

PATHFINDER

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Klan in Miami



Knotted Nooses Did Not Deter Negroes

Since the recall of three city commissioners at a special election several months ago, Miami, Florida, winter haven for the nation's idle rich, has been in a political turmoil. Last week another election had filled the vacancies, but not before Florida had witnessed one of the ugliest demonstrations of race hatred in its recent history.

Miami's population of 127,000 includes some 28,000 Negroes. In the southern tradition, no more than a handful of them has ever voted. The night before citizens went to the polls to decide among 13 candidates for the three commissionerships, the old specter of the Ku Klux Klan was raised to scare away colored votes.

Through Miami's Negro section rolled a procession of more than 50 autos, with license plates carefully covered. Inside sat men peering through the sheet-like garb of the K.K.K. Some dangled knotted nooses, silent threat of lynching, from their car windows. The paraders dropped crimson-lettered cards reading: "Respectable Negro citizens not voting tomorrow. Niggers stay away from the polls." From a telephone pole was strung a red-daubed effigy labeled: "This nigger voted." Twenty-five fiery crosses, traditional symbol in Klan mumbo-jumbo, lit the night air.

When the votes were cast next day, Miami had a striking object lesson in the efficacy of Klan tactics—the Negro vote was five times larger than any in the city's history.

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