

# D. C. STEPHENSON COLLECTION, 1922-1978

---

Collection #  
M 0264  
BV 2591

---

## Table of Contents

[Collection Information](#)  
[Historical Sketch](#)  
[Scope and Content Note](#)  
[Box and Folder Listing](#)  
[Cataloging Information](#)

Processed By:  
Paul Brockman  
20 October 1997

---

## COLLECTION INFORMATION

<b>VOLUME OF COLLECTION:</b>	4 manuscript boxes, 1 bound volume
<b>COLLECTION DATES:</b>	Inclusive, 1922-1978, bulk, 1922-1927
<b>PROVENANCE:</b>	Hubert Hawkins, Indianapolis, IN, December, 1961; Mrs. William H. Remy, Marissa, IL, 6 September 1970; John Niblack, Washington, IN, 2 May 1975 (bulk of the collection); Lance Trusty, Dept. of History & Political Science, Purdue University-Calumet Campus, Hammond, IN 46323, 8 August 1991; Blue River Books, 20 East Maryland St., Indianapolis, IN 46204, 12 May 1993.
<b>RESTRICTIONS:</b>	None
<b>REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:</b>	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the Indiana Historical Society.
<b>ALTERNATE FORMATS:</b>	None
<b>RELATED HOLDINGS:</b>	Booth, Edgar Allen, <i>The Mad Mullah of America</i> (HS 2330 .K63 B6 1927); Greenapple, H. R., ed., <i>D. C. Stephenson, Irvington 0492</i> (HS 2330 .K63 D2 1989); Lutholtz, M. William, <i>Grand Dragon, D. C. Stephenson and the Ku Klux Klan in Indiana</i> (HS

2330 .K63 L87 1991); *Stephenson was Framed in a Political Conspiracy* (HS 2330 .K63 S84 1936); Tucker, Richard K., *The Dragon and the Cross: The Rise and Fall of the Ku Klux Klan in Middle America* (HS 2330 .K63 T84 1991).

**ACCESSION NUMBERS:** 1961.1106, 1970.0906, 1975.0505, 1991.0639X, 1993.0428.

**NOTES:** None

---

## **HISTORICAL SKETCH**

D. C. (David Curtis) Stephenson (1891-1966) was born in Houston, Texas, and moved with his family to Mayesville, Oklahoma, in 1901. While living in Oklahoma, Stephenson became active in the Socialist Party and served briefly with the U. S. Army during World War I. In 1920 he moved to Evansville where he was active in the Democratic Party and joined the Ku Klux Klan. Stephenson backed Hiram Evans in his successful attempt in unseating William Simmons as the Klan's imperial wizard in November, 1922, and was rewarded by being named grand dragon for Indiana and 22 other northern states. Under Stephenson's leadership, Klan membership in Indiana climbed to about 250,000.

Stephenson also accumulated a great amount of wealth from the position and moved to a large home in the Irvington area of Indianapolis. In September 1923, Stephenson severed his connection with Evans and the national organization and formed a rival Klan group.

He used his power and wealth to support political candidates, the most notable being his successful support of Republican candidate Ed Jackson for governor in 1924.

In November 1925, Stephenson received a life sentence for second degree murder resulting from his part in the rape and subsequent death of Madge Oberholtzer (1896-1925), a state government employee who he supposedly met through Governor Jackson. He served 31 years of his sentence and was paroled in 1956. After returning to Indianapolis for several years, Stephenson quietly relocated to Jonesboro, Tennessee, where he died.

Source: *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, pp. 1296-1297.

---

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

The majority of the collection consists of legal papers regarding Stephenson's 1925 trial for the murder of Madge Oberholtzer. Materials include transcripts, testimony, statements, briefs and other official documents for both Stephenson's bail bond hearing, June, 1925, and the Marion County Grand Jury Investigation for Alleged Political Corruption, 1926-1928. Also included in the collection is Stephenson's appellant briefs for his appeal to the Indiana Supreme Court; his parole hearing, 1927; his financial record sheets, 1924-1934; and the notebook and autobiography of prosecutor William H. Remy (1892-1968). The collection also contains some of Stephenson's Ku Klux Klan correspondence and records, 1922-1925, as well as Klan pamphlets and other related publications and newsclippings, 1921-1965, and a notebook of Republican Party county chairmen and chairwomen, 1924.

---

## **BOX AND FOLDER LISTING**

### **BOX 1: Correspondence & Records, 1922-1925; Criminal Proceedings, 1925**

FOLDER	CONTENTS
--------	----------

1	Correspondence & Records, Sept., 1922-July, 1923
2	Correspondence & Records, Aug., 1923-Dec., 1923
3	Correspondence & Records, Jan., 1924-April, 1924
4	Correspondence & Records, May, 1924-Aug., 1924
5	Stephenson to Hon. Roy West, 9 Aug. 1924
6	Correspondence & Records, Sept., 1924-Dec., 1924
7	Correspondence & Records, Jan., 1925-March, 1925
8	Ernst & Ernst, Report on Indiana Ku Klux Klan, 1922-1923
9	Canceled Checks, 1923-1924
10	<i>Violet M. Stephenson v. David C. Stephenson</i> , 1924
11	Yacht Case Clippings, Dec., 1924
12	Criminal Proceedings (Oberholtzer), March, 1925-April 15, 1925
13	Criminal Proceedings (Oberholtzer), April 16, 1925-April 23, 1925
14	Criminal Proceedings (Oberholtzer), May, 1925
15	Criminal Proceedings (Oberholtzer), June, 1925-Nov., 1925
16	Criminal Proceedings (Oberholtzer), 1925

**BOX 2: *Bail Bond Hearings, June, 1925; Marion County Grand Jury Investigation, 1926-1927***

FOLDER	CONTENTS
1	Bail Bond Hearing Transcripts, June, 1925, Folder 1
2	Bail Bond Hearing Transcripts, June, 1925, Folder 2
3	Bail Bond Hearing Transcripts, June, 1925, Folder 3
4	Marion County Grand Jury, <i>State v. Stephenson et al.</i> , May, 1925
5	Marion County Grand Jury Investigation, Oct. 12, 1926
6	Marion County Grand Jury Investigation, Oct. 13, 1926
7	Marion County Grand Jury Investigation, Oct. 13, 1926 (P.M.)
8	Marion County Grand Jury Investigation, Oct. 14, 1926 (A.M.)
9	Marion County Grand Jury Investigation, Stephenson Testimony, July 30, 1927
10	Marion County Grand Jury Investigation, Testimony, Sept. 2, 1927
11	Marion County Grand Jury Investigation, Henry A. Rodman Testimony, Sept.

26, 1927

**BOX 3: Marion County Grand Jury Investigation, 1927-1928; Indiana Supreme Court, *Stephenson v. Indiana*, n.d.**

FOLDER	CONTENTS
1	Marion County Grand Jury Investigation, Mary Spann & Stephenson Testimony, Dec. 14, 1927
2	Marion County Grand Jury Investigation, Dec. 27-29, 1927
3	Marion County Grand Jury Investigation, Robert Lyons Testimony, Dec. 30, 1927
4	Marion County Grand Jury Investigation, Dec. 31, 1927
5	Marion County Grand Jury, Robert Lyons Investigation, Feb. 29, 1928
6	Marion County Grand Jury Briefs, Notes & Related Materials, 1926-1927
7	Legal Papers, 1927
8	Legal Papers, 1928
9	Statement of Earl Klenck, 25 Jan. 1927
10	Papers, n.d., Folder 1
11	Papers, n.d., Folder 2
12	Indiana Supreme Court, <i>Stephenson v. Indiana</i> , Appellant's Brief, vol. 1, n.d.
13	Indiana Supreme Court, <i>Stephenson v. Indiana</i> , Appellant's Brief, vol. 2, n.d.
14	(BV 2591) Indiana State Prison Parole Hearing, 1927

**BOX 4: Notebooks & Printed Materials, 1921-1978**

FOLDER	CONTENTS
1	District & County Chairmen & Chairwomen, 1924
2	Financial Records Balance Sheets, 1924-1934
3	William H. Remy Notebook, n.d.
4	William H. Remy Autobiography, Folder 1
5	William H. Remy Autobiography, Folder 2
6	Newsclipping, 1925-1978

- 7 "The Stephenson Case," 1936
  - 8 Ku Klux Klan Pamphlets & Publications, 1921-1924
  - 9 Ku Klux Klan Pamphlets & Publications, 1922-1948
- 

## CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's [online catalog](#)
2. Click on the "Local Catalog" icon.
3. Search for the collection by its call number, using the letter or letters designation and **four** digits (e.g., M 0715, SC 2234).
4. When you find the collection, go to the "Holdings" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.

END