

Ku Klux Klan

WHO? a white supremacist organisation that aimed to ensure white people continued to have more rights than, and power over, other races.
WASPs (White Anglo- Saxon Protestants)

WHEN? Origins in 1860s (post Civil War) resurgence after film 'Birth of a Nation', 1915. By mid 1920s had 5 million members. Died out after scandal involving Grand Dragon David Stephenson.

WHERE? Especially prevalent in the South (where Jim Crow laws existed), but had a nationwide membership.

WHAT? The KKK used several methods to intimidate and persecute anyone it felt was a threat to WASP supremacy.
Sometimes they would burn crosses outside their victims' homes to denote them as a target.
The Klan used violence and members were often involved in lynchings. They also beat, burned, and tarred and feathered their victims.
Its members protested against politicians with whom it disagreed and influenced lawmaking where possible.
Members boycotted any businesses owned by those who disagreed with them.

WHY? They believed immigration threatened WASPs and should be stopped. They enforced some traditional Christian values by attacking people of other religions and groups they saw as

Police

Ignored serious crimes
Could not protect victims
Took part in killings

Courts

Friends of the Klan

Politicians

Difficult to change attitudes
Scared of losing votes

African Americans - made up 12 million of US population (75% lived in South). Slavery abolished (1865) but Jim Crow laws = racial segregation = discrimination in employment (esp. in south where agriculture dominated), education and more generally in society - for example restrictions on voting rights.

By 1920, 1 million migrated north in search of employment in new manufacturing industries. No Jim Crow laws, but like immigrants suffered from low wages, poor housing and lack of job security as mostly unskilled

Improvements + Opportunity

NAACP (National Association for the advancement of colored people) W.E.B du Bois - campaigns for the abolition of segregation, lynchings, employment discrimination, poor housing and equal education etc

UNIA (Universal Negro improvement Association Assistance with business. Somewhat controversial - Marcus Garvey wanted to create an Africa for Africans and criticized NAACP for wanting to assimilate with white people!)

The Harlem Renaissance - was an **African American** cultural movement that flourished in the 1920s and had **Harlem** in **New York City** as its symbolic capital. It challenged perceptions of white supremacy through creativity in musical, theatrical, visual arts and literature; it is considered the most influential period in **African American literary history**. The Harlem Renaissance was an artistic flowering of the "New Negro" movement as its participants celebrated their African heritage and embraced self-expression, rejecting long-standing—and often degrading—stereotypes Regarded as a turning point in the perception of black American representation



Did you know? In 1868 the 14th Amendment granted citizenship, equality and equal civil rights to enslaved Americans.

Immigrants - By 1920 the USA wanted to stem immigration into the USA. They passed a variety of Acts. Old immigrants from 1880s from Northern Europe - pulling up ramparts on new immigrants from east and Southern Europe - fears of diluting WASP cultural values. (Most new immigrants Jews or Catholics)

They were blamed for spreading disease and slum housing, as well as rising crime rates, alcoholism and gambling.

1917 - Literacy Act: reading and writing tests which many eastern European immigrants failed.

1921 - emergency quota act = restricting immigration to 357,000. Only 3% of any existing nationality permitted.

1924 - National origins act - Reducing percentage of existing nationalities to 2%. Total exclusion of immigrants from Asia

Prejudice - Immigrants from Eastern Europe viewed as a communist threat to US values. Created a Red Scare Led to: Palmer Raids - US Attorney General said 150,000 communists living in USA. 6,000 arrests and hundreds deported.

Led to: Sacco and Vanzetti trial and execution by electric chair, 1927. Radicals yes, but 107 witnesses placed them elsewhere at time + place of robbery they were accused of! Even lost an appeal after someone else admitted guilt! Their arrest, trial and execution symptomatic of intolerance towards new immigrants.



How tolerant was US society?

Was the USA a melting pot?