

## The Second Coming of the Invisible Empire: The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s

*William Rawlings*

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**William Rawlings : The Second Coming of the Invisible Empire: The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Second Coming of the Invisible Empire: The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s:

7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Great, great read! You may be shocked at what you find! By Dr.

Frank M. Howell Everyone interested in the history of the South, Indiana, and their neck of the woods should read this book. Be ready for what you may find. It will surprise you, no doubt. The just-published work by Dr. William Rawlings on the 2nd Coming of the Ku Klux Klan was one I read over a week's time. The more I read, the more I read. One of those books. Even though I'm a published scholar on the demography and culture of the South, I learned a great deal by this meticulously researched work. Books like this come in two general types: very well researched and very well written. They usually do not come with both characteristics. This one does. This porridge is "just right," as Goldilocks would have said. While the Klan's motivational rhetoric was based upon the maintenance of the belief in white supremacy, was this a true-believer social movement? Dr. Rawlings' book shows that the 2nd Wave was not. Oh no. Really not. A soap opera set to scholarly words, this narrative draws upon careful historical sources, even personal interviews with the author in a few instances, to show that the commonplace vices surrounding greed were the underlying reasons that the Klan of Nathan Bedford Forrest was resuscitated from its earlier burial. Far from being a figment of the Lost Cause per se, it was economic opportunism run wild. And in many forms. Was the 2nd Wave of the KKK active in your hometown outside of the Moonlight, Magnolias, and Mosquitoes of the Deep South? You'd better check Dr. Rawlings's book. You may be surprised as to what you find out. While I was not surprised about my home county, which I share with the author of this book although I've never had the pleasure of meeting him in person, you Hoosiers may be interested to know that basketball isn't the only thing that Indiana was famous for during the last century. Me? My dear grandmother's brother was known in the family as a KKK member. He was mean enough to literally cut the tail off of a cow he milked when said cow swatted his old, sweat-stained fedora off his bald head too many times. If you ever owned a Barlow pocket knife, you know that it will do the job if you have the motivation to do so as Mr. Major did. Cost a tidy sum with the veterinarian but it maintained his dignity sullied by the cow. But all that went with the times in the Deep South. Indiana, it did not, from the current historical lens on hate groups in America. The Klan, you see, went far beyond the Mason-Dixon Line! By the way, the 2nd Wave of the KKK didn't stop at our nation's borders but you'll have to read the book on those details. (I guess you'd have to say we weren't sending our best to Mexico in this sense.) After running across William Rawlings' previous book, *Killing on Ring Jaw Bluff*, set in Washington County GA along the Oconee River where white gold known as kaolin chalk came out of the ground in plentiful depth, this book on the 2nd Coming places him as one of my most favored writers on the South. Right up there with my long-time friend, John Shelton Reed (Professor Emeritus, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill). I won't miss another book of Dr. Rawlings and will now check into his previous works. In closing, I was also struck by the commonalities that the politics of social movements in the 1920s have with today's Presidential contest. Trumpism, if that's the term, parallels so many of the elements of the Klan as a social movement back then. Dog whistling to the Presidency Mr. Trump may indeed do but if you want a roadmap as to how it unfolds, read this book! Frank M. Howell, Ph.D. Professor Emeritus of Sociology Mississippi State University 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A detailed history of one of the low points in Southern history told by an author who knows his subject. By Customer William Rawlings is an author who feels what he writes. He is uniquely qualified in that he lives in the South and has experienced what he writes about having sat at the knees of those who lived the events he writes about. If you want to learn about the KKK, its culture, and the reasons it thrived, then read on....for the misguided who thinks the mystery, ritualistic symbolism, and claims of bearing redemption for the Old South this will be an eye opener, for the history buff this will be an aperitif on the plate of Southern history. An excellent book by an outstanding author whose family represents the best of the old South. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Skilled, but lesser known writer By Stu Though not nationally known..... Mr. Rawlings has a gift for writing, especially the intricate world of the historical south.

Fifty years after the end of the Civil War, William Joseph Simmons, a failed Methodist minister, formed a fraternal order that he called The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. Organized primarily a money-making scheme, it shared little but its name with the Ku Klux Klan of the Reconstruction Era. With its avowed creed of "One Hundred Percent Americanism," support of Protestant Christian values, white supremacy, and the rejection of all things foreign, this new Klan became, for a brief period of time in the mid-1920s, one of America's most powerful social and political organizations. Shamelessly adopting the symbols of the hooded robe and burning cross from the movie, *The Birth of a Nation*, and exploiting the sense that America was headed in the wrong direction, the order spread rapidly to every state in the nation. While often using intimidation and violence against its foes, the Klan was responsible for the election of supportive politicians at all levels of government. Following a disastrous attempt to influence the presidential election of 1924, and with increasing public awareness of the Klan's corrupt and violent nature, the order faltered, becoming a mere wisp of its former self by 1930. This original and meticulously researched history of America's second Ku Klux Klan presents many new and fascinating insights into this unique and important episode in American History.

About the Author William Rawlings, a physician and sixth-generation resident of Washington County, Georgia, was educated at Emory, Tulane, and Johns Hopkins Universities. He is the author of a number of books, as well as both

popular and scholarly articles on a wide range of subjects.