

Unit III: Historical Context of Terrorism

Grade Levels: 6-8

Time: 90 minutes

Lesson MIII-7: Surprising Klansmen

Objective:

Students will investigate the question, "Why do some people support/become members of the KKK?"

Key Terms and People:

Ku Klux Klan

Reconstruction

William J. Simmons

Thomas E. Watson

Materials:

- Brief history of the KKK from website article, *Ku Klux Klan*, The Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition. 2008. Encyclopedia.com. 10 Jul. 2009
- <http://www.encyclopedia.com> Photo of Thomas E. Watson- <http://georgiainfo.galileo.usg.edu/statues/watson2.htm>
- Photo of William J. Simmons- http://www.imageenvision.com/stock_photo/details/0003-0704-2922-2446/william_joseph_simmons
- Analysis worksheet for photo- www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/photo_analysis_worksheet.pdf

Activities/Procedures:

Journal activity:

1. Show students the image of Thomas E. Watson's statue. You may wish to enlarge the image so that the writing at the base is clear. The inscription on the base is the following:

EDITOR, LAWYER, HISTORIAN,
AUTHOR, ORATOR, STATESMAN.
AUTHOR OF
RURAL FREE DELIVERY
A CHAMPION OF RIGHT WHO
NEVER FALTERED IN THE CAUSE

1. Have students write about the kind of person they think Thomas Watson was based on the inscription and the fact that this statue is in front of the main entrance to Georgia's state capitol.
2. Next, show students the image of William Joseph Simmons. Have students study the image and try to determine the time period when the photo was taken and the place/circumstances surrounding the photo. Teachers can visit a website for analyzing photos at: www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/photo_analysis_worksheet.pdf
3. When all students have completed their journal writing, have them share their observations.
4. Explain to the students the history behind the statue of Thomas E. Watson and the photo of William J. Simmons.
5. Have students read the article, *Ku Klux Klan*, The Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition. 2008. Encyclopedia.com. July 10, 2009 <http://www.encyclopedia.com>
6. Making Inferences: Based on the activities of the Ku Klux Klan and what you know about two people directly involved in the organization, what did you learn about some members of the KKK that you did not expect to discover?

Evidence of Understanding:

Ask students to share their preconceived ideas about the type of person who might be attracted to join the Ku Klux Klan. List the characteristics. Compare and contrast these characteristics with what you have learned about civic leaders, Simmons and Watson.

Extension Activities: Taking Action and Giving Service:

1. Research the official attire of the Ku Klux Klan.
 - What are some of the specific features and symbols of the attire?
 - What do these features and symbols represent?
 - Why do members frequently cloak their appearance during Ku Klux Klan activities?
 - Why would prominent men like Simmons and Watson choose to participate in clandestine activities?
 - How has the Ku Klux Klan attire come to be perceived by the general public?
2. Obtain the free film, *Shadow of Hate*, from www.teachingtolerance.org. Thomas Watson is depicted in this film. Henry Ford and Father Charles Coughlin are also featured in this video, two prominent members of society who openly shared their anti-Semitic views.
3. Research former Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, David Duke, who was a member of the House of Representatives in Louisiana. He also unsuccessfully ran for higher state and national positions.
 - What was David Duke's background?
 - How did the Ku Klux Klan groom him for public/political office?
 - Throughout his political career, how did the public receive him?
 - How is David Duke similar to and different than Simmons and Watson?

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*The Hon. Thomas Kean, former New Jersey Governor and
Chair, the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*

