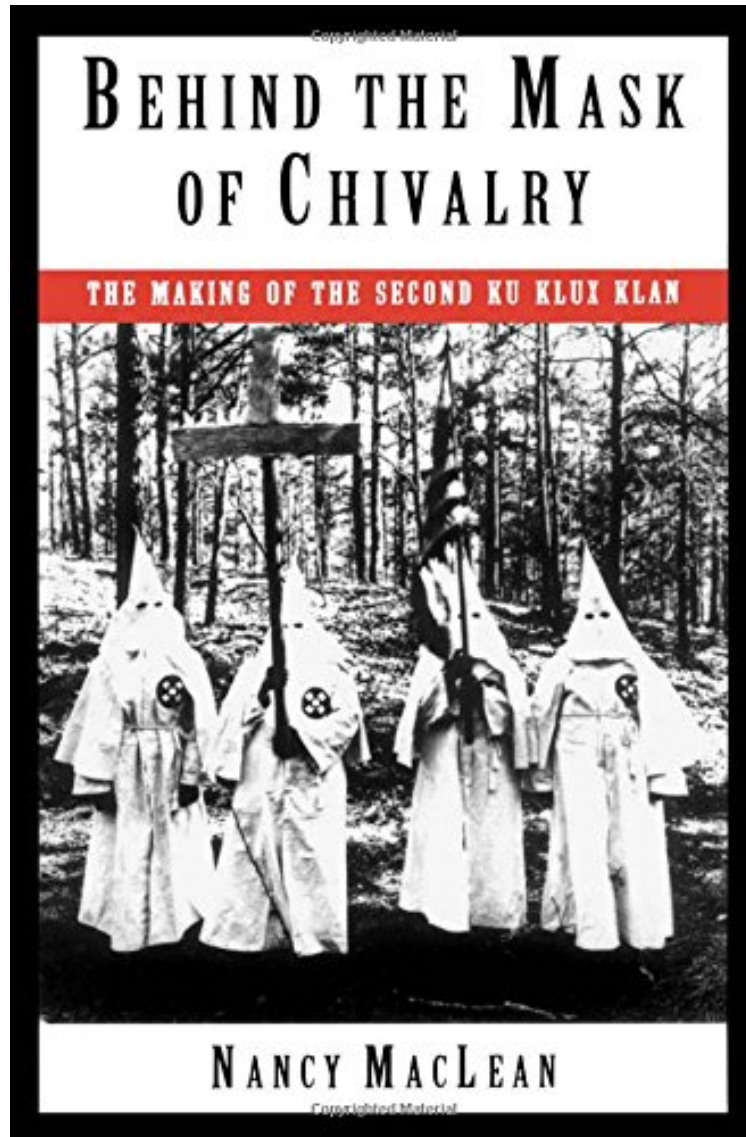


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Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan

Nancy K. MacLean

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#137892 in Books Nancy MacLean 1995-07-13Ingredients: Example IngredientsOriginal language:EnglishPDF # 1 5.32 x .62 x 8.001, .94 #File Name: 0195098366336 pagesBehind the mask of chivalry | File size: 30.Mb

Nancy K. MacLean : **Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A Must Read By Wendell F. Wentz Every Southerner should have this book sitting beside their Bible. Nancy MacLean has written a most excellent book about the KKK, and this should be a text book in colleges and universities in the Sociology Department. Every minister and all church people will benefit from this book. 18 of 20 people found the following review helpful. An in Depth Look At The Second Ku Klux Klan By Lionel S. Taylor This book looks at the activities of the Clarke County, Georgia Klan in the 1920's. The reason this Klan organization is chosen is due to the many public records and archives that are available and, according to the author, this chapter was typical of small town Klan chapters in the South. The author argues that the Klan represented a movement of "reactionary populism" among middle class whites during this time as they tried to deal with pressures from larger businesses that were putting competitive pressure on the middling farmer and businessman as well as the threat of labor unrest from the lower classes as various union movements tried to get established. There was also a reaction against the change of the family structure and the role of women. While the Klan was without a doubt a racist terrorist organization, the author also explores other aspects of their ideology such as the enforcements of gender roles and the hostility of organized labor and Catholicism. By looking at the other aspects of the Klan's ideology the author firmly places within the realm of extreme right wing American politics. What I found especially interesting was how the author place the Klan in the context of other far right movements in the 1920's especially the Fascist movements in Italy and Germany during this period. While there are definitely some parallels between them there is also the biggest difference in that the Klan did not take off but began to decline after 1926. Why was this? The author asserts that the changing economic forces in the United States (and the Klan leaderships blatant corruption) did not allow it to continue to be a mass movement like its German and Italian cousins. This is something all Americans should be very grateful for. This is a very good book that looks at the day to day activities of the Klan on a local level as well as what its appeal was and what type of people it attracted. As the title implies, the author does a good job of going beyond the image of the hooded night rider to the conditions in society that would allow this terrorist organization to flourish in the first place. 5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Read This Book By Rabbit the Reader Painful reading. Know your bigots.

On Thanksgiving night, 1915, a small band of hooded men gathered atop Stone Mountain, an imposing granite butte just outside Atlanta. With a flag fluttering in the wind beside them, a Bible open to the twelfth chapter of Romans, and a flaming cross to light the night sky above, William Joseph Simmons and his disciples proclaimed themselves the new Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, named for the infamous secret order in which many of their fathers had served after the Civil War. Unsure of their footing in the New South and longing for the provincial, patriarchal world of the past, the men of the second Klan saw themselves as an army in training for a war between the races. They boasted that they had bonded into "an invisible phalanx...to stand as impregnable as a tower against every encroachment upon the white man's liberty...in the white man's country, under the white man's flag." Behind the Mask of Chivalry brings the "invisible phalanx" into broad daylight, culling from history the names, the life stories, and the driving passions of the anonymous Klansmen beneath the white hoods and robes. Using an unusual and rich cache of internal Klan records from Athens, Georgia, to anchor her observations, author Nancy MacLean combines a fine-grained portrait of a local Klan world with a penetrating analysis of the second Klan's ideas and politics nationwide. No other right-wing movement has ever achieved as much power as the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s, and this book shows how and why it did. MacLean reveals that the movement mobilized its millions of American followers largely through campaigns waged over issues that today would be called "family values": Prohibition violation, premarital sex, lewd movies, anxieties about women's changing roles, and worries over waning parental authority. Neither elites nor "poor white trash," most of the Klan rank and file were married, middle-aged, and middle class. Local meetings, or klonklaves, featured readings of the minutes, plans for recruitment campaigns and Klan barbecues, and distribution of educational materials--Christ and Other Klansmen was one popular tome. Nonetheless, as mundane as proceedings often were at the local level, crusades over "morals" always operated in the service of the Klan's larger agenda of virulent racial hatred and middle-class revanchism. The men who deplored sex among young people and sought to restore the power of husbands and fathers were also sworn to reclaim the "white man's country," striving to take the vote from blacks and bar immigrants. Comparing the Klan to the European fascist movements that grew out of the crucible of the first World War, MacLean maintains that the remarkable scope and frenzy of the movement reflected less on members' power within their communities than on the challenges to that power posed by African Americans, Jews, Catholics, immigrants, and white women and youth who did not obey the Klan's canon of appropriate conduct. In vigilante terror, the Klan's night riders acted out their movement's brutal determination to maintain inherited hierarchies of race, class, and gender. Compellingly readable and impeccably researched, *The Mask of Chivalry* is an unforgettable investigation of a crucial era in American history, and the social conditions, cultural currents, and ordinary men that built this archetypal American reactionary movement.

From Publishers Weekly MacLean, who teaches history at Northwestern University, offers a deft, close study of the Klan, which became in the 1920s "the most powerful movement of the far right that America has produced." In this

post-WW I era, white male Christian supremacy was challenged by black labor resistance, the budding of feminism and economic uncertainty. Analyzing a typical local Klan in Clarke County, Ga., MacLean describes its members as economically fragile and insecure middle-class men who responded to the group's "reactionary populism:" a mix of Protestant fundamentalism, anti-statist individualism, anti-Communism and anti-Wall Street capitalism. She describes Klan efforts to enforce morality regarding alcohol, gambling and prostitution, and how Klansmen used racial hatred--against blacks, Jews and immigrants--to displace their fears of change. MacLean suggests, counter to the claims of others, that the Klan was indeed violent. The group waned by the end of the decade; unlike in Europe, where fascism flourished, an improved economy as well as receding efforts by labor and blacks assuaged the fears of would-be Klan participants. Then, in the 1930s, MacLean notes, a "strong and inclusive working-class movement" precluded Klan resurgence. Photos not seen by PW. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus sA well-researched and convincing analysis of the most powerful reactionary movement in American history: the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s. Dormant since the end of Reconstruction in the 1870s, the Ku Klux Klan broke out with an even more virulent strain of terrorism in 1915. Yet, as MacLean (History/Northwestern) demonstrates, it did not really hit its stride until after WW I, amid social disruptions ``that appeared to eviscerate discipline, stability, and predictability." MacLean is less interested in the organization's use of terror (though the few incidents she recounts are horrifying enough) than in the frightened worldview of its members. She takes issue with the common depiction of its rank and file as ``poor white trash," instead identifying the typical Klansman as a solid family man who found the settled certitudes of his life under a multipronged assault from changing relations between the sexes, Prohibition violations, strikes, and civil rights agitation. Such men, threatened by concentrated wealth above and labor insurgency below, felt as unmanned in the workplace as they did in the home. With between one and five million members at its height, the Klan was so powerful that no president in the 1920s dared to denounce its violence against African-Americans, Roman Catholics, Jews, and union activists. MacLean focuses on Clarke County, Georgia, where the Klan's Athens chapter left a cache of records surprisingly rich for an organization so famed for secrecy. At the same time, she carefully anchors this local study in a larger international perspective that takes in the post-World War I reactionary movements that produced fascism and Nazism. Masterly scholarship that unravels the murderous racial, gender, and class resentments underpinning a terrorist organization as American as apple pie. -- Copyright 1994, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. "An ambitious addition to a now long list of revisionist local studies of the Klan. It is the first of these books to focus on a southern community or state, and the first to place gender squarely at the center in explaining the extraordinary popularity of the men's Klan."--The Journal of American History"One of the most insightful and authoritative works on the Klan. It will serve as the standard work on the Klan of the 20s for decades to come."--Professor David Williams, Valdosta State University"[T]his is an important book. It is recommended for all students of the South, African Americans, and violence in American history."--History"Behind the Mask of Chivalry is a well-written...analysis of the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s."--Journal of Social History"This is a big book about a small place....Its dark vision of the American heartland is bound to stir lively debate."--The New York Times Book "This study...is without a doubt the best done on the Klan in the 1920s....[W]hat emerges is a portrait of racial division in this country that is frightening, and important to understand."--LIATT, September 1995"Using a rich cache of Klan records from Athens, Georgia, MacLean shows how and why the Klan achieved a level of power and influence unmatched by other American right-wing groups."--The Black Scholar"Behind the Mask of Chivalry is a unique and well-researched resource on the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s. Nancy MacLean's book is an invaluable work for scholars or anyone interested in this little-documented era of Klan history."--Morris Dees, The Southern Poverty Law Center"An elegant and sophisticated book that goes a long way toward unraveling the puzzle of the twentieth-century Ku Klux Klan."--Edward L. Ayers, author of The Promise of the New South: Life after Reconstruction"In a major new interpretation, MacLean puts the Ku Klux Klan in racial, sexual, class and even international context. This powerful book will challenge all of us to rethink the nature and potential of American right wing movements."--Linda Gordon, author of Heroes of Their own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence