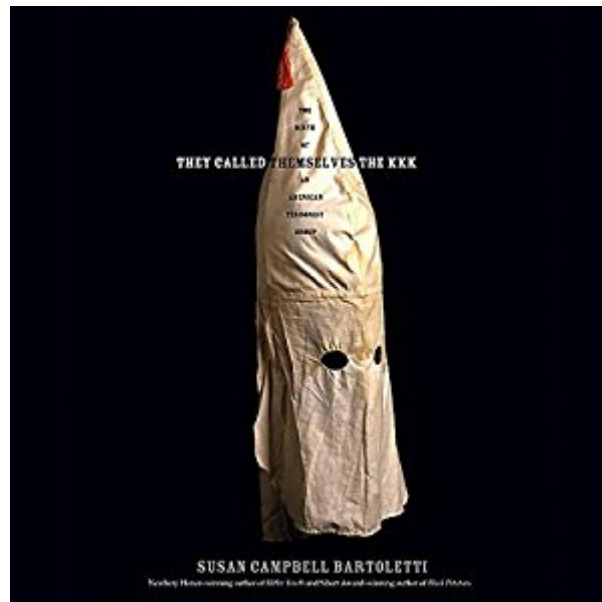


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# They Called Themselves The KKK



## Synopsis

A thoroughly-documented, chilling history of one of the world's most recognizable extremist groups, this is the true story of terrorism in America. "Boys, let us get up a club." With these chilling words, six restless young men raided the linens at a friend's mansion, pulled pillowcases over their heads, hopped on horses, and cavorted through the streets of Pulaski, Tennessee. They called their new club the Ku Klux Klan, and it quickly grew into the self-proclaimed Invisible Empire, with secret dens spreading across the South. Award-winning author Susan Campbell Bartoletti weaves together vivid personal accounts from oral histories, congressional documents, and diaries in this enlightening, surprising, and disquieting story, which has received a slew of starred reviews from Kirkus, Publisher's Weekly, Booklist, and other esteemed publications. Her extensive research places the length of the Klan's history into a larger context that sheds new light on the roots of hate groups. When you purchase *They Called Themselves the KKK*, you'll get exclusive bonus audio from a conversation with the author and Audie Award-winning narrator Dion Graham.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Like any American adult, I had some knowledge of the Ku Klux Klan. However, prior to reading this book, I had no real understanding of the history of the Klan, how it began and how it evolved. (I had not realized how little I knew). The evolution of this group is frightening. However, understanding this evolution is a beginning to understand the process through which a group of people, small or large, can band together in fear of the "others" and begin their journey of terror. While this book is categorized as a "young adult" book, it is informative reading for adults (like me) as well. I would

recommend this book to everyone.

"Boys, let us get up a club." These words coined in May of 1866 by John Lester, one of six Confederate officers in Pulaski, Tennessee, marked the beginning of a secret society. Dedicated to "preserv[ing] a government and way of life that they considered superior and a covenant with God," the group came up with an alliterated name, the Ku Klux Klan (K.K.K), that means "simply and ridiculously 'circle circle.'" Yet what they practiced was far from ridiculous --- they terrorized the newly-freed Southern black slaves who were given rights to own land and to vote like the white man. There are a number of books written on the K.K.K, although very few are targeted for young adult readers. To better understand why this group came into existence, multi-award winning author Susan Campbell Bartoletti draws from a plethora of primary resources to recreate the tumultuous atmosphere that occurred when Reconstruction was imposed upon the Southern states at the close of the Civil War. What began as a small assembly of men who "leaped astride their horses and swooped through the town streets, whopping and moaning and shrieking like ghosts" in the middle of the night, turned into an opportunity to incite fear among free blacks. This assembly then developed into "a secret empire powerful enough to overthrow Republican rule and battle Reconstruction policies." Growing in popularity, the Klan adhered to principles maintaining that "America was founded by the white race and for the white race only" and that it "considered any laws that granted citizenship and the rights and privileges of citizenship to nonwhites unconstitutional and against God's plan." By 1868, three years after the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery throughout the United States, K.K.K. dens had formed in every former Confederate state. Those who became members of the K.K.K. dens did so for reasons that went beyond preserving white rule. Bartoletti clearly indicates from first-hand accounts that while there were members who were forced and others who knew their lives would be threatened if they attempted to leave, what is known is that "large numbers of white Southerners willingly joined the Ku Klux Klan" out of insecurity and needing "to belong to something that made them feel powerful or superior." Regardless of reasons behind membership, members were bound to carry out their duties against black people as well as those who supported them. Whether sharecroppers, educators or political figures, there was no stopping the K.K.K. from spreading their reign of terror. "When the chief or anybody else wanted anybody whipped or killed, the council was to sit on it and decide what to do with him --- whether to whip him, or kill him, or hang him, or gut him, or cut his throat, or drown him, or anything." Though Bartoletti's principal research on the K.K.K. centers on the Reconstruction Era, she provides a brief historic overview of their activity post-Reconstruction up to

the present. Bartoletti includes an extensive Civil Rights timeline and quote attributions. Of primary interest, though, is the section on bibliography and source notes, which not only includes information on Pulaski, Tennessee and a well-rounded list of books and articles for those who want to do further research, but also Bartoletti's chilling account of a Klan Congress (they no longer call it a rally) that she attended for the purpose of wanting "to understand how the present-day Klan read against the Reconstruction Era order." Absolutely regarded as both a fascinating and gripping read, **THEY CALL THEMSELVES THE K.K.K.** is not be limited to just youth. The K.K.K. has evolved over the years, but they are still active today, and adults would do well to take time out by reflecting on Bartoletti's deeply profound presentation on a disconcerting aspect of America history. Reviewed by Anita Lock.

This book was assigned for my 7th grade son to read. We were a little worried that it might have unsuitable content for a 7th grader, however, it is well written and the issues surrounding the KKK are sensitively handled. It sparked a lot of good dinner time conversation at our house and kept his interest all the way through. Thoroughly recommend.

What's inside of this book, is as powerful as the cover image. The small print on the hood is "The birth of an American terrorist group" Someone with no knowledge of the klan could read this and easily understand its history. Someone who familiar with the klan could read this and appreciate the work and detail Baritoletti has put into her latest release. Bartoletti follows a precise, timeline beginning in the Spring of 1865. In doing the upheaval America was quickly established. When the Civil War ended and Blacks were freed (air quotes) many Southren White people were scared their way of life would change. This lead six Confederate officers from Puaski, Tennessee to form a club that would soon become the kkk Bartoletti unmasks the klan and the men behind it, from their secret codes, names and rankings. She also makes the reader wonder what would've happened if Abraham Lincoln wasn't assassinated. "After Lincoln's death, Johnson took the oath of office. He began to reconstruct the Southern states on his own, without the help of Congress, which was not in session. Right away, he began to pardon Confederate soldiers and other supporters of the Confederate army." The artwork is part photographs, part illustrations. On page 56 there is a photograph of man in a klans robe from the Reconstruction. On page 57 there is a photograph of W.E.B Du Bois. The art alone will give anyone much to think about. This is one of the best non fiction books of the year. Bartoletti has not missed a thing. Her Civil Rights timeline, (6pgs), quotes cites (6pgs) and Bibliography and Source Notes (7pgs) are all very impressive and appreciated.

Interesting book about the white supremacist group that unfortunately is around these days too

you have two choices if you want to judge this sect of whites. it could be that they're just black haters who wants white supremacy just to have slaves OR they could be another ideological organization that have its own goal that is positive just like democracy. just a matter of perspectives. some things may look ridiculous , but it's the most beautiful thing for some.

Fascinating account of the Ku Klux Klan's rise and fall?. Began as a supposed social club, supposedly innocent, the "club" developed into a widespread terrorist organization largely sanctioned by local and state governments if not the federal government. And the Federal government worked to shut it down mainly because it was seen as a form of insurrection of the Southern states, which it also was. The photographs, newspaper clippings and drawings help illustrate how influential and fearsome the Klan was.

Well researched, balanced, and unbiased. A magnified approach and analysis about this ravenous brotherhood that controls America up to this point.

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