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Southern History

Junior

“Ku Klux Klan Hood (Ca. 1920s)”

1,166 words

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A prominent image when one thinks of the Kul Klux Klan is the masked hood that many members wore. At the time that they were most common in the 1920s, they were not identified as terror-related, but as an item of ordinary and prestigious attire. The hood was representative of

dating back to the Spanish Inquisition. At the time, Spain evoked sinners atoning for their sins and they did so by wearing *capirotes* that had different colors and symbols based on the sin that they committed (Gilad). This sort of spiritual foundation connected with the KKK when they embraced Protestant values within their ranks. The Klansmen saw it as their duty to uphold the Christian values America was founded on and enforce them during an onslaught of shifting cultural norms and attitudes. Their intolerance of values other than those that were Protestant was growing as new ideas began to gravitate toward mainstream America.

What made the second Ku Klux Klan different from the first was that it was much more intolerant with a growing number of Americans that they saw did not fit their nativist vision of America. Their aim of dispute grew from just anti-black to anti-Catholicism, anti-Semitism, anti-immigration, and anti

When one sees the image of the 1920s KKK hood, the first thought that comes to mind is one of overt racism. However, that conclusion forges the attitudes that were presented to ordinary Americans living in a time of prosperous economic growth. The organization grew during the melting pot structure of American society that they saw as threatening Protestant American values. To disrupt the changing patterns, the KKK adopted techniques to intimidate their enemies and one of these tools was the infamous pointed hood. The hoods represent an organization concealed by a vision of the past facing off against a more progressive and diverse American future. The hood highlights the vision to conceal and cast out current American society to advance a vision that was becoming increasingly threatened by a shifting American culture.

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