worked on a series of changes , advertised as reforms , to the Klan structure and sought to promote a positive public opinion of the Klan ; Evans felt that his organization should be able to reach out to those who were " struggling with the moral decay and economic distress of the 20th century " . He increased the Klan 's surveillance of members before and after initiation , expelling those considered to be of " questionable morals " . He also worked to increase Klan involvement in local policing and denounced acts of violence committed by Klan members , promoting the Klan as a symbol of lawfulness . These efforts , although successful in reducing the number of attacks , were ultimately unable to sway public opinion in the Klan 's favor .

= = Internal conflicts under Evans ' tenure = =

Evans became embroiled in several internal Klan conflicts that gained media exposure . In January 1921 , he and a group of grand dragons expelled the publicist Clarke , who had been critical of Evans ' efforts to involve the Klan in electoral politics . Evans also clashed with Henry Grady , a judge from North Carolina who served in the Klan from 1922 to 1927 , reaching the rank of Grand Dragon . Before Evans gained control of the Klan , Grady had been considered a potential successor to Simmons . After Grady dismissed a Klan @-@ backed law that would have banned the Knights of Columbus , a Catholic fraternal service organization , Evans revoked his membership . Grady subsequently leaked his correspondence with Evans to the media .

In August 1923 , Evans participated in a Klan parade in the heavily Catholic borough of Carnegie , Pennsylvania , which was attacked by local residents . One member of the Klan was killed ; Evans declared him a martyr and hoped that the death would inspire new recruits . The incident gave a fillip to the Klan 's recruitment efforts , but increased Stephenson 's animosity toward Evans , on whom he blamed the incident . Stephenson 's proclivity for ostentation irritated Evans . Although Stephenson left his official Klan position after a short tenure , under his leadership the Klan 's northern supporters had begun to rival those in the South . He had been a skilled campaigner and

demagogue , and he remained a well @-@ known advocate of the Klan 's platforms after resigning . Evans avoided publicly clashing with him , fearing that it would hurt the candidacies of Klan @-@ backed politicians : Stephenson was closely involved in the successful gubernatorial candidacy of Indiana Klan @-@ member Edward L. Jackson , and the Klan members had significant electoral gains in that state in 1924 , including the election of several candidates to the state legislature . After these victories , Stephenson showed further disdain for Evans .

Although membership in the Klan was limited to men , Simmons ? after losing control of the national organization ? attempted to create a parallel white supremacist organization for women . Evans established a women 's group and sued him . Evans won the lawsuit , leading to a public war of words with Simmons , whose lawyer was soon murdered by Evans ' press agent , an event in which Evans denied complicity . In 1924 , Evans paid Simmons \$ 145 @,@ 000 for a promise to abandon the latter 's claim to Klan leadership .

Afterward , Evans moved the Klan 's national headquarters to Washington , D.C. , where the murder of Simmon 's lawyer had received less publicity . To Evans ' consternation , Stephenson also formed a women 's auxiliary group . Evans and Stephenson subsequently exchanged allegations of sexual impropriety . Police charged Stephenson with the kidnapping , rape and murder of a young woman ; he maintained that the charges were orchestrated by Evans . After a sensational trial , Stephenson was convicted of second degree murder and given a life sentence ; the publicity about the leader 's behavior caused thousands of members to abandon the Klan .

= = Klan growth and political activism = =

In the early years of Evans ' tenure , the Klan reached record enrollment ; estimates of its peak range from 2 @.@ 5 to 6 million members , although records are poor and the figure cannot be accurately determined . He also dramatically increased the organization 's total assets , more than doubling them from July 1922 to July 1923 . Evans changed the way that chapter leaders were paid : he insisted that they receive a fixed salary rather than commissions based on membership fees in a move that lowered their income . Although previous Imperial Wizards had lived in lavish properties , Evans initially settled in an apartment after his promotion . The sociologist Rory McVeigh of the University of Notre Dame argues that this increase in membership was owing to the Klan 's exploitation of a " favorable political context " , particularly one in which native @-@ born white @-@ settler Americans were fearful after increased immigration caused them to compete for jobs and housing in many cities . Evans had high hopes for the Klan , saying in 1923 that he aimed to reach ten million members . That year , he spoke at the largest Klan gathering in history , a Fourth of July meeting in rural Indiana that was attended by over 200 @,@ 000 .

Evans sought to include more members from the Southwestern U.S. in leadership ; previously the Klan had been led by people from the Southeast . In 1922 , Evans supported the successful U.S. Senate candidacy of the Texas politician Earle Bradford Mayfield , an event that demonstrated that Klan @-@ supported candidates could win prominent offices . The next year , Evans returned to Texas for the state fair , where 75 @,@ 000 people gathered for a " Klan day " celebration . He devoted funds to fighting Jack C. Walton , the anti @-@ Klan governor of Oklahoma ; to the group 's joy , Walton was impeached and removed from office in 1923 . However , the Oklahoma legislature soon passed several anti @-@ Klan bills .

Evans published instructions for local Klan leaders that detailed how to run meetings , recruit new members , and speak to local gatherings . He advised leaders to avoid " raving hysterically " in favor of " [a] scientific ... presentation of facts " . In addition , he urged them to forbid members from bringing their Klan regalia home from meetings and to perform background checks on applicants . He instructed Klan members to shun vigilantism but to assist police and attempted , with some success , to recruit police officers into the Klan . Emphasizing the difference between his organization and the more violent 19th @-@ century Ku Klux Klan , Evans formed Klan @-@ themed groups for children . As the Klan attempted to portray itself as a movement led by cultured , well @-@ educated people , its leaders spoke about education in the U.S. Evans believed that public schools could create a homogeneous society and saw education advocacy as an effective

form of public relations .

In his writings on the subject , he cited the nation 's illiteracy rate as evidence that American public schools were failing ; he considered low teacher salaries and child labor key obstacles to reform . He supported the idea of a federal Department of Education , hoping that it would lead to improvements in public schools that would help " Americanize the foreigners " and thwart recruitment efforts of Catholic schools . Evans wrote four books in the mid to late 1920s , *The Menace of Modern Immigration* (1923) , *The Klan of Tomorrow* (1924) , *Alienism in the Democracy* (1927) , and *The Rising Storm* (1929) .

After the Klan gained respect and political influence in parts of the U.S. , Evans hoped to replicate this on a national scale . Political involvement was controversial among the organization 's members , and Evans issued contradictory statements on the issue , publicly disavowing it but surreptitiously attempting to sway politicians . Apart from fundamental Klan issues , different local groups often held varying political ideologies ; as such , by insisting on specific political stances , Evans would have risked alienating members . Although many of his hopes were never realized , Evans saw several Klansmen elected to high offices and , in the mid @-@ 1920s , the group was frequently discussed by political commentators . In 1924 , the group convinced Republican Party leaders to avoid criticizing them , prompting *Time* to put Evans on its cover . That year , the Klan supported Calvin Coolidge in his successful candidacy for president of the U.S. Although Coolidge opposed many key Klan platforms , with the exception of immigration restrictions and prohibition , he was the only major @-@ party candidate who did not condemn them . Nonetheless , Evans declared Coolidge 's victory a great success for the Klan . Although Republican leaders refrained from attacking the Klan , they were hesitant to support candidates promoted by the group . Significant discussion of the Klan also took place at the Democratic Party 's convention ; senator and Democratic presidential primary nominee Oscar Underwood decried them as " a national menace " . Evans ' attempts to elect Klansmen to public offices in 1924 saw limited success , although they achieved their goals in Indiana .

= = Decline of the Klan = =

Although the Klan had four million members in 1924 , the group 's membership quickly shrank after Stephenson 's widely publicized trial . The Indiana Klan lost more than 90 % of its members by the end of the proceedings , and there were mass resignations in other states as well . Other scandals emerged , further damaging Klan enrollment . Although the Colorado Klan had seen strong growth , Evans asked the Grand Dragon , John Galen Locke , to resign after local corruption scandals in 1925 involving Klan members who served as police . Evans ' request was poorly received by Colorado Klan members ; local enrollment subsequently plummeted . He encountered difficulties with Klan leaders in Pennsylvania in 1926 , after many of them concluded that he was too autocratic . In response , he revoked the charters of several local Klan groups and removed John Strayer , a state legislator , from his position of authority in the Klan . When the Pennsylvania groups continued to refer to themselves as the Ku Klux Klan , Evans sued them in federal court . Pennsylvania Klan members launched a detailed legal offensive against Evans and other Klan leaders , alleging misdeeds , including participation in kidnappings and lynchings . Evans ' suit was unsuccessful and , as many newspapers reported the scandalous allegations aired in court , the Pennsylvania Klan suffered a serious decline in membership and support .

In response to the decline in Klan membership , in 1926 , Evans organized a Klan parade in Washington , D.C. , hoping that a large turnout would demonstrate the Klan 's power . About 30 @,@ 000 members attended , making it the largest parade in the group 's history . Evans was disappointed , however , as he had expected double the attendance and the march did not staunch the drop in membership . That year , Evans attempted to rally U.S. senators to vote against a bill supporting a proposed world court . He was unsuccessful , however , and several Klan @-@ backed senators followed Calvin Coolidge and supported the bill . In 1928 , Evans opposed the candidacy of the New York Democratic governor Al Smith for president , emphasizing the threat of Smith 's Catholic faith . After the Republican Herbert Hoover won the election , Evans boldly claimed

responsibility for Smith 's loss ; but most of the solidly Democratic South had rejected Hoover and voted for Smith against the Klan 's advice .

In 1929 , Evans acknowledged that membership levels had declined but predicted a dramatic turnaround would soon occur . His prediction was inaccurate . This loss of members resulted in a Klan that was a skeleton of its former self . Historians have attributed this loss of membership to ineptness and hypocrisy on the part of Klan leadership . McVeigh argues that the Klan 's inability to form alliances with other political groups led to the sharp loss of political power and solidarity within the group .

= = Changes in focus = =

Although many Democratic Klan members initially supported the 1932 presidential campaign of Franklin D. Roosevelt , the Klan later officially turned against him because of his acceptance of endorsements from minorities and labor unions . After Roosevelt 's election , Evans fiercely opposed the New Deal , describing it as a " great danger " to the nation ; he argued that it was a " Jewish " policy that endangered American freedom , reserving particular scorn for Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau , Jr . , who was Jewish . Evans ' statements about Jews were sometimes contradictory : he argued that he was not an anti @-@ Semite but maintained that Jews were materialistic and resisted assimilation . The Klan subsequently launched an offensive against organized labor . In the 1930s , Evans fiercely condemned communism and unionism . Around that time , Evans began to suspect that government agencies had been infiltrated by communists . He focused his attacks on the Congress of Industrial Organizations , claiming that they sought to " flout law and promote social disorder " .

Although Evans bemoaned commercialism and attributed it to the effects of liberalism , he supported capitalism and sought to form ties between business leaders and the Klan . He condemned corporate greed , alleging that wealthy elites ' desire for cheap labor led to increased immigration . In his view , corporations had changed the Eastern U.S. so that it no longer reflected " true Americanism " , a concept he believed could only be understood by " legitimate Americans " such as himself . He blamed an influx of unskilled laborers for lowering wages in the U.S. Evans believed that U.S. immigration policy should restrict the immigration of unskilled workers , except for those needed on farms .

In 1934 , Evans encountered public controversy after it was revealed that he intended to travel to Louisiana to campaign against the Democratic governor Huey Long , who planned to run in the 1936 presidential election . Long learned of Evans ' plans and condemned him in a speech at the Louisiana State Legislature , deriding him as a " tooth @-@ puller " and an " Imperial bastard " and warning of grave consequences should he follow through with his plans . After learning of the potential opposition , Evans cancelled his plans , although he retorted that Long ? who based his campaign on Americanist themes ? was " un @-@ American " .

= = Downfall and death = =

In the 1930s , the Klan 's public support nearly vanished and their membership dropped to about 100 @,@ 000 people , primarily concentrated in the South , having lost most of their members in the Midwest and West . At that time , James A. Colescott , Evans ' handpicked chief of staff , increasingly shouldered Evans ' responsibilities . After the Great Depression further damaged the Klan 's finances , the group 's leadership sold their Atlanta headquarters in 1936 . Around that time , Evans announced his intention to retire .

Although anti @-@ Catholicism had been a consistent platform of the Klan , before leaving the organization , Evans renounced his anti @-@ Catholicism and pronounced a " new era of religious tolerance " . In 1939 , he said that " in no other time in history has there been more need for all people who believe in the same Father and same Son to stand together . " That year , Evans also publicly expressed an interest in learning aspects of Judaism to better understand the Old Testament . Chester L. Quarles , a professor of criminal justice at the University of Mississippi ,

argues that Evans repudiated anti @-@ Catholicism owing to his desire to fight unions and communism and his fear of having too many enemies at one time .

After Evans sold the Klan 's former headquarters , it was purchased by the Catholic Church . The Cathedral of Christ the King was later built on the site . Evans attended the building 's dedication and spoke highly of the service , surprising many observers . His attendance at the service was his last significant public appearance as Imperial Wizard : he stepped down soon afterwards , having become deeply unpopular with members of the Klan , who felt that he had embraced their enemies . He resigned on June 10 , 1939 , and was replaced as Imperial Wizard by Colescott .

Evans ' service as Imperial Wizard proved to be a lucrative position , allowing him to maintain a large residence in a prestigious Atlanta neighborhood . In the mid @-@ 1930s , however , Klan funds dwindled , and he worked for a Georgia @-@ based construction company selling products to the Georgia Highway Board . At the same time , he was a staunch supporter of Georgia governor Eurith D. Rivers , whom he had previously employed as a lecturer . Owing to the political support that he provided the administration , Evans was allowed to sell to the highway board without bidding against other contractors . In 1940 , the state of Georgia charged Evans and a member of the state highway board with price fixing . The Attorney General of Georgia , Ellis Arnall , directed legal proceedings against Evans that resulted in a \$ 15 @,@ 000 fine .

Meanwhile , Colescott attempted to resuscitate the waning second Klan through an " administration of action " and stricter enforcement of the Klan 's stated policies ; he also led extensive recruitment campaigns . Despite concerns by opponents that the Klan would regain full force after the conclusion of World War II , it was unable to improve its membership and was under pressure from the Internal Revenue Service for failure to pay taxes . Through a decree on April 23 , 1944 , Colescott formally disbanded the Klan . Locally sponsored groups continued to use the name , but lacked the united leadership of the earlier Klan .

As late as 1949 , Evans served as a commentator on Klan activities , speaking as the former Imperial Wizard . He died on September 14 , 1966 , in Atlanta , Georgia .

= = Appraisal = =

David A. Horowitz , a historian at Portland State University , credits Evans with changing the Klan " from a confederation of local vigilantes into a centralized and powerful political movement " . Fellow historian William D. Jenkins of Youngstown State University maintains that Evans was " personally corrupt and more interested in money or power than a cause " . During Evans ' tenure as Imperial Wizard , the New York Times characterized the Klan 's leadership as " shrewd schemers " . However , Rice suggests that Evans ' reforms would never have been successful , as the Klan remained a white supremacist organization that " automatically made enemies of ... anyone who happened to be foreign @-@ born , Negro , Catholic , Jewish , or opposed to bigotry and chauvinism . "

An editorial in The New York Times during Evans ' tenure as Klan leader described him as " severe and logical " in his writing , while the historian Richard Hofstadter described Evans ' writings as not immoderate in tone . The communications specialist Nicolas Rangel Jr. of the University of Houston ? Downtown suggests that this vernacular prevented some Americans from recognizing the extremist nature of Evans ' views .

Evans ' ideology was attacked by numerous contemporaries ; these criticisms began early in his Klan career . David Lefkowitz , rabbi of Temple Emanu @-@ El in Dallas , assailed Evans ' assertion that Jews did not assimilate , emphasizing American experiences shared by Jews and Christians , such as military service in World War I. James Weldon Johnson , leader of the NAACP , responded to Evans ' promotion of white supremacy by contending that " all races are mixed " . Other well @-@ known adversaries of Evans included the minister and theologian Reinhold Niebuhr , who opposed the Klan in Detroit in 1925 , describing them as " one of the worst specific social phenomena which the religious pride of a people has ever developed . " The Dallas Morning News publisher George Dealey and Atlanta journalist Ralph McGill opposed him , the latter deriding him for his hypocrisy and false claims about minorities .

Several publications , however , gave positive coverage to Evans , although not necessarily his work with the Klan . In 1927 , the New York Times congratulated Evans on his " modest and engaging exposition of ' Americanism ' " . Although the Klan disowned Evans for reaching out to the Catholic Church , popular opinion was more positive . In 1939 , the Palm Beach Daily News described the meeting between Evans and Cardinal Dennis Joseph Dougherty as stirring both religious and secular circles ; favorable coverage of the meeting was found in several other publications . Dougherty said that he had found Evans " intensely interested in religious subjects " outside Protestantism .