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DAYTON, Ohio— Recent activity from several different hate groups in Ohio this past year begs the question of whether an agenda of hate is on the rise, and where the origin of hate groups in Ohio and the U.S. derived from.

In November, residents of the Short North neighborhood in Columbus, Ohio witnessed a group of neo-Nazis march across the neighborhood carrying swastika flags and shouting racial slurs.

In an interview with [WBNS](#), Senior Research Analyst for the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) Jeff Tischauser said, “...people in these groups don’t want to travel far distances, and Ohio is more conveniently located for some of the hate group members working in nearby states... they pick Ohio as kind of like a central meeting point.”

Another instance of hate activity came during President Donald Trump’s campaigning in September 2024, where he accused the Haitian migrant residents of Springfield, Ohio of eating cats and dogs, a claim for which there is no evidence of.

Following the conspiracy theory that summer came months of intimidation and death threats from a group named the Blood Tribe which the City of Springfield filed a lawsuit against in February.

According to the SPLC in a [2023 annual report](#), “more than 1,400 active groups, with a 14% increase in the number of hate groups, fueled by growth in the white nationalist movement.”



The center lists dozens of different hate and anti-government groups across the U.S. which saw a spike in numbers in 2022 following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. William Trollinger, professor of history at the University of Dayton, dates the first real organized hate group as the Ku Klux Klan Inc. and studied the Klan's presence in Ohio.



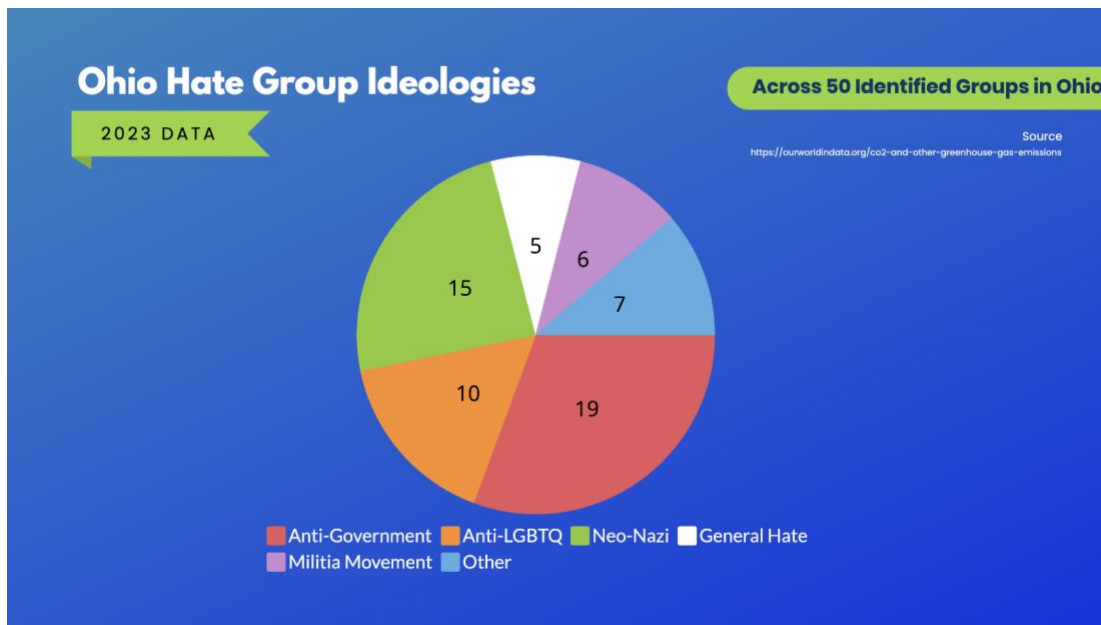
A [rally](#) held on Sept. 21, 1923, saw burning crosses and 7,000 new members initiated into the Dayton Klan at what used to be Montgomery County Fairgrounds, and is now a field on Main and Stewart St. as seen above.

“The big surprise to me was how many people had no idea of this history,” he said, “and I had one person from the library even tell me it was fiction. But almost one in five people who could join the Klan in Dayton did.”

Today, however, the Klan and its many factions have taken a backseat in popularity in comparison to groups such as the Proud Boys and Patriot Front, according to Dr. Michael E. Brooks, professor of history at Bowling Green State University and co-author of the book *A History of Hate in Ohio: Then and Now*.

“I’m still coming to terms with the shift in the political system in 2015,” Dr. Brooks admitted, “and Ohio is a place with quite a few hate groups if you look at the news at any given week.”

Offshoots of the Klan were a part of the 50 hate groups in Ohio in 2023 according to the [SPLC](#), whose ideologies are spread across different issues.



Dr. Art Jipson, associate professor of sociology and criminology at the University of Dayton, described in an interview the framework that these groups often follow.

“You recruit people by creating a set of grievances, because making people upset is the easiest way to connect as seen throughout history. Then create a narrative and encourage people on a “hero’s journey” which is usually through violence.”

As for whether the current political climate has emboldened the recent actions of hate groups, Dr. Jipson holds what he believes is a controversial opinion.

“I would make an argument technically speaking that there is more extremism today than there was in the past,” he spoke in an interview, “and that extremism proliferated in the 1980s; it spread and has been made possible by communication and technology. It’s woven into American culture.”

## Source Sheet

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