Songs of the KKK

** Due to the sensitive nature of the material covered, this lesson should not be used in all classrooms. A variety of song options and activities will be provided so that each instructor can customize this for the classroom. **

The Basics

SUBJECT
American History

TARGETED GRADE LEVELS
11th-12th grade

STANDARDS:
Common Core standards or your state standards.

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The Lesson

Introduction
Songs about and by the Ku Klux Klan provide a unique perspective on the reorganization in the United States following the Civil War and during the immigration debates of the early twentieth century. The use of contrafacta to popular tunes viscerally illustrates both the denigration of the Klan in the post-Civil War era and the patriotic, Christian claims of the Klan during its reincarnation in the early twentieth century.

The music of the early Klan (1865-1877) is limited to a few songs about the KKK written by those who opposed it. The first lesson in this plan includes these two election songs for the Grant campaigns of 1868 and 1872: “KKK,” a new text written to the tune of “Johnny I Hardly Knew Ye”/”When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again” and “Ku Klux Klan,” a new text written to the tune of Dixie. These songs can be integrated into a study on the early years of the Reconstruction and the passage of the 13th-15th Amendments to the Constitution.

During the KKK revival of the early twentieth century, Klansmen began to compose their own music and rewrite texts to popular songs for their own purposes. The second evangelical religious songs from the early twentieth century and the contrafactum texts composed by members of the Klan for their own usage: the popular Christian song “The Old Rugged Cross” and most well-known Klan song, “The Bright Fiery Cross.” These can be integrated into a study of changing immigration policies, anti-Catholic sentiment, tent revivals, and the changing role of religion and ethnicity in American politics.

I have included additional songs from the second wave of the KKK that can be used by teachers to supplement the lesson. While “The Bright Fiery Cross” was the most popular KKK song in the time (existing in several recordings and editions of sheet music), other contrafacta to patriotic songs and hymns could be used in the lessons in their place. Some of these songs engage the
immigration debate, while others illustrate anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic rhetoric.

These lessons are designed to drop at two key points in a chronological American history course. They can be adapted in any high school classroom. Although there are no recordings of the early songs, the tunes are recognizable and many recordings of instrumental versions of the songs exist as tools to jog students’ musical memories.

OBJECTIVES:
Using the Ku Klux Klan as a case study, students will develop a deeper understanding of the conflict over race, ethnicity, immigration, identity, and religion in American history. They will be able to identify the origins of the KKK in the aftermath of the Civil War and its second incarnation in 1915 amid a wave of Christian evangelism and national immigration debates. Through the analysis of primary sources found using online search tools, students will understand the differences between the first and second wave of the KKK in terms of geography, scope, and ideology. Moreover, students will become more comfortable working with different types of primary sources: political documents such as the Emancipation Proclamation, Constitutional amendments, photographs, historical newspapers, songs, election songbooks, quotations from political leaders, et cetera.

RESOURCES/MATERIALS

SONGS:
First Wave of the KKK, 1865-1874.
1. “KKK” (Tune: “When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again”)
   Anti-klan song from a Grant 1868 election songster. The lyrics state that electing Grant puts the “rebs” in their place and leaves the Klan “a-tremblin’ in their shoes.”
2. “Ku Klux Klan” (Tune: Dixie)
   Anti-klan song from Grant’s 1872 election songster. Lyrics discuss black voting in the South and the suppression of voting rights through violence; the Klan will be afraid if Grant is given four more years.

Second Wave of the KKK, 1915-1944.
1. “The Old Rugged Cross”
   Popular Christian hymn with no KKK connection. This hymn was popularized in the evangelistic movement because of its use by Homer Rodeheaver in the Billy Sunday
2. “The Bright Fiery Cross” (Tune: “The Old Rugged Cross”)
   Written just a few years after “The Old Rugged Cross” became popular, this song quickly became the most recorded Klan song. The text speaks of duty and the image of the bright fiery cross, but does not directly engage racism, anti-Catholicism, or immigration policy.

APPENDIX: Additional Songs from the Second Wave of the KKK, 1915-1944.
1. “Mystic City”
   The B side of most early recordings of “The Bright Fiery Cross,” with emphasis on Gentile, Protestant, native-born Americans.
2. “When Will the Pope Come?” (Tune: America/“My Country, ‘Tis of Thee”)
   Virulently anti-Catholic reworking of a popular patriotic tune. Racist lyrics also target Jews and Asians, making it a song to tie to the Asian Exclusion Act of 1882.
3. “Battle Hymn” (Tune: “Battle Hymn of the Republic”)
   Lyrics discuss immigration policy and the power of the White House.
4. “The Church in the Wildwood”
   Another popular hymn with no KKK connection, written in 1857.
5. “The Cross in the Wildwood”
   Using the burning cross as its central image, this also patriotically cites Old Glory in its anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic text.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**


Danny O. Crew, *Ku Klux Klan Sheet Music: An Illustrated Catalogue of Published Music, 1867-2002*, Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2003. A chronological listing of all the printed sheet music about and by the KKK, complete with cover sheets and lyrics. Music not provided, but the tunes are given when the music is not originally composed.


*History Detectives*, PBS.
  A 16-minute program on the origins of the early KKK recording industry, revealing that the Italian producers of the early KKK records kept their label name off the record to distance themselves from the Klan. Five weeks prior to recording the 100% Americans singing Klan songs, the same company recorded Louis Armstrong’s first trumpet solo.

**“KKK”**

**Words:** No author indicated.
**Music:** Air -- When Johnny Comes Marching Home

**Song Background:** This song appeared as an election song on page 26 in *The Grant Songster, for the Campaign of 1868*. In the election of 1868, Republicans Ulysses S. Grant and Schulyer
Colfax ran against Democrats Horatio Seymour and Francis P. Blair, Jr. The songster, a small 4½” x 6½”, fit easily into the palm of the hand. Like many of the election songs in the booklet, an anonymous author penned new words to a familiar tune. The tune used here, “When Johnny Comes Marching Home,” would be familiar as both the tune “When Johnny Comes Marching Home” and “Johnny, I Hardly Knew Ye.”

No recordings available.

Verse 1
Oh! Hearken to the glorious news, hurrah! Hurrah!
The rebels all have got the blues, hurrah! Hurrah!
The people all are turning out,
With drum and banner, song and shout,
And the Ku-klux-klans are
A-tremblin’ in their shoes
A-tremblin’ in their shoes.

Verse 2
Upon the breeze our banner blue, hurrah! Hurrah!
We’ll spread for Grant and Colfax too, hurrah! Hurrah!
For him who lead to vict’ry on,
And Indiana’s favorite son,
And the Ku-klux-klan is
A-shiverin’ in its shoes
A-shiverin’ in its shoes.

Verse 3
The rallying shouts are rising high hurrah! Hurrah!
On every hand we hear the cry, hurrah! Hurrah!
And Schuyler C. they’ll find will be,
As obstinate as General G.,
While the Ku-klux-klan stands
A-tremblin’ in their shoes
A-tremblin’ in their shoes.

Verse 4
They’ll find we’ll Chase ‘em to the wall, hurrah! Hurrah!
And they will See-more in the fall, hurrah! Hurrah!
While onward freemen’s votes will role,
Till the tailor’s clique will hunt its hole,
And the Ku-klux-klan
Will be dying in its shoes
Will be dying in its shoes.

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Focus Questions:
* **Identify.** What is the “banner blue” in verse 2? *Blue marks the Union in the Civil War.* Who is “Schuyler C.” in verse 3? *Schuyler Colfax, running as Grant’s vice presidential candidate.* Who is “Chase” in verse 4? *Salmon P. Chase, then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.* Who is “See-more”? *Democratic presidential candidate Horatio Seymour.* Whose are the “freemen’s votes” in verse 4? *The votes of the newly freed slaves.*

* **Contextualize.** Which amendments had already been passed at the time of this election? *The Thirteenth Amendment (abolishing slavery) was adopted in 1865 and the Fourteenth Amendment (guaranteeing full citizenship to all) was adopted in July of 1868. The Fifteenth Amendment, however, had not yet been adopted.* What is in the Fifteenth Amendment, and how did this impact voting rights in the Reconstruction Era? *The text of the Fourteenth amendment did not explicitly grant voting rights to all races, so not all freedmen were given the opportunity to vote in the 1868 election. The Fifteenth Amendment guarantees voting rights to all races and a mechanism to enforce those rights.*

The Fifteenth Amendment

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

* **Interpret.** What impact does the familiar tune have on the meaning of this song? Does it make you want to vote for Grant? What does the listener learn about the KKK from this song?
“Ku-Klux Song”

Text: No author given.
Music: Air--Dixie

Song Background: This election song was published on page 77 of the 100 pages in the National Republican Grant and Wilson Campaign Song-Book: “We’ll Sing a Song for U.S. Grant”. The anonymous author writes new lyrics to the tune of “Dixie” for Ulysses S. Grant’s reelection campaign of 1872. He and vice presidential candidate Henry Wilson ran against Democratic candidate Horace Greeley and running mate Benjamin G. Brown. The song addresses the enforcement of the newly passed Fifteenth Amendment.

Suggested Recording
Although there are no recordings of this song, an option for the classroom would be to play an instrumental version of the song. An upbeat, military-themed version of the song with snare drums and brass can be found here on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fCnEndNO-ho. This version is from the early film The Birth of A Nation, a pro-KKK film from the early 20th century that mixes historical fact and fiction.

Verse 1
I’ve a song to sing to every Greeley man,
With a few brief words on the Ku-klux Klan,
Far away, far away, far away, in Dixie land.
‘Tis the Ku-klux Klan that parades at night,
With pistol and whip, dealing death and affright,
Far away, far away, far away, in Dixie land.

Chorus
Oh! A lovely land was Dixie --
(In a horn! In a horn!)
But Grant was the man destroyed their Klan,
And gave free speech to Dixie’s land,
Then hurrah! hurrah! hurrah for Grant and Wilson!

Verse 2
When election came around, and the rebels found
That the blacks all took the Republican ground,
Far away, far away, far away, in Dixie’s land.
They conspired in the Klan, with a horrible oath,
To stop them by whipping or murder, or both,
Far away, far away, far away, in Dixie’s land.

Chorus
Oh! A lovely land was Dixie --
Verse 3
Then a reign of terror and blood began,
And the blacks were taught by the Ku-klux Klan,
Far away, far away, far away, in Dixie’s land.
That to save their lives they must keep from the polls,
And swear that Republicans had no souls,
Far away, far away, far away, in Dixie’s land.

Chorus
Oh! A lovely land was Dixie --

Verse 4
But the President said, “You inhuman Turks,
I propose to move immediately on your works,”
Far away, far away, far away, in Dixie’s land.
And the cowardly assassins, after all their rant,
Fell into the gripe of the law, and of Grant,
Far away, far away, far away, in Dixie’s land.

Chorus
Oh! A lovely land was Dixie --

Verse 5
Now the Ku-klux are shivering in deadly fears
Lest Grant should be President four more years,
Far away, far away, far away, in Dixie’s land.
So they vote and pray, like our friends here in town
For soft old Greeley and hard old Brown.
Far away, far away, far away, in Dixie’s land.

Chorus
Oh! A lovely land was Dixie --

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Focus Questions:
* What does this song say the KKK was doing in the United States in 1872?
* What was Grant’s reaction to the KKK? What is the “gripe of the law” in verse 4?
* How does the music of “Dixie” impact your understanding of the song?
* Which kind of voter would this song appeal to?
* Would this song make you want to vote for Grant?
* How do elections today address specific laws or political accomplishments of the candidates?
“The Old Rugged Cross”

Text and Music: George Bennard

Song Background
This hymn was composed by George Bennard in 1913, but became famous because of its use in Christian revival meetings with baseball-player-turned-evangelist Billy Sunday. Music director Homer Rodeheaver frequently programmed this hymn, composed in a sentimental popular style with verses and choruses, and later recorded it.

Suggested Recording

Verse 1
On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,
The emblem of suffering and shame;
And I love that old cross where the dearest and best
For a world of lost sinners was slain.

Chorus
So I’ll cherish the old rugged cross,
Till my trophies at last I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross,
And exchange it someday for a crown.

Verse 2
O that old rugged cross, so despised by the world,
Has a wondrous attraction for me;
For the dear Lamb of God left His glory above
To bear it to dark Calvary.

Chorus
So I’ll cherish the old rugged cross...

Verse 3
In that old rugged cross, stained with blood so divine,
A wondrous beauty I see,
For ’twas on that old cross Jesus suffered and died,
To pardon and sanctify me.

Chorus
So I’ll cherish the old rugged cross...
Verse 4
To the old rugged cross I will ever be true;
Its shame and reproach gladly bear;
Then He’ll call me someday to my home far away,
Where His glory forever I’ll share.

Chorus
So I’ll cherish the old rugged cross...

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Focus Questions:
* When does the recording sound like it was made? Variety of answers from students.
* How can you tell? Scratchy sound, wobbly voices, brassy instruments, etc.
* Where is the “hill far away”? Jerusalem, at the site of the Crucifixion.
* Why is it an “emblem of suffering and shame”? Because Jesus suffered during his death.
* Who is the “dearest and best” in verse 1? Jesus, who “was slain” “for a world of lost sinners.”
* What’s the narrative mode of the song, and how does that impact the song? First-person singular personalizes the song to each person who sings it.
* What’s the form of the song: strophic, or verse-refrain? Verse-refrain, which makes it sound more like a sentimental popular song than a traditional strophic hymn.
* Why would this hymn be in this form? By using popular culture, this song appeals to those outside the church and also makes the revival movement more culturally relevant.

Following a brief lecture on American religious divisions, ask the following questions:
* Who is this hymn written for? Protestants, Catholics, Orthodox Christians? Protestants.
* How do you know that? It's written in English in a popular style. No Catholic or Orthodox worship service would have used anything but the liturgy (i.e. the order of service) in Latin, Greek, or Church Slavonic.
“The Bright Fiery Cross”

Text: Alvia O. DeRee.
Music: George Bennard.

Song Background
Indianapolis Klansman Alvia O. DeRee wrote new words to the hymn “The Old Rugged Cross” just a few years after it became popularized by Homer Rodeheaver in the Billy Sunday revivals of the early twentieth century. DeRee later published a book of poetry in 1928 as well. This song, often referred to as “Our Song”, became the most popular KKK song of its time. Sheet music for the parlor was reprinted throughout the 1920s, and the song was recorded in the KKK recording studios of the era.

Suggested Recording
Old records are available, but no recordings. Brief clips sung by a Klan quartet named The 100% Americans are on the cited History Detectives [8:50-9:00, 14:20-14:30]. Sheet music is available via the Levy Sheet Music Collection. http://levysheetmusic.mse.jhu.edu/catalog/levy:151.084

Verse 1
Over all the U.S.A., the fiery cross we display;
The emblem of Klansmen’s domain,
We’ll be forever true to the Red, White, and Blue,
And Americans always remain.

Chorus
So, I’ll cherish the Bright Fiery Cross,
Till from my duties at last I lay down;
Then burn for me a Bright Fiery Cross,
The day I am laid in the ground.

Verse 2
To the bright fiery cross, I will ever be true;
All blame and reproach gladly bear;
And friendship will show to each Klansman I know;
Its glory forever we’ll share.

Chorus
So, I’ll cherish the Bright Fiery Cross...

Verse 3
Oh, the bright fiery cross, despised by a few,
Has a wondrous attraction for me;
And when I leave here some day, for my home far away,
May a bright Fiery Cross beam for me.
Chorus
So, I’ll cherish the Bright Fiery Cross...

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Focus Questions:
Questions about the sheet music for BEFORE listening:
* What images does this song use? The red, white, and blue. Americans. The fiery cross.
* What else does the cover tell you about the song? The words "Our Song" are prominent.

Questions about the music for AFTER listening:
* Is this song patriotic or nationalistic? What kind of America is portrayed here?
* How were bright fiery crosses used by the KKK in the 1910s and 1920s?
* What does this song say about the values of the Klan? Value being an American, show friendship to all other Klan members, act responsible for your duties.
* Who is the song written for? Written by a Klansman for fellow Klan members.
* How does the tune impact what you think of this song? Students will have a variety of responses.
* Did the composer of “The Old Rugged Cross” have any say in the creation of this song? No.
* How does this new text compare to “The Old Rugged Cross”? What are the similarities? Where there are differences, how can you explain the changes? The text of “The Bright Fiery Cross” is very similar to the “The Old Rugged Cross.” The chorus borrows many words from the original, and the verse texts line up with both as well. It is clear that Alvia DeRee knew “The Bright Fiery Cross” well. When changes are made, the shift is often one from an emphasis on Christendom to the Klansmen’s domain or the United States. Calvary and Jesus’ death on the cross is replaced by a cross “beam[ing] for me.” The changes illustrate how the ideals of universalism and sacrifice in “The Old Rugged Cross” have been twisted into ideals of Americanism to the exclusion of others and self-interest.
Compare and Contrast Handout

“The Old Rugged Cross”
Text: George Bennard
Music: George Bennard

[ORIGINAL VERSE ORDER]

Verse 1
On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,
The emblem of suffering and shame;
And I love that old cross where the dearest and best
For a world of lost sinners was slain.

Chorus
So I’ll cherish the old rugged cross,
Till my trophies at last I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross,
And exchange it someday for a crown.

Verse 2
O that old rugged cross, so despised by the world,
Has a wondrous attraction for me;
For the dear Lamb of God left His glory above
To bear it to dark Calvary.

Verse 3
In that old rugged cross, stained with blood so divine,
A wondrous beauty I see,
For ’twas on that old cross Jesus suffered and died,
To pardon and sanctify me.

Verse 4
To the old rugged cross I will ever be true;
Its shame and reproach gladly bear;
Then He’ll call me someday to my home far away,
Where His glory forever I’ll share.

[VERSE ORDER HAS BEEN CHANGED]

Verse 1
Over all the U.S.A., the fiery cross we display;
The emblem of Klansmen’s domain,
We’ll be forever true to the Red, White, and Blue,
And Americans always remain.

Chorus
So, I’ll cherish the Bright Fiery Cross,
Till from my duties at last I lay down;
Then burn for me a Bright Fiery Cross,
The day I am laid in the ground.

Verse 2
To the bright fiery cross, I will ever be true;
All blame and reproach gladly bear;
And friendship will show to each Klansman I know;
Its glory forever we’ll share.

Verse 3
Oh, the bright fiery cross, despised by a few,
Has a wondrous attraction for me;
And when I leave here some day, for my home far away,
May a bright Fiery Cross beam for me.

Verse 3
In that old rugged cross, stained with blood so divine,
A wondrous beauty I see,
For ’twas on that old cross Jesus suffered and died,
To pardon and sanctify me.
APPENDIX: Additional KKK Songs for Use in the Classroom

Depending on how you or your school incorporate discussions of race, ethnicity, and politics, you may want to tailor the song choice used in the classroom to specific political issues. Alternatively, you may consider an extension exercise using these songs.

“Mystic City”

Words and Music: John M. Nelson and Noah F. Tillery (1882-1943)

Song Background
The song “Mystic City” was one of the most widely distributed songs of the KK in the 1920s. Harry F. Windle first published the sheet music in 1922, and the song was so popular, it was republished multiple times through the decade. Multiple singing groups recorded this tune, often placing it on the B side of recordings of “The Bright Fiery Cross.”

Suggested Recording
https://app.box.com/shared/kt8ds1d327 This quartet called themselves the 100% Americans. The recording uses a quartet and soloist for the choruses and verses, and is accompanied by a small orchestra with brass instruments.

Verse 1
Lived there in the mystic city of the empire that’s unseen
A grand and noble wizard who once had a wondrous dream.
In this dream he saw Old Glory and the cause of liberty
Being supplanted by a people who had come across the sea,
Bringing with them flags and customs belonging to primeval lands
To affix and plant them firmly in this, our native land.

Chorus
Klansmen, Klansmen, of the Ku Klux Klan,
Protestant, gentile, native-born man,
Hooded, knighted, robed and true,
Royal sons of the Red, White, and Blue,
Owing no allegiance we are born free,
To God and Old Glory we bend our knee,
Sublime lineage written in history sands,
Weird, mysterious Ku Klux Klan.
Verse 2
With a sudden start, he wakened, opened wide his seeing eyes,
Crying, “Room for one flag only underneath American skies!”
Then the fiery cross, he lighted and from that symbolic charm
Were united all the Klansmen from cities, towns, and farms,
Bound by bonds of Klansmenship are stronger than bonds of steel
For their country’s flag and heritage, they would die before they yield.

Chorus
Klansmen, Klansmen, of the Ku Klux Klan...

Chorus
Klansmen, Klansmen, of the Ku Klux Klan...

“Battle Hymn”

Words: No author given.
Music: Tune of “The Battle Hymn of the Republic”

Song Background
“The Battle Hymn of the Republic” was incorporated into some KKK songbooks with its original lyrics by Julia Ward Howe, and into other KKK songbooks with newly written lyrics explicitly supporting Klan behavior. One example of the latter is found in a songbook called A-T-L-A-N-T-I-C County for the Klan, published circa 1923. In this book, hymns such as “Christ Arose” and “How Firm a Foundation” are found alongside KKK parodies “The Bright Fiery Cross” and “Battle Hymn.”

No recordings available.

Verse 1
There’s a mighty organization
Of an empire that’s unseen;
Sweeping over all the nation
Neath the fiery cross’ beam.
With a pure and noble purpose
They are bound to make men free
If they go marching on.
Chorus
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
While the Klan goes marching on.

Verse 2
They have sounded forth a trumpet
With a blast that’s loud and long;
Calling Protestants together
Who have hearts brave and strong.
Oh! The swift dear souls to answer.
Join this great and happy throng,
As they go marching on.

Chorus
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah...

Verse 3
We must watch our immigration
We must watch our White House door,
We must watch our public school house
As we never did before.
We must keep our church doors open;
And the cross of Christ adore,
And with God go marching on.

“When Will the Pope Come?”

Words: No author given.
Music: Tune of America (“My Country, ‘Tis of Thee”)

Song Background
The KKK songbook A Few 100% Selections (To the Good Old Tunes We all Know) features newly written lyrics to popular tunes such as “This is Like Heaven to Me,” “Yankee Doodle,” “The Battle Cry of Freedom,” and “Mary Had a Little Lamb.” It was published circa 1924 in Vincennes, Indiana, and like many KKK songbooks, indicates no authors of the lyrics contained therein. (Other KKK songbooks list the author as “A. Klansman.”) This selection is to the tune of “America,” a popular patriotic song at the time.
1. They say the Pope will come
   To make our land his home
   But when that day?
   When cats quit catching mice
   And a Chinaman won’t eat rice
   And chickens have no lice
   Then he will come.

2. When bristles grow on geese
   And rocks all turn to grease
   Then he will come.
   When a Ford will make no noise
   And Irish raise no boys
   Our battleships are all toys
   Then he will come.

3. When car wheels are made of glass
   And cows quit eating grass
   The Pope will Come.
   When dogs no more will bark
   And sing just like the lark
   And Baboons play the harp,
   The Pope will Come.

4. When mules all cease to kick
   And sheep the slat won’t lick
   Then he will come
   When bullfrogs cease to leap
   And owls at night will sleep
   And snails no longer creep
   Then he will come.

5. When donkeys cease to bray
   And catfish live on hay
   Then he will come.
   When cash won’t tempt the Jew
   And cows no cud will chew
   And woodpeckers heads turn blue
   The Pope will come.
6. When snakes upright will walk
   And women cease to talk
   Then he will come.
   When the Negroes all turn white
   And the sun will give no light
   When the bulldogs will not fight
   Then he will come.

7. When all men cease to think
   And polecats do not stink,
   The Pope will come.
   When we no more mine lead
   And Klansmen all are dead
   And the seas with their blood is red
   The Pope will come.

“The Church in the Wildwood”

Words and Music: William S. Pitts

Song Background
A Wisconsin schoolteacher and singing school director wrote the hymn “The Church in the Wildwood” after first seeing a church being built in the small town of Bradford, Iowa in 1857. Pitts took the tune to a Chicago publisher after the completion of the building roughly a decade later, but it was not until the gospel singer Charles Alexander used the song on the evangelist circuit of the 1890s that it came to national attention.

Suggested Recording
This popular hymn has been recorded

Verse 1
There’s a church in the valley by the wildwood,
No lovelier spot in the dale;
No place is so dear to my childhood,
As the little brown church in the vale.

Chorus
Come to the church in the wildwood,
Oh, come to the church in the dale,
No spot is so dear to my childhood,
As the little brown church in the vale.
Verse 2
How sweet on a clear, Sabbath morning,
To list to the clear ringing bell;
Its tones so sweetly are calling,
Oh, come to the church in the vale.

Chorus
Come to the church in the wildwood…

Verse 3
There, close by the church in the valley,
Lies one that I loved so well;
She sleeps, sweetly sleeps, ’neath the willow,
Disturb not her rest in the vale.

Chorus
Come to the church in the wildwood…

Verse 4
There, close by the side of that loved one,
To trees where the wild flowers bloom,
When the farewell hymn shall be chanted
I shall rest by her side in the tomb.

Chorus
Come to the church in the wildwood…

Verse 5
From the church in the valley by the wildwood,
When day fades away into night,
I would fain from this spot of my childhood
Wing my way to the mansions of light.

Chorus
Come to the church in the wildwood…
“The Cross in the Wildwood”

Words: No author given.
Music: William S. Pitts

Song Background
This KKK version of “The Church in the Wildwood” was also included in the songbook A-T-L-A-N-T-I-C County for the Klan. It was republished in no less than 9 separate versions over the following decade, sometimes with two verses and sometimes with three. This version comes from the songbook There Comes a Call to Old Virginia, a mimeographed collection for local Klanswomen that dates from circa 1924.

No recordings available.

Verse 1
There’s a cross that is burning in the wildwood,
Its beauty reflects on the skies.
As its base you will find thousands kneeling,
Praying that its meaning never dies.

Chorus
Oh! Come! Come! Come! Come!
Come! to the cross in the wildwood,
And learn of its meaning so true;
You will carry away in your bosom
The great beauty that’s pure as the dew.

Verse 2
For the cross that is burning in the wildwood,
Each Klansman has sworn to be true;
He has pledged to uphold Old Glory
Not to down the Catholic and the Jew.

Chorus
Oh! Come! Come! Come! Come!

Verse 3
By the cross that is burning in the wildwood,
Each Klansman Will guard brave and true;
They will carry their Emblem to victory,
For the dear old Red, White, and Blue.

Chorus
Oh! Come! Come! Come! Come!
PROCEDURE:


This lesson picks up immediately following the assassination of Abraham Lincoln and the military events leading through the end of the Civil War. In order to follow the issues of race and politics in the Reconstruction Era, this begins with the Emancipation Proclamation, which the students were introduced to at an earlier date. The next lesson in chronological sequence in this class would pick up with the presidential election of 1876 and the Compromise of 1877.

Take anything from this that is useful in your classroom, and feel free to incorporate activities into your regularly planned lessons. This is designed for a two-hour class period, but can be broken down into smaller sections as need be.

0. Read/Write
Distribute a copy of the Emancipation Proclamation to students at the end of the previous period. For work at home, they will read the document. They will summarize the text in one typed paragraph and provide two questions for class discussion on a sheet to be handed in at the start of class. (Go to the National Archives website for an image and transcript of the Emancipation Proclamation. http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured_documents/emancipation_proclamation/)

1. Discuss
Open the class with a guided discussion of the Emancipation Proclamation using their questions. These will likely include things like the following: Who was it for? What did it specify? When was it written? What kind of document was it? What were its limitations? What were its strengths? Did the Emancipation Proclamation do enough? (Supplement with questions of your own if need be.)

2. Read
Display the 13th Amendment on the board and ask each student to read quietly.

Section 1. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

Section 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

3. Discuss
How is this different from the Emancipation Proclamation? Who is included?

4. Lecture
Present the timeline of events in a classroom lecture.

1865 Ideological differences on Reconstruction: moderates Lincoln and Johnson versus the Radical Republicans of Congress
Creation of the Freedmen’s Bureau for one year
Passage and implementation of the 13th Amendment
Assassination of Lincoln, Ascension of Johnson
1866  Election places Congress in the hands of the Radical Republicans  
Radical Republicans renew Freedmen’s Bureau after Johnson veto  
Increasingly restrictive Black Codes passed by Southern states  

1867  Passage of the Reconstruction Acts  
Creation of 5 military districts in the South  

1868  Impeachment of Andrew Jackson  
Impeachment trial under Supreme Court Justice Chase  
Passage and implementation of the 14th Amendment  
Election of 1868: Grant vs. Seymour

5. Read  Display the 14th Amendment on the board and ask each student to read quietly. This text is notably longer than either the 13th or 15th Amendments.

Section 1. All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

Section 2. Representatives shall be apportioned among the several States according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each State, excluding Indians not taxed. But when the right to vote at any election for the choice of electors for President and Vice President of the United States, Representatives in Congress, the Executive and Judicial officers of a State, or the members of the Legislature thereof, is denied to any of the male inhabitants of such State, being twenty-one years of age, and citizens of the United States, or in any way abridged, except for participation in rebellion, or other crime, the basis of representation therein shall be reduced in the proportion which the number of such male citizens shall bear to the whole number of male citizens twenty-one years of age in such State.

Section 3. No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may, by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability.

Section 4. The validity of the public debt of the United States, authorized by law, including debts incurred for payment of pensions and bounties for services in suppressing insurrection or rebellion, shall not be questioned. But neither the United States nor any State shall assume or pay any debt or obligation incurred in aid of insurrection or rebellion against the United States, or any claim for the loss
or emancipation of any slave; but all such debts, obligations and claims shall be held illegal and void.

Section 5. The Congress shall have power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

6. Discuss How does this build on the 13th Amendment? Why is this necessary?

7. Song Song activity: “KKK”
Distribute a copy of the lyrics to each student. Play instrumental version of the song OR encourage the students to sing the song together on a neutral syllable (“Dum da dum”) while they read through the lyrics. One strategy to getting the students to sing the song together is to first have them sing through the melody on a neutral syllable, then ask them all to sing the lyrics together. There will be some stumbling over the lyrics, but most will make it through and follow the teacher’s lead. Break into small groups and distribute the political cartoon of the 1868 election. Give students time to fill out organizers, then elect one person from each group to present to the class.

8. Show Pull up an election songster for Grant, found online at http://archive.org/details/grantsongster01newy.

9. Discuss How were elections different in an era before mass media? What tools did political campaigns use to get their message across? How is the election of 1868 different from an election today?

10. Lecture Present the timeline of events in a classroom lecture.
    1869 Grant takes office, reinstates Radical Edwin Stanton as Secretary of War
    15th Amendment proposed
    US readmits Virginia, Mississippi, and Texas after voting rights changes
    1870 Force Acts begin: Enforcement Act of 1870

11. Read Display the 15th Amendment on the board and ask each student to read quietly.

    Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

    Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

12. Discuss How does this build on the previous Reconstruction amendments?

13. Lecture Present the timeline of events in a classroom lecture.
    1871 Force Acts Continue: Enforcement Act of 1871, Ku Klux Klan Act (serves to enforce the 14th Amendment)
1872 Freedmen’s Bureau abolished
Election of 1872: Grant vs. Greeley

14. Song Song activity: “Ku-Klux Song”
Distribute a copy of the lyrics to each student. Play instrumental version of “Dixie” without telling the students. Ask them to think through the lyrics as the melody plays on in the background, giving them signposts as you go: “Verse 1, Verse 2,” et cetera. Break up into small groups and discuss the focus questions.

15. Research Each student will use the website Chronicling America (http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/) to search for primary source accounts of the KKK in the Reconstruction Era. Setting time boundaries for the years 1865-1875, students will find two articles that discuss the KKK, one from a Northern state and one from a Southern state. They will present their articles with a brief summary at the start of the next class period.

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Part II: Changing Ideologies in the 1910s and 1920s: Americanism and Foreignness, Patriotism and Nationalism, Religion and Discrimination

*This lesson is centered on the changing politics around race, religion, and ethnicity in the early 20th century. It picks up in our chronological history after the military involvement in World War I and the introduction of social issues such as Prohibition and the women's suffrage movement.*

0. Research/Write Each student will use the website Chronicling America to search for primary source accounts of Billy Sunday and Homer Rodeheaver. The students will (a) cite a minimum of 5 separate sources with a range of views in both footnote and bibliographic style, and (b) use quoted evidence from each of their sources to answer the following question: What was Billy Sunday's goal in preaching, and how did America respond to his message? There is no length requirement. They will hand in their essays following the discussion at the beginning of class.

1. Discuss Open the class with a guided discussion through their written essays. First, ask for Billy Sunday's words. Did any students find his published sermons? Did they cite quotes from the man himself? Are there any accounts from Homer Rodeheaver? Encourage students to share the evidence they used in their essays. Turn to reception, asking students how others in America responded to Sunday and Rodeheaver. Who supported the Sunday mission? Who opposed it? Why? Accept the written essays from students after the discussion.

2. Song Song activity: "The Old Rugged Cross"
Do not distribute a copy of the lyrics to this song, but play the historical recording of Homer Rodeheaver and Mrs. William Asher singing the hymn for students to listen to. After the first hearing, ask them to write down the takeaway message from the song in thirty seconds or less. Play the song a second time, asking the students to summarize the message of the hymn, verse-by-verse. Guide them through the focus questions for a class discussion.

3. Lecture

Introduce the issue of ethnicity and religion in America, walking students through the arrival of Puritans and waves of immigration by country. Taking care to address the issue sensitively and avoid generalizations (i.e. "All Italian-Americans in the 19th c. were Catholic), discuss the connection between country of origin and religion in the 19th and early 20th century: Protestantism, Catholicism, Judaism, Orthodoxy, Buddhism, Confucianism, atheism, etc. Next introduce the issue of language and religion in America and the idea of the church as an institution that preserves language and cultural identity, emphasizing the use of English or other European languages (especially German in Lutheran churches) in Protestant churches, the use of Latin in Catholic churches (until Vatican II in the 1960s), the use of Greek or Church Slavonic in Orthodox churches, and the use of Hebrew in synagogues. Using excerpts from Will Herberg's classic Protestant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology, introduce students to America as a "triple melting pot" wherein specific national boundaries fell away, leaving behind divisions of religion that could not be crossed.

4. Discuss

Does the "triple melting pot" work? Does it include everyone in the United States in the 1910s and 1920s? Who does it miss out on, if anyone? Does it still apply to the United States today?

5. Discuss

Return to "The Old Rugged Cross" for the final focus questions. Who is "The Old Rugged Cross" for -- Protestants, Catholics, Jews?

6. Lecture

Present the history of US immigration laws in a classroom lecture. Helpful timelines to organize this can be found at Digital History Online. (http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/historyonline/immigration_chron.cfm)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1790</td>
<td>Naturalization Act: requires 2 years of residency in the US before applying for citizenship for &quot;free white persons&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1795</td>
<td>Naturalization Act: requires 5 years of residency prior to citizenship application AND applicant must give notice 3 years prior to application for &quot;free white persons&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1798</td>
<td>Naturalization Act: requires 14 years of residency and notice 5 years prior to application for citizenship for &quot;free white persons&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>Page Act: ambiguous laws restricting contract workers from Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>Chinese Exclusion Act: prohibited immigration of Chinese, provided deportation of illegals, encouraged first large wave of illegal immigration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>Immigration Act: first comprehensive set of immigration laws, creation of Immigration Bureau</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1921 Emergency Quota Act: limited immigration to 3% by country of origin based on the 1910 census in order to keep the ethnic makeup the same
1924 Immigration Act: increasingly restrictive law that shifted the quota to 2% by country of origin of the 1890 census
1952 Immigration and Nationality Act: opens citizenship to skilled workers
1965 National origin quotas are finally removed, visa system created
**** Instruct students that you will pick up the immigration issue again in the 1960s. It is included here to remind them that the decisions made in this era (1920s) stood unchecked for roughly four decades.

7. Read Display the following quotation from Theodore Roosevelt, given at a speech to a primarily Irish Catholic audience of members of the Knights of Columbus at Carnegie Hall on Columbus Day 1915. Ask a student to read it aloud.

"There is no room in this country for hyphenated Americanism. When I refer to hyphenated Americans, I do not refer to naturalized Americans. Some of the very best Americans I have ever known were naturalized Americans, Americans born abroad. But a hyphenated American is not an American at all … The one absolutely certain way of bringing this nation to ruin, of preventing all possibility of its continuing to be a nation at all, would be to permit it to become a tangle of squabbling nationalities, an intricate knot of German-Americans, Irish-Americans, English-Americans, French-Americans, Scandinavian-Americans or Italian-Americans, each preserving its separate nationality, each at heart feeling more sympathy with Europeans of that nationality, than with the other citizens of the American Republic … There is no such thing as a hyphenated American who is a good American. The only man who is a good American is the man who is an American and nothing else."

8. Discuss Return to "The Old Rugged Cross" for the final focus questions. Who is "The Old Rugged Cross" for -- Anglo-Saxons, German-Americans, "Americans"?


10. Lecture Introduce the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1910s, and track the number of changes to this revised KKK: an emphasis on patriotism, "100% Americanism," a political bid for power (as seen in candidates such as Harry S. Truman and Robert Byrd with KKK affiliations), anti-Catholic sentiment, the image of the burning cross, and more. The first KKK was exclusively located in the Democratic party and the American South, while the second KKK courted Republicans and Democrats, and geographically expanded through the South and the Midwest, with a large population in Indiana. At its height in the mid-1920s, there were an estimated 4-6 million members.
11. **Show**  
Consider showing a brief clip or a film still of a burning cross from the successful and popular early film *The Birth of a Nation* to demonstrate the origins of the iconic emblem of KKK intimidation and destruction.

12. **Song**  
Song Activity: "The Bright Fiery Cross"  
Display an image of the sheet music for "The Bright Fiery Cross." Begin discussing the focus questions for before listening to the music. Next choose one of two tactics: Either remind them of the melody of "The Old Rugged Cross" by playing them an excerpt of the Homer Rodeheaver recording, or have the class hum or sing through the verse and chorus on a neutral syllable. Display the sheet music for "The Bright Fiery Cross" and have the students read through the lyrics.  

*Note: I do not believe it is appropriate for any class to sing these lyrics aloud. Asking students to embody the words themselves in song is quite different from reading the words from this primary source. Please be sensitive to your students throughout this activity. Be prepared to discuss the importance in understanding why acts and ideologies of hate exist in order to make different choices and prevent the past from repeating itself.*

Asking the students to work quietly on their own, distribute a copy of the Compare and Contrast Handout above to each student. Give them a few minutes in silence to read over both texts, and ask them to use highlighters or colored pencils. First, identify places where the texts are exactly the same and mark them in the first color. For example, they can highlight "So I'll cherish" and "cross" in this color. Secondly, identify key changes made to the KKK text, highlighting the different words in the second color. "The Bright Fiery" and "the old rugged" can be highlighted in the second color. When students have completed this exercise, continue with the focus questions.

13. **Write**  
Distribute the handout "The Twenties in Contemporary Commentary: The Ku Klux Klan“ from the National Humanities Center's America in Class.  
(http://americainclass.org/sources/becomingmodern/divisions/text1/colcommentaryklan.pdf) Using the primary sources in the handout, students will write a 2-page essay on the different portrayals of the Klan in the pro- and anti-Klan publications and cartoons, in the general circulation and African-American publications. How does point of view shape the way you write history? This will be due at the start of the next class period.

**CLOSURE:**  
Reserve 17 minutes at the end of the final class period for the *History Detectives* episode about "The Bright Fiery Cross."

If you can only reserve 10 minutes of class time, use the first two minutes of the episode, in which the host sensitively discusses the importance of talking about the KKK today, and cut to 8:20 to watch the final 8 minutes of the episode.
In those final 8 minutes, the students will hear an early recording of "The Bright Fiery Cross," watch a discussion of the Protestant origins of the hymn, and learn how the recording of the song turns the KKK connection on its head: not only was the record produced by Italian-Americans (not KKK approved), but the same producers made the first recording of legendary artist Louis Armstrong playing solo trumpet. The host of the show sums it up at the end of the episode: "So these songs really represent the contradiction of race in America. That you would have the same engineer producing "The Bright Fiery Cross" for the purposes of the Klan also producing this beautiful music which becomes historic and groundbreaking. We can only speculate on [the producer's] motivation. The contradictions between his political beliefs and his work illustrate the complex racial environment of the time." This allows the class to end on a positive note, seeing both the fall of the Klan from their heights of power and the rise of something beautiful in Louis Armstrong's jazz.

EVALUATION:
Assessment in this unit includes research assignments, writing assignments, and brief presentations. All are included in the procedures listed above.

REFLECTION:
This project has been challenging and fruitful. Since the topics of discrimination and hate crimes are an important and controversial part of American history, I encourage all teachers to talk to their principals and parents about the content of the lesson plan and the incorporation of the song "The Bright Fiery Cross" into the classroom.

I believe the best approach to this material is to provide students with both primary sources to interrogate and an expansive historical framework within which to understand and interpret them. Hearing people explain their beliefs in their own words (and in their own songs) is the most powerful way to understand why they make the choices they are making.

From a pedagogical standpoint, the most challenging part of incorporating this music into the classroom is the lack of recordings. However, all the music in this lesson is new lyrics to familiar tunes. Depending on how frequently you use music or how musically oriented your students happen to be, you have a few different choices to tackle this problem. The key is familiarizing students with the melodies before giving them the texts. If they are familiar with the tunes, they will be able to follow along with the newly composed texts. Your options for familiarizing students with the melodies in the classroom include (1) playing a recording of the original song, (2) playing a recording of an instrumental version of the original song, (3) leading the class in singing the original song, and (4) leading the class in humming the original song.