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"KU KLUX KLAN HOLD PICNIC AT FAIRGROUNDS LABOR DAY"

The above title was the headline on an article published in The Orleans Republican September 9, 1925. The article is as follows: "A number of out of town people gathered at the Fair Grounds last Monday and had a picnic under the auspices of the Ku Klux Klan. It was an ordinary crowd."

That is the extent of the article from The Orleans Republican. The photo show here, taken on Labor Day 1925, reveals the KKK gathering on the Fairgrounds. The person who took this picture was facing west. To the right we see the end of one of the grandstands and in the distance, the chimney at the Western House of Refuge, now the Albin Correctional Facility. In the foreground there are a number of Klansmen dressed in white robes and pointed hats.

However, with a little further research I found another article published in The Orleans American September 10, 1925. As Paul Harvey would say, "Now here is the rest of the story."

"On Monday last, September 7, the first Klan parade was witnessed in Albin attracting no little attention. There were hundreds in line, men and women. It is said that five hundred of the marchers were women. There were three bands and drum corps - Albin band was the most conspicuous. There were two floats which accompanied the white robed members.

"It is said that not a member of the Klan from Albin or the central and western towns of Orleans County were in the parade. The spectators along the line of march were of the curious class, many of whom had never seen a klan parade and others who wished to satisfy their curiosity as to who participated. Only members were admitted to the fairgrounds and those who held cards from members and an admission fee of 25 cents each was charged. A massive cross was burned Tuesday night at the fairgrounds where the ceremonial work and talks by national and state organization leaders were speakers to members of the Klan only. The display of fireworks attracted considerable attention during the closing hours of the Klan meeting."

Younger people often find it hard to believe that the KKK was active in this county during the mid-1920's. However, with internal problems concerning qualified national leadership, the organization suffered drastic membership loss by the late 1920's. Very little is known of the organization locally. We can assume that membership dissolved and interest waned over sixty years ago. As is noted in the Orleans Republican article, it was a number of out of town people who gathered for the event on Labor Day 1925.

