

# *A Report on the Ku Klux Klan*

George W. Kirk



---

## **OVERVIEW**

The power of the Ku Klux Klan, the terrorist white supremacy organization that emerged during the Reconstruction years, reached everywhere in the South, bringing about fear and lawlessness. Colonel George W. Kirk, a North Carolina state trooper, described the Klan operations to a Senate investigating committee in 1871.

**GUIDED READING** As you read, consider the following questions:

- Why do you think the Ku Klux Klan emerged during Reconstruction?
- Why were Klan members not punished for their crimes?

---

I have spoken of their having the law and the courts all on their side. The juries were made up of Ku-Klux, and it was impossible for any of the loyal people to get justice before the courts. Not less than fifty or sixty persons have been killed by the Ku-Klux in the State, besides some three or four hundred whippings, and there has never been a man convicted that I have heard of. Out of all those that I arrested, against whom there was as good proof as could possibly be given, enough to convict anybody before twelve honest men, I do not think one has ever been tried. They know very well when they commit these depredations that they will be cleared, and it just makes it that much worse for the loyal people. If they prosecute them for debt or for anything else they fail. Colored men cannot get justice, cannot get their hard earned money. They agree to give them part of the crop, and about the time of the harvest they charge them with something and run them off. They dare not say a word.