

Early Perspectives on the Ku Klux Klan

Historical Thinking Skills Assessed: Sourcing, Corroborating, Evidence

Author/School/System: C. Renee Bos, Howard County School System, Maryland

Course: United States History, African-American Studies

Level: High

Task Question: How did the perspectives of African Americans and Southern whites differ on the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) during Reconstruction?

Learning Outcomes:

Students should be able to:

- Source two documents
- Describe and compare the perspectives of Southern whites and African Americans on the Ku Klux Klan during Reconstruction
- Corroborate information contained in multiple sources

Standards Alignment:

[Common Core Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies](#)

- RH.9-10.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
- RH.9-10.6 Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.
- RH.9-10.9 Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.
- WHST.9-10.9 Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

[National History Standards](#)

Era 5: Civil War and Reconstruction (1850-1877)

Standard 3: How various reconstruction plans succeeded or failed.

[College, Career, and Civic Life \(C3\) Framework for Social Studies Standards](#)

- D2.His.4.9-12 Analyze complex and interacting factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.

Materials:

- RS#01: Ku Klux Klan Members and a Burning Cross
- RS#02: A Brief History of the Ku Klux Klan
- RS#03: A Brief History of the Ku Klux Klan – Background Questions
- RS#04: Document A – Slave Narrative
- RS#05: Document A (Modified) – Slave Narrative
- RS#06: Document B – Newspaper Report, *Shelby County Guide*, December 3, 1868
- RS#07: Document B (Modified) – Newspaper Report, *Shelby County Guide*, December 3, 1868
- RS#08: Comparing Sources
- RS#09: Early Perspectives of the Ku Klux Klan
- RS#10: ARCH Historical Thinking Skills Rubric – Evidence, Corroboration
- RS#11: Nathan Bedford Forrest High School – Take a Position

Background for the Teacher:

This activity is designed to take place during a unit on Reconstruction in the American South after the Civil War. Prior to completing this activity, students should have an understanding of the history of slavery, the policies and consequences of Reconstruction, and Southern resentment toward the North and Southern African Americans resulting from the Civil War and Reconstruction.

In 1865, the Ku Klux Klan was founded as a social club for Confederate veterans of the Civil War who felt disempowered once the Union regained control of the South.¹ At first, the Klan was a rowdy bunch of young Southern men who dressed up in sheets and rode their horses through the dark countryside. Very quickly, however, they realized the power they had to inspire terror, especially among the many displaced freed slaves. The Klan began to take violent action to preserve white supremacy in the South despite the reforms instituted under Radical Reconstruction.² They beat and lynched freed blacks, Northern carpetbaggers, and Northern sympathizers and supporters.

Soon, news of the Klan's actions and goals spread, and within a year there were a number of Klan organizations in various counties and states in the South. The Klan had its first organizational meeting in April 1867, and Confederate general Nathan Bedford Forrest assumed leadership as the Klan's first Grand Wizard. Despite the early attempts at centralized organization, the KKK continued to operate primarily as a collection of independent local groups bound together loosely by racist and anti-Northern ideologies.

Because the Klan had little influence on Republican policies during Reconstruction and because many Southerners were repulsed by the violence of Klan actions, the power of the Ku Klux Klan quickly declined. In 1871 Congress passed the Ku Klux Klan Act, which enabled federal troops to suppress Klan actions and provided that Klan members could be tried in federal courts. This essentially ended the early reign of the Klan in the South, although the Klan would reemerge in the early twentieth century.³

More information and background on the KKK during Reconstruction from Civil War historians:

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/kkk/sf_klan.html

Procedure

Context Setting:

- Display RS#01: Ku Klux Klan Members and a Burning Cross, a photograph taken between 1921 and 1930. Ask students to describe their feelings about the image using the following questions:
 - Describe what you see in this image. Who are these people and what are they doing?
 - Describe their clothing. Why do you think they are dressed like this? Why are they burning a cross?
 - What feelings do you have upon seeing this? What effect might this have had on the people who saw the event?
- Explain that these images evoke the Ku Klux Klan's second incarnation from 1915 to the present.
- Ask students what they already know about the Ku Klux Klan.
- Students should read RS#02: A Brief History of the KKK and answer the questions on RS#03: A Brief History of the Ku Klux Klan – Background Questions. Students may read the background essay independently or with another student.

¹ "Rise of the Ku Klux Klan," American Experience, accessed 1/12/14,,

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/grant-kkk/>.

² "Ku Klux Klan," History Channel, accessed 1/12/14, <http://www.history.com/topics/ku-klux-klan>.

³ "The Ku Klux Klan, 1868," Eyewitness to History, accessed 1/12/14,

<http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/kkk.htm>.

- Once students have completed the background essay and answered the corresponding questions, discuss the answers with the entire class to check for understanding. (For more information see: <http://www.uhv.edu/asa/articles/KKKAmericasForgottenTerrorists.pdf>)
- Inform students that this lesson will give them a chance to look at the early history of a white supremacist organization by analyzing and comparing two primary sources to answer the following task question: **How did the perspectives of African Americans and Southern whites differ on the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) during Reconstruction?**

Document Analysis:

- Students should read each source (RS#04: Document A – Slave Narrative and RS#06: Document B – Newspaper Report, *Shelby County Guide*, December 3, 1868) and use the student worksheet (RS#08: Comparing Sources) to record information about each source. Students may work in pairs or heterogeneous groups to analyze the documents at the discretion of the teacher.
- Important Notes:
 - Both the full sources (RS#04 and RS#06) and modified versions (RS#05 and RS#07) have been provided. The teacher may use the modified versions at their discretion with students who may be challenged by the original readings.
 - Teachers should be aware that the slave narrative source (original and modified) contains objectionable language. The person being interviewed by the WPA in 1937, a former slave, frequently refers to African Americans using derogatory terms. While this language may be difficult for some students to read, it is an accurate reflection of racial attitudes of the time and an important legacy of the dehumanization wrought by slavery and discrimination. Teachers who are uncomfortable with the language may choose to black it out on student copies.
 - Also, it should be noted that the dialect reflected in the interview may not be entirely accurate. White interviewers often attempted to record the unique speech patterns of their African-American subjects, but these attempts were hindered by the interviewers' lack of expertise in language and personally held racial stereotypes.
- Remind students that the task question asks them to determine how the perspectives of white Southerners and African Americans on the KKK differed. Tell them that we can often make predictions as to a given source's perspective by analyzing information about its creator and the date and place of creation. This information also allows us to evaluate the source's reliability or credibility.
- As a class, source the two documents, referring to students' responses to the first two rows of RS#08: Comparing Sources. Ask students the following questions for each source:
 - Where was the document created?
 - When was it created? When was it created in relation to the events of Reconstruction? Does this suggest anything about reliability?
 - Who created the source? What might this suggest about the source's perspective on the Ku Klux Klan?
- Teacher's Note: The WPA slave testimonies can be an excellent sourcing lesson in and of itself. A useful section on the Library of Congress's introduction to slave narratives can be found here: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snintro15.html> and <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snintro16.html>. These resources offer insights into sourcing for enrichment or extension activities.

Corroborating Evidence and Constructing Interpretations – Close Analysis:

- One of the fascinating aspects of this exercise is how much of the factual evidence is corroborated by the two sources. The major difference between the two sources, however, is how the authors *perceive* the factual evidence.

- Discuss as a class the answers to the last three rows of RS#08: Comparing Sources, emphasizing the similarities and differences between the two sources.
- Make sure that students understand the following distinction: To many white residents of the South, the Klan's actions were heroic, and the language used in the newspaper account reflects that. To African Americans like Ben Johnson, the Klan's actions were a terrifying tool used by whites to control and punish blacks.

Thoughtful Application:

- Students will complete an analysis comparing the perspectives found in the two sources (RS#09: Early Perspectives on the Ku Klux Klan). Students will choose several adjectives that describe how each group perceived the Klan and its actions and then use textual evidence to support their claims.
- Students may share their responses with the class at the teacher's discretion.
- Score the responses using the "evidence" and "corroboration" sections of the ARCH Historical Thinking Skills Rubric (RS#10).
- Students can further apply their knowledge to a contemporary issue by considering the case of Nathan Bedford Forrest High School in Florida. Present the controversy surrounding the school's name, and have students articulate a position by writing a short speech to the Duval County School Board (RS#11: Nathan Bedford Forrest High School – Take a Position). Students should support their positions with evidence drawn from the two primary sources.
- Again, students may share their responses with their class at the teacher's discretion.

Thoughtful Application: Student Sample 1

Directions: Based on the documents you studied in class, explain the perspectives of African Americans and of Supporters of the KKK to the new institution of KKK. Choose four adjectives to describe each perspective's attitude. Use quotes from the documents to support your word choices (claims).

<p>African Americans</p> <p><u>Terrifying</u> "very quickly, however, they realized the road they had to pursue led to especially of the myriad of dispersed freed slaves"</p> <p><u>ranked</u> "They beat and tortured freed men, Northern Carpetbaggers, & Northern sympathizers & supporters"</p> <p><u>Violent</u> "The KKK robes get him, or Gussie, or any niggers from him on the cold red dirt on the Hillsboro Rd"</p> <p><u>Notice</u> "They spit fire, they beat negro, putting six nails through his head"</p>	<p>Supporters of the KKK</p> <p><u>Popular</u> "I soon news of the Klan's actions and goals spread within a year and the number of Klan organizations in various counties & states in the South"</p> <p><u>Respected</u> "They went to several states & knocked: the doors were opened & one honorable "Evangelist who saw them says their masses were more praising than for superiors, only in the country word about."</p> <p><u>Business</u> "The supporters of the KKK is that they did not..."</p>
---	---

Thoughtful Application: Student Sample 2

Directions: Based on the documents you studied in class, explain the perspectives of African Americans and of Supporters of the KKK to the new institution of KKK. Choose four adjectives to describe each perspective's attitude. Use quotes from the documents to support your word choices (claims).

African Americans

Unfair - "They hung him for a scandalous insult to a white woman"

Violent - "They beat and lynched freed blacks, with the carpet baggers, and Abolition sympathizers and supporters"

distributing - "In they scratches Cy's arm to get some blood, on with that blood they writes that he shall hang 'tween the heavens and the Earth till he is dead, dead, dead"

Unrespectful - "Most of them ain't got no respect for god, nor, nor the devil" "they fell his him that his time has come on" if he wants to tell his wife goodbye and his prayers; hurry up!"

Supporters of the KKK

Polite - "No one had asked for n'avy; "made a clean breast of the matter, telling everything"

Proudful - "they realized the power they had to inspire terror" "They come here in a hundred strings"

Just - "felt themselves discriminated in that part of the woman" "They shot one very bad negro"

Proud - "Did not hesitate to unmask themselves"

Thoughtful Application: Student Sample 3

Directions: Based on the documents you studied in class, explain the perspectives of African Americans and of Supporters of the KKK to the new institution of KKK. Choose four adjectives to describe each perspective's attitude. Use quotes from the documents to support your word choices (claims).

<p>African Americans</p> <p>evil... when they'd come to Hillsboro on 'most of them ain't got no respect for God, man, nor the Devil."</p> <p>horrific - "I never will forget when they hung Cy Guy."</p> <p>determined - "They ain't catch him neither, and the next night they come back, determined to get him, they shot another... by accident."</p> <p>unnegotiable - "Sam Allen in Caswell County was told to move out after a month the hundred Ku Klux came a town his caskets on, they tells him that his time has come..."</p>	<p>Supporters</p> <p>lawful - "They shot one very bad negro, putting six balls through his head."</p> <p>brave - "The strongest thing about these Kluxes was that they did not hesitate to unmask themselves when asked to do so..."</p> <p>courageous - "They did not disturb anyone else, nor did they take anything..."</p> <p>beneficial - "The visitants advent has been productive of much good and benefit to the community..."</p>
---	---

Resource Sheet #01

Ku Klux Klan Members and a Burning Cross



Source: Denver News. *Ku Klux Klan Members and a Burning Cross*. Photograph. Circa 1921-1930. Western History/Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library, Denver. Accessed 1/9/14. <<http://cdm15330.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15330coll22/id/21853>>

Resource Sheet #02

A Brief History of the Ku Klux Klan

In 1865, the Ku Klux Klan was founded as a social club for Confederate veterans of the Civil War who felt **disempowered** once the Union regained control of the South.¹ At first, the Klan was a rowdy bunch of young Southern men who dressed up in sheets and rode their horses through the dark countryside. Very quickly, however, they realized the power they had to inspire terror, especially among the many displaced freed slaves. The Klan began to take violent action to preserve **white supremacy** in the South despite the reforms instituted under **Radical Reconstruction**.² They beat and **lynched** freed blacks, Northern **carpetbaggers**, and Northern sympathizers and supporters.

Soon, news of the Klan's actions and goals spread, and within a year there were a number of Klan organizations in various counties and states in the South. The Klan had its first organizational meeting in April 1867, and Confederate general Nathan Bedford Forrest assumed leadership as the Klan's first Grand Wizard. Despite the early attempts at centralized organization, it continued to operate primarily as a collection of independent local groups bound together loosely by racist and anti-Northern **ideologies**.

Because the Klan had little influence on Republican policies during Reconstruction and because many Southerners were repulsed by the violence of Klan actions, the power of the Ku Klux Klan quickly declined. In 1871 Congress passed the Ku Klux Klan Act, which enabled federal troops to suppress Klan actions and provided that Klan members could be tried in federal courts. This essentially ended the early reign of the Klan in the South, although the Klan would re-emerge in the early twentieth century.³

disempowered – deprived of power and influence, made weak

white supremacy – belief that the so-called white race is better than others

Radical Reconstruction – the movement to dramatically reform and punish the South led by Republican Congressmen who believed in political equality for African Americans

lynched (lynch) – a form of execution, generally by hanging, carried out by a mob

carpetbaggers – Northerners who moved South after the Civil War to make money

ideologies – beliefs that guide the actions of individuals or groups

¹ "Rise of the Ku Klux Klan," American Experience, accessed 1/12/14
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/grant-kkk/>.

² "Ku Klux Klan," History Channel, accessed 1/12/14, <http://www.history.com/topics/ku-klux-klan>.

³ "The Ku Klux Klan, 1868," Eyewitness to History, accessed 1/12/14,
<http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/kkk.htm>.

Resource Sheet #03

A Brief History of the Ku Klux Klan Background Questions

- 1. Some people have described the Ku Klux Klan as America's first homegrown terrorist organization. Why?**
- 2. Briefly describe the Klan's purpose and organization.**
- 3. Describe two reasons for the Klan's decline in the late 1860s and early 1870s. Which of these two reasons do you think had a greater influence? Why?**

Resource Sheet #04

Document A – Slave Narrative

This narrative, like many collected by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) project in the 1930s, contains objectionable language. The person being interviewed was a former slave. He frequently refers to African Americans using derogatory terms. While this language may make us uncomfortable, it is an accurate reflection of racial attitudes of the time and an important legacy of the dehumanization wrought by slavery and discrimination. Also, the dialect reflected in the interview may not be entirely accurate. White interviewers often attempted to record the unique speech patterns of their African-American subjects, but these attempts were hindered by the interviewers' lack of expertise in language and their personally-held racial stereotypes.

Ben Johnson was born a slave in 1852. He lived in Hecktown, Durham County, North Carolina. On May 20, 1937 he was interviewed by Mary Hicks as part of the Works Progress Administration's (WPA) Federal Writers' Project. His testimony was edited Daisy Bailey Waitt.

"I was born in Orange County [North Carolina] and I belong to Mr. Glibert Gregg near Hillsboro. I don't know nothin' 'bout my mammy and daddy, but I had a brother Jim who was sold to dress young misses fer her weddin'. The tree is still standing where I set under an' watch them sell Jim. I set dar an' I cry an' cry, especially when they puts the chains on him an' carries him off, an' I ain't never felt so lonesome in my whole life. I ain't never hear from Jim since an' I wonder now sometimes if'en he's still living.

I knows that the master was good to us an' he fed an' clothed us good. We had our own garden an' we was gitten' long all right.

I seed a whole heap of Yankees when they comed to Hillsboro an' most of them ain't got no respect for God, man, nor the devil. I can't remember so much about them though cause we lives in town... an' we has a gyard.

The most that I can tell you 'bout is the Klu Klux. I never will forget when they hung Cy Guy. They hung him for a scandalous insult to a white woman an' they comed after him a hundred strong.

They tries him there in the woods, an' they scratches Cy's arm to get some blood, an' with that blood they writes that he shall hang 'tween the heavens and the earth till he is dead, dead, and that any nigger what takes down the body shall be hanged too.

Well sir, the next morning there he hung, right over the road an' the sentence hanging over his head. Nobody would bother with that body for four days an' there it hung, swinging in the wind, but the fourth day the sheriff comes an' takes it down.

There was Ed an' Cindy, who before the war belonged to Mr Lynch an' after the war he told them to move. He gives them a month and they ain't gone, so the Ku Kluxes gets them.

It was on a cold night when they came and dragged the niggers out of bed. They carried them down in the woods an' whup them, then they throes them in the pond, their bodies breakin' the ice. Ed comes out an' come to our house, but Cindy ain't been seen since.

Sam Allen in Caswell County was told to move an' after a month the hundred Ku Klux came a-totin' his casket an' they tells him that his time has come an' if he wants to tell his wife goodbye an' say his prayers; hurry up.

They set the coffin on two chairs an' Sam kisses his old woman who's a-crying, then he kneels down beside his bed with his head on the pillar an' his arms thrown out in front of him.

He sits there for a minute an' when he rose he had a long knife in his hand. Before he could be grabbed, he done kill two of the Klu Kluxes with the knife, an' he done gone out of the door. They ain't catch him neither, and the next night when they came back, determined to get him, they shot another nigger by accident.

Bob Boylan falls in love with another woman, so he burns his wife an' four youngsters up in their house.

The Ku Kluxes gets him, of course, an' they hangs him high on the old red oak on the Hillsboro Road, After they hanged him, his lawyer says to us boys: 'Bury him good, boys, just as good as you'd bury me if I was daid'

I shook hands with Bob before they hanged him an' I helped bury him too an' we bury him nice an' we all hopes that he done gone to glory."

Source: Johnson, Ben. Interview by Daisy Bailey Waitt, May 20, 1937. In *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1938, North Carolina Narratives* (Vol. XI, Part 2, pp 8-13). Federal Writer's Project, United States Work Projects Administration, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Accessed 1/11/14.

http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mesn&fileName=112/mesn112.db&recNum=12&itemLink=D%3Fmesnbib%3A1%3A.%2Ftemp%2F~ammem_7TPs%3A%3A

Resource Sheet #05

Document A (Modified) – A Slave Narrative

This narrative, like many collected by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) project in the 1930s, contains objectionable language. The person being interviewed was a former slave. He frequently refers to African Americans using derogatory terms. While this language may make us uncomfortable, it is an accurate reflection of racial attitudes of the time and an important legacy of the dehumanization wrought by slavery and discrimination. Also, the dialect reflected in the interview may not be entirely accurate. White interviewers often attempted to record the unique speech patterns of their African-American subjects, but these attempts were hindered by the interviewers' lack of expertise in language and their personally-held racial stereotypes.

Ben Johnson was born a slave in 1852. He lived in Hecktown, Durham County, North Carolina. On May 20, 1937 he was interviewed by Mary Hicks as part of the Works Progress Administration's (WPA) Federal Writers' Project. His testimony was edited Daisy Bailey Waitt.

"I was born in Orange County [North Carolina] and I belong to Mr. Glibert Gregg near Hillsboro...

I knows that the master was good to us an' he fed an' clothed us good. We had our own garden an' we was gitten' long all right...

The most that I can tell you 'bout is the Klu Klux. I never will forget when they hung Cy Guy. They hung him for a scandalous insult to a white woman an' they comed after him a hundred strong.

They tries him there in the woods, an' they scratches Cy's arm to get some blood, an' with that blood they writes that he shall hang 'tween the heavens and the earth till he is dead, dead, and that any nigger what takes down the body shall be hanged too.

Well sir, the next morning there he hung, right over the road an' the sentence hanging over his head....

There was Ed an' Cindy, who before the war belonged to Mr Lynch an' after the war he told them to move. He gives them a month and they ain't gone, so the Ku Kluxes gets them.

It was on a cold night when they came and dragged the niggers out of bed. They carried them down in the woods an' whup them, then they throes them in the pond, their bodies breakin' the ice. Ed comes out an' come to our house, but Cindy ain't been seen since.

Sam Allen in Caswell County was told to move an' after a month the hundred Ku Klux came a-totin' his casket an' they tells him that his time has come an' if he wants to tell his wife goodbye an' say his prayers; hurry up.

They set the coffin on two chairs an' Sam kisses his old woman who's a-crying, then he kneels down beside his bed with his head on the pillar an' his arms thrown out in front of him.

He sits there for a minute an' when he rose he had a long knife in his hand. Before he could be grabbed, he done kill two of the Klu Kluxes with the knife, an' he done gone out of the door. They ain't catch him neither, and the next night when they came back, determined to get him, they shot another nigger by accident.

Bob Boylan falls in love with another woman, so he burns his wife an' four youngsters up in their house.

The Ku Kluxes gets him, of course, an' they hangs him high on the old red oak on the Hillsboro Road, After they hanged him, his lawyer says to us boys: 'Bury him good, boys, just as good as you'd bury me if I was daid'

I shook hands with Bob before they hanged him an' I helped bury him too an' we bury him nice an' we all hopes that he done gone to glory."

Adapted from: Johnson, Ben. Interview by Daisy Bailey Waitt, May 20, 1937. In *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1938, North Carolina Narratives* (Vol. XI, Part 2, pp 8-13). Federal Writer's Project, United States Work Projects Administration, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Accessed 1/11/14. http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mesn&fileName=112/mesn112.db&recNum=12&itemLink=D%3Fmesnbib%3A1%3A.%2Ftemp%2F~ammem_7TPs%3A%3A>

Resource Sheet #06

Document B – Newspaper Report, *Shelby County Guide*, December 3, 1868

Movements of the Mystic Klan

A reliable correspondent writes as follows to a friend in Memphis from Florence, Alabama:

About a week ago Saturday night the Ku Klux came into town to regulate matters. They were here from eleven p.m. to three o'clock a.m — five hundred in all. They shot one very bad negro, putting six balls through his head. Many heard the noise, but did not know what was going on. They also hung three or four negroes nearly dead, and whipped others severely in order to make them tell them about their nightly meetings, and what their object was in holding the same; also, as to who their leaders were. They made a clean breast of the whole matter, telling everything. The strongest thing about these Kuklux was that they did not hesitate to unmask themselves when asked to do so; and out of the whole party none were identified. —Every one who saw them says their horses were more beautiful than, and far superior to, any in the country round about. They spoke but little but always to a purpose. They went to several stores and knocked; the doors were opened at once. They then called for rope, and at each place a coil was rolled out to them. They cut it in suitable length to hang a man with. No one asked for money and they offered none. They did not disturb any one else, nor did they take any thing except some few Enfield rifles which were found in possession of some very bad negroes. —They called on the revenue officer and passed a few remarks with him. What transpired is not known, but it has made a great improvement in his conversation. The visitants advent has been productive of much good and benefit to the community, though all regret such steps should have to be resorted to, every one says "give us peace," and really I believe them to be truly sincere.

Source: "Movements of the Mystic Klan. (1868, December 3). *Shelby County Guide*, December 3, 1868. Alabama Moments in American History, Alabama Department of Archives & History. Accessed 1/11/14.
<<http://www.alabamamoments.alabama.gov/sec28ps.html>>

Resource Sheet #07

Document B (Modified) – Newspaper Report, *Shelby County Guide*, December 3, 1868

Movements of the Mystic Klan

A reliable **correspondent** writes as follows to a friend in Memphis from Florence, Alabama: About a week ago Saturday night the Ku Klux came into town to **regulate matters**. They were here from eleven p.m. to three o'clock a.m. — five hundred in all. They shot one very bad negro, putting six balls through his head. Many heard the noise, but did not know what was going on. They also hung three or four negroes nearly dead, and whipped others severely in order to make them tell them about their nightly meetings, and what their object was in holding the same; also, as to who their leaders were. They **made a clean breast** of the whole matter, telling everything. The strongest thing about these Kuklux was that they did not hesitate to unmask themselves when asked to do so; and out of the whole party none were identified. — Every one who saw them says their horses were more beautiful than, and far superior to, any in the country round about. They spoke but little but always to a purpose. They went to several stores and knocked; the doors were opened at once. They then called for rope, and at each place a coil was rolled out to them. They cut it in suitable length to hang a man with. No one asked for money and they offered none. They did not disturb any one else, nor did they take any thing except some few Enfield rifles which were found in possession of some very bad negroes. — They called on the **revenue officer** and passed a few remarks with him. What **transpired** is not known, but it has made a great improvement in his conversation. The **visitants advent** has been productive of much good and benefit to the community, though all regret such steps should have to be resorted to, every one says "give us peace," and really I believe them to be truly sincere.

correspondent – reporter

regulate matters – in this sense, to make things normal or regular

made a clean breast – told the entire truth

revenue officer – tax collector

transpired – took place

visitants advent – the coming of the visitors to town

Adapted from: "Movements of the Mystic Klan. (1868, December 3). *Shelby County Guide*, December 3, 1868. Alabama Moments in American History, Alabama Department of Archives & History. Accessed 1/11/14. <http://www.alabamamoments.alabama.gov/sec28ps.html>

Resource Sheet #08

Comparing Sources

	Document A Slave Narrative	Document B Newspaper Account
What is the original date and place of origin of each source?		
Who is the author? Do you believe the author to be credible? Why or why not?		
What information contained in these two sources is similar? Cite specific quotes.		
What is the author's point of view (perspective)?		
What claims does the author make about the Ku Klux Klan? Cite at least 2 examples for each.		

Resource Sheet #09

Early Perspectives on the Ku Klux Klan

Directions: Using the two sources you read in class, explain the perspectives of African Americans and Ku Klux Klan supporters during the period of Reconstruction. Choose four adjectives that describe each perspective. Select quotes from the sources that support your word choices (claims).

African American		KKK Supporters
	K K K	

Resource Sheet #10

ARCH Historical Thinking Skills Rubric - Secondary

	Procedural Concepts	
Criteria	Evidence	Corroboration
4	Justifies claims using appropriate direct evidence from a variety of reliable sources.	Constructs an interpretation of events using information and perspectives in multiple sources. Identifies consistencies and inconsistencies among various accounts.
3	Justifies claims using some appropriate direct evidence from a variety of reliable sources.	Explains similarities and differences by comparing information and perspectives in multiple sources.
2	Justifies claims using generalizations or limited appropriate direct evidence.	Identifies similarities and differences in information in multiple sources.
1	Does not justify or support claims using appropriate direct evidence.	Demonstrates little to no attempt to examine sources for corroborating or conflicting evidence.

Resource Sheet #11



Nathan Bedford Forrest High School – Take a Position

In 1959, the Duval County School Board named Nathan B. Forrest High School in Jacksonville, Florida after the Confederate general and founder of the Ku Klux Klan. The school’s athletic teams were named the Rebels, and the Confederate flag was waved at sporting events. The connection of the school to these symbols of the Confederacy has long been controversial, and calls to change the name have increased, particularly since the student body is now more than fifty percent African American. Nonetheless, a number of community members and alumni have advocated for retaining the name.

Applying what you know about Forrest and the history of the Ku Klux Klan, write a short speech to the local school board advocating to either change or retain the school’s name. Use historical evidence to support the position you take.

This activity is based on a real event. For information see:
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nathan_B._Forrest_High_School_\(Jacksonville,_Florida\)#cite_note-woodmeeting-2](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nathan_B._Forrest_High_School_(Jacksonville,_Florida)#cite_note-woodmeeting-2)
<https://www.change.org/petitions/duval-county-school-board-change-the-name-of-nathan-bedford-forrest-high-school>