

The Ku Klux Klan



The **Ku Klux Klan** was formed as a social club in Pulaski, Tennessee around 1865. The group adopted the name Ku Klux Klan from the Greek word *kyklos*, meaning circle, and the English word *clan*.

White superiority was the philosophy of the Klan, and they often used violence and terrorization of blacks. The Klan hated the idea of blacks gaining any rights after the Civil War, and terrorized blacks to prevent them from voting in elections or practicing any other right. Blacks were often threatened, beaten, or even murdered by Klan members in the South; the Klan used white robes and hoods to mask their identity. The **Ku Klux Klan** became known as the *Invisible Empire* as it grew and spread rapidly.

In 1871, the Force Bill was passed by Congress. This act gave the President the authority to use federal troops against the Ku Klux Klan. Soon after this bill was passed, the Klan disappeared.

William J. Simmons organized a new Klan in Stone Mountain, Georgia in 1915 as a patriotic, Protestant fraternal society. This new Klan directed its activity against, not just blacks, but any group it considered un-American, including any immigrants, Jews, and Roman Catholics. The **Ku Klux Klan** grew rapidly and had more than 2 million members throughout the country in the 1920's. The KKK became a more powerful political force as it elected many public officials throughout the nation.



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