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## **Catholics and the Meredith March in Mississippi**

*by Mark Newman*

On June 16, 1966, civil rights activist Stokely Carmichael, chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), told a rally after his release from jail in Greenwood, Mississippi: “This is the twenty-seventh time I have been arrested. I ain’t going to jail no more. We been saying freedom for six years and we ain’t got nothin’. What we get to start saying now is Black Power!” Spoken to participants in the Meredith Mississippi Freedom March (sometimes called James Meredith’s March Against Fear), Carmichael’s oft-repeated call ensured the march’s lasting association with Black Power, which many white journalists, who seized on Carmichael’s more sensational comments about burning down Mississippi courthouses rather than his emphasis on black voter registration and collective political mobilization, typically associated with anti-white racism and violence. Black Power and the Meredith March seemed in stark contrast to the Selma, Alabama, protests of a year earlier for voting rights that had helped achieve the Voting Rights Act. In response to an appeal from Martin Luther King Jr., hundreds of mostly white clergy and laity of all faiths, including more than nine hundred Catholics, had gone to Selma in 1965, mostly from the North, and march organizers had placed some of the fifty-six nuns who participated conspicuously toward or in the front ranks of the protesters. By contrast, far fewer whites participated in the Meredith March, and the march organizers did not appeal to people

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of conscience to converge on Mississippi in a public display of sympathy and support until its final day.<sup>1</sup>

Catholics, however, played a supporting role throughout the Meredith March. Their contribution received brief or, more usually, no acknowledgement from contemporary reporters, or later historians of Catholicism, despite a growing body of work (especially since the millennium) about Catholic support for, and participation in, efforts to achieve racial equality. Historians of Catholicism and civil rights have concentrated on the North, Selma, and a few other southern locales, including studies by Danny Collum and Paul T. Murray on Natchez and Greenwood, Mississippi, respectively. Their focal point has often been the contributions of exceptional Catholic individuals, mostly clergy but also some laity, acting, or exercising leadership, on their own initiative. By focusing on the Meredith March, this article provides further evidence that Catholic participation in the southern civil rights movement continued beyond Selma and what historian Peniel E. Joseph calls the “heroic period” of the movement that ended in 1965. It also demonstrates that Catholic involvement in the Mississippi civil rights struggle was greater and more connected than historians have recognized, and it explores the complex response of the Catholic Church to that struggle. The Diocese of Natchez did not endorse the march, but it did not try to stop religious priests (members of religious orders which operated some churches, missions, and charitable institutions in the state) from assisting the march. They, like the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice (NCCIJ), played a supporting role, along with members of the Memphis and Little Rock Catholic interracial councils and a few other priests from outside Mississippi. Some diocesan priests and nuns also attended the march’s final rally in Jackson, along with some Catholic clergy and a nun from

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<sup>1</sup> Aram Goudsouzian, *Down to the Crossroads: Civil Rights, Black Power, and the Meredith March Against Fear* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014), 94-97, 133-34, 142-44 (quotation on pp. 142-43), 147, 150-51, 155-57, 162, 182-3; John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 396-7; *New York Times*, March 21, 1965, June 17, 18, 1966; Amy L. Koehlinger, *The New Nuns: Racial Justice and Religious Reform in the 1960s* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 2007), 53; “Nuns ‘inspire’ Selma marchers,” *Texas Catholic Herald*, March 18, 1965; Cornelia F. Sexuauer, “A Well-Behaved Woman Who Made History: Sister Mary Antona’s Journey to Selma,” *American Catholic Studies* 115 (Winter 2004): 50; Carmichael had also told the crowd in Greenwood, “Every courthouse in Mississippi ought to be burned down to get rid of the dirt.” *New York Times*, June 17, 1966.

outside the state.<sup>2</sup>

As it had done earlier in Selma, the NCCIJ took the major responsibility for organizing and coordinating Catholic involvement in the Meredith March. Operating from its headquarters in Chicago, the NCCIJ, an organization of Catholic clergy and laity established in 1960 with the approval of the American Catholic hierarchy, was committed to desegregation and racial equality. Although not an official Church agency, the conference received support from many bishops, including some in the South. At their annual meeting just two years earlier, the American Catholic bishops had condemned racial discrimination and segregation and called for their gradual elimination. However, the statement issued on their behalf by the administrative board of the National Catholic Welfare Conference did not discuss segregation in Catholic schools, churches, and other institutions, and it was not binding on ordinaries, that is, bishops who exercised authority over a diocese and were virtually autonomous. To further the achievement of its goals, the NCCIJ encouraged the formation

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<sup>2</sup> David W. Southern, *John LaFarge and the Limits of Catholic Interracialism, 1911-1963* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996); John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Michael V. Namorato, *The Catholic Church in Mississippi, 1911-1984* (Westport, Conn., and London: Greenwood Press, 1998); Gregory Nelson Hite, "The Hottest Places in Hell: The Catholic Church and Civil Rights in Selma, Alabama 1937-1965" (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 2002); R. Bentley Anderson, *Black, White and Catholic: New Orleans Interracialism, 1947-1956* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2005); Mark Newman, "The Catholic Church in Mississippi and Desegregation, 1963-1973," *Journal of Mississippi History* 67 (Winter 2005): 331-55; Cyprian Davis, O.S.B., "Black Catholics in the Civil Rights Movement in the Southern United States: A.P. Tureaud, Thomas Wyatt Turner, and Earl Johnson," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 24 (Fall 2006): 69-81; Cecilia A. Moore, "'To Serve Through Compelling Love': The Society of Christ Our King and the Civil Rights Movement in Danville, Virginia, 1963," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 24 (Fall 2006): 83-103; Koehlinger, *New Nuns*; Andrew S. Moore, *The South's Tolerable Alien: Roman Catholics in Alabama and Georgia, 1945-1970* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007); Justin D. Poché "Religion, Race and Rights in Catholic Louisiana, 1938-1970" (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 2007); Katrina M. Sanders, "Black Catholic Clergy and the Struggle for Civil Rights: Winds of Change," in *Uncommon Faithfulness: The Black Catholic Experience*, eds. M. Shawn Copeland, LaReine-Marie Mosely and Albert J. Raboteau (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2009), 78-93; Danny Duncan Collum, *Black and Catholic in the Jim Crow South: The Stuff that Makes Community* (New York and Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 2006); Paul T. Murray, "Father Nathaniel and the Greenwood Movement," *Journal of Mississippi History* 72 (Fall 2010): 277-311; Paul T. Murray, "'The Most Righteous White Man in Selma': Father Maurice Ouellet and the Struggle for Voting Rights," *Alabama Review* 68 (January 2015): 31-73; Dittmer, *Local People*, 389-407; Goudsouzian, *Down to the Crossroads*, 96; memorandum, Jim McGuire to Matt [Ahmann], "Southern Field Service and the Meredith Freedom March," June 29, 1966, 1-8, folder 11, box 8, series 34, National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice Records, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (hereinafter cited as NCCIJR); Peniel E. Joseph, "Reinterpreting the Black Power Movement," *OAH Magazine of History* 22 (July 2008): 5 (quotation).



of Catholic interracial councils in dioceses across the country. By 1965, there were 112 councils, twenty-four of them in the South. By supporting the Meredith March in Mississippi, the NCCIJ was helping to fulfil the direction for the Church outlined by the Second Vatican Council, held in Rome between 1962 and 1965, of alerting Catholics “to the demands of social justice” and engaging with the world’s problems.<sup>3</sup>

In 1961, the NCCIJ’s Southern Field Service (SFS) was established in New Orleans, and like the NCCIJ, the SFS preceded the council but took inspiration from it. The SFS sought to persuade Catholic bishops in the South and Southwest to overturn racial discrimination and segregation in Catholic churches, schools, hospitals, and other Catholic institutions that were prevalent in many dioceses, especially, but not exclusively, in the Deep South. The SFS fostered the growth of Catholic interracial councils, which could be established only with the consent of the local bishop, and it urged councils to pressure their prelates to work for racial equality in both Church and secular society. A few southern bishops, such as Archbishop Thomas J. Toolen of Mobile, a diocese that encompassed Alabama and the Florida panhandle, refused to work with the SFS, but several others, among them Archbishop Robert. E. Lucey of San Antonio, were supportive.<sup>4</sup>

The NCCIJ and SFS took inspiration from rejections of racism and racial discrimination by the Vatican and the American Catholic hierarchy. The Vatican had accepted the establishment of separate black Catholic institutions in the South in the late nineteenth century and in the first half of the twentieth century by ordinaries and religious orders, operating in dioceses with the permission of their bishops, as a practical means of evangelizing and serving African Americans within a segregated society. However, responding to Nazi and Fascist racism, Pope Pius X condemned racism in the 1930s, and the Vatican began appointing ordinaries in the United States vetted to ensure their opposition to racism and segregation. His successor Pope Pius XII issued an encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi*

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<sup>3</sup> National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice, “A proposal to the Commission for the Catholic Missions Among the Colored People and the Indians,” n.d., folder 719.78, Archives of the Diocese of Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina; *New York Times*, March 20, 21, 1965; “Discrimination and the Christian Conscience,” folder 3, box 2, series 21, NCCIJR; John T. McGreevy, “Racial Justice and the People of God: The Second Vatican Council, the Civil Rights Movement, and American Catholics,” *Religion and American Culture* 4 (Summer 1994): 223 (quotation), 234.

<sup>4</sup> “Summary Proposal for Maintaining Southern Field Service Project,” September 1962, folder 7, box 4, series 30; Henry Cabirac, Jr. to James Devitt, May 9, 1962, folder 18, box 3; “Southern Field Service Report, November, 1963 through September, 1964,” 1-12, folder 8, box 4, series 33, NCCIJR.

(Mystical Body of Christ) in 1943 that referred to the Church's "divinely-given unity – by which all men of every race are united to Christ in the bond of brotherhood." The pontiff declared that God "has taught us not only to have love for those of a different nation and a different race, but to love even our enemies."<sup>5</sup>

Despite these teachings, Rome recognized local conditions and permitted ordinaries to desegregate Catholic institutions when and as they saw fit, leading to variations among dioceses. While some southern Catholic dioceses outside the Deep South began parochial school desegregation in the 1950s, it did not begin in the Deep South until 1962, when the archdioceses of Atlanta and New Orleans acted after public school desegregation had already begun in their dioceses under federal court order. Other Deep South ordinaries tied parochial school desegregation to the beginning of federal court mandated public school desegregation in their dioceses between 1963 and 1965. They were also encouraged to act by Pope John XXII's encyclical *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth), issued in April 1963, which declared that "racial discrimination can in no way be justified" and affirmed the duty of people to claim their rights.<sup>6</sup>

In common with many other Deep South Catholic bishops, Bishop Richard O. Gerow of Natchez-Jackson, whose diocese covered all of Mississippi and included 60,329 white and 7,097 African American Catholics in 1963, took a guarded, cautious approach and had a strained and sometimes fractured relationship with the SFS. Born in Mobile, Alabama, in 1885, Gerow had grown up in a segregated society. Installed as bishop in 1924, he presided over the growth of separate white and African American Catholic schools, churches and other institutions. He believed that separate institutions, especially schools, were essential to reach and convert African Americans, but he was also acutely conscious that most whites in the state, including most white Catholics, were segregationists. Until 1963, he avoided public discussion of segregation

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<sup>5</sup> Charles Harbutt, "The Church and Integration," *Jubilee* 6 (February 1959): 8; John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 50-52; "Mystici Corporis Christi," *Catholic Mind* 41 (November 1943): 1-44 (first quotation on p. 3; second quotation on p. 37).

<sup>6</sup> Reed Saratt, *The Ordeal of Desegregation: The First Decade* (New York and London: Harper and Row, 1966), 278-81; *Pacem in Terris: Encyclical Letter of Pope John XXIII, April 11, 1963* (Washington, D.C.: National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1963), 12 (quotation), 22; On Catholic desegregation in the South see Mark Newman, *Desegregating Dixie: The Catholic Church in the South and Desegregation, 1945-1992* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2018).

and racism, but he, nevertheless, disciplined white Catholic churches that refused African Americans admission to services, although most black Catholics attended black Catholic missions and churches.<sup>7</sup>

Clergy and nuns from religious orders, mostly based outside the South, operated and staffed black Catholic churches, missions, and schools in the diocese. The orders were mostly white, such as the Society of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart (Josephites), the Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity (M.S.S.S.T.), the Franciscan Friars (O.F.M.) and the Holy Ghost Missionary Sisters, but they also included the Oblate Sisters of Providence, a black order of nuns based in Baltimore, and the Society of the Divine Word (S.V.D.), which had a seminary, St. Augustine's, in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, that accepted black applicants. An inherently cautious man, Gerow was unwilling to desegregate Catholic schools ahead of secular desegregation, fearful that either action would arouse white segregationist opposition, divide white Catholics, and reinvigorate engrained anti-Catholicism in Mississippi.<sup>8</sup>

Soon after its formation, the SFS's director Henry Cabirac Jr., a white former New Orleans businessman, established contact with Auxiliary Bishop Joseph B. Brunini of Natchez-Jackson and sympathetic black and white clergy and laity in the state. A Mississippian, born in Vicksburg in 1909, Brunini introduced Cabirac to other interested Catholics. Cabirac also wrote to African American Catholics in the state, mostly on the Gulf Coast, where their numbers were most concentrated. He made contact as well with the civil rights movement in Mississippi and met Aaron Henry, state president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), who was a Methodist. Despite interest from Brunini,

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<sup>7</sup> Charles Carruth, "Interesting View, Words of Hope in Jackson, Miss.," *Clarion Herald*, August 29, 1963; "Bishop Richard O. Gerow," *Mississippi Methodist Advocate*, October 14, 1964; *Our Negro and Indian Missions: Annual Report of the Secretary of the Commission for the Catholic Missions among the Colored People and the Indians*, January 1946, 12-13, January 1947, 11-13, January 1949, 9-13, January 1957, 7-11, January 1958, 7-11, Archives of the Society of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart, Baltimore, Maryland (hereinafter cited as ASSJ); Richard O. Gerow to Joseph F. Rummel, February 12, 1946, folder 4, box 7, Archbishop Joseph F. Rummel Papers, Archives of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, New Orleans, Louisiana; Wilson Minor, "In Mississippi: Rigid Segregation," *Sign* 35 (July 1956): 16-17.

<sup>8</sup> "Mississippi," *Our Colored Missions* 32 (November 1946): 162-63; Minor, "In Mississippi," 16-17; "All-Negro Town in South Gets Catholic School," *Alamo Messenger*, May 14, 1954; "Holy Ghost Sisters Active in Negro Education," *Interracial Review* 29 (February 1956): 34; *Our Negro and Indian Missions*, January 1960, 7-12; Only one African American parish in Mississippi had a diocesan priest; Memorandum, Jim McGuire to Matt [Ahmann], "Southern Field Service and the Meredith Freedom March," June 29, 1966, 8.

Cabirac was unable to generate sufficient support among Mississippi Catholics for establishing a Catholic interracial council. Instead, at Brunini's request, Cabirac launched "a quiet educational program [on race relations] among a few people" of "good will" in Jackson. In keeping with Brunini's caution and concern not to bring down segregationist wrath on the Church, Cabirac conducted the program without publicity.<sup>9</sup>

Unknown to the chancery, Cabirac engaged in a letter writing campaign in which he encouraged sympathetic white and African American Catholics to urge black Catholic parents to seek to register their children at white Catholic high schools and, if refused, to complain to Gerow. Unable to generate a response from black Catholic parents, in 1963 Cabirac, who had joined the NAACP, enlisted Medgar Evers, field secretary of the Mississippi NAACP, to ask Catholic NAACP members along the Mississippi Gulf Coast (where a black Catholic high school had been closed) to meet with Cabirac about desegregating Catholic high schools. Whether through Evers's intercession or by his own efforts, Cabirac eventually made contact with Gilbert R. Mason, president of the Biloxi NAACP and a Missionary Baptist, who arranged a meeting in Biloxi with black Catholics on June 16, during which "two or three" of them agreed to try to register their children at a white Catholic school.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> "Biographical Sketch – Henry A. Cabirac, Jr.," folder 1, box 7, series 34; Henry Cabirac, Jr. to Aaron E. Henry, October 25, 1961, June 13, 1962; Henry Cabirac, Jr. to Mark Figaro, November 16, December 27, 1961, February 27, May 21, 1962; Henry Cabirac, Jr. to Mrs. Louis J. [Marjorie R.] Baroni, December 7, 29, 1961; Henry Cabirac, Jr. to John Scanlon, March 8, 1962; Henry Cabirac, Jr. to John McGough, March 12, 1962; Henry Cabirac to Medgar W. Evers, January 8, 1963, folder 8, box 10; Henry Cabirac, Jr. to Joseph B. Brunini, November 2, 1961; Joseph B. Brunini to John LaFarge, March 5, 1962, folder 11, box 11; Henry Cabirac, Jr. to Josiah G. Chatham, December 22, 1961; Josiah G. Chatham to Henry Cabirac, Jr., January 15, 1962, folder 12, box 11; Henry Cabirac, Jr. to John Scanlon, October 16, 1962 (quotations), folder 14, box 11; Henry Cabirac, Jr. to Charles P. Greco, February 27, 1963, folder 9, box 6, series 33; "Southern Field Service Report of Activities, 1962-63; Program Goals 1964," 7, folder 7, box 4, series 30, NCCIJR; "Bishop Joseph Bernard Brunini," consulted April 11, 2018, at <<http://jacksondiocese.org/about/diocesan-history/growing-1853-1977/1900s/bishop-joseph-bernard-brunini/>>; "Oral history with Dr. Aaron Henry, prominent civil rights worker," 1, consulted April 17, 2018, at <<http://digilib.usm.edu/cdm/ref/collection/coh/id/15303>>.

<sup>10</sup> Cabirac to Figaro, December 27, 1961, February 27, 1962; Cabirac to Baroni, December 29, 1962; Cabirac to Henry, June 13, 1962; Henry Cabirac to Mr. and Mrs. Philip S. Ogilvie, January 8, 1963; Henry Cabirac, Jr. to Medgar W. Evers, January 8, April 30, 1963; Medgar W. Evers to Henry Cabirac, January 15, 1963, folder 8, box 10; Henry Cabirac to Gilbert R. Mason, June 3, 20, 1963; Henry Cabirac to Matt [Ahmann] (quotation) typed on to Henry Cabirac to Gilbert R. Mason, June 20, 1963, folder 2, box 12, series 33, NCCIJR; "Gilbert's Obituary: Dr. Gilbert R. Mason Sr.," consulted April 5, 2018, at <<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/name/gilbert-mason-obituary?pid=18422446&view=guestbook&page=2>>. On Mason's civil rights activism see Gilbert R. Mason, *Beaches, Blood, and Ballots: A Black Doctor's Civil Rights Struggle* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2000).

The meeting occurred four days after Evers's assassination outside his Jackson home by segregationist Bryon de la Beckwith. Evers's murder led Gerow to speak out publicly on race relations for the first time. The bishop deplored the murder and called on "our leaders and men of good will of both races to find some common ground on which to build a civic order based on human dignity and a concept of justice under God's law" and for recognition of "the legitimate grievances of the Negro population." On June 19, Gerow wrote to his pastors in recognition of the increasing number of civil rights protests in the country that seemed to embody the call by the papal encyclical *Pacem in Terris* for the oppressed to claim their rights: "This race problem which now confronts our state and our country is . . . fundamentally a moral problem. The question is not one of granting concessions but of recognizing rights." Gerow's newfound willingness to speak out on race seemed to offer an opportunity for the SFS.<sup>11</sup>

However, Gerow reacted angrily after Cabirac held a meeting with fifty African American Catholics in Mississippi City on the Gulf Coast a week later, leading between fifteen and twenty to try unsuccessfully to register their children at white Catholic schools. In July, Gerow wrote to Cabirac, "I resent your coming into the Diocese and giving talks without consulting myself" and instructed him "to stay out of Mississippi." Although Cabirac complied, initially he continued to write to African American Catholic leaders urging them to ask black Catholics to try to register their children in white Catholic schools and to pressure Gerow to act. The bishop remained unwilling to desegregate Catholic schools ahead of secular integration or to attempt the formation of a Catholic interracial council. Gerow explained to NCCIJ executive director Mathew Ahmann that he favored a "wise policy" between what he considered to be "two extremes – one extreme speaking of the mixing of the races as 'never'; the other extreme says 'everything now.'" After meeting with Ahmann and later Cabirac, in January 1964, Gerow lifted his ban on Cabirac and the

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<sup>11</sup> "Statement of the Most Reverend Richard O. Gerow, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Natchez-Jackson, June 14, 1963 (first and second quotations), folder 11, box 11; Richard O. Gerow to "The Pastors," June 19, 1963 (third quotation), folder 12, box 11, series 33, NCCIJR.

SFS working in the diocese.<sup>12</sup>

In September 1964, Gerow desegregated the first grade of Catholic schools to coincide with the beginning of federal court-ordered desegregation of the first grade of public schools in Biloxi, Carthage, Clarksdale, and Jackson. As desegregation applied only to Catholic students and 65 percent of black children in Catholic schools were not Catholic, Gerow's order had little impact. Three black Catholic children registered in two formerly white Catholic schools. Token change continued a year later, when the bishop desegregated all grades. Acting with his usual caution, Gerow instructed his diocesan priests not to participate in the civil rights movement or comment on racial issues, and, in 1964, he ordered six Oklahoma priests who had volunteered for the civil rights movement's Mississippi Summer Project, a program of voter registration, freedom schools, and community centers, to return home.<sup>13</sup>

Although Gerow remained wary of the SFS, there seemed to be a promise of a fresh start in 1964 when John P. "Jack" Sisson replaced Cabirac, who had resigned to become director of the Human Relations Department in Phoenix, Arizona. Although born in Milwaukee in 1926, Sisson had been raised in the South, mostly in Pensacola, Florida. Sisson

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<sup>12</sup> Henry Cabirac to Sid W. Sicotte, July 2, 1963; Henry Cabirac to Matt [Ahmann] (quotation) typed on to Henry Cabirac to Sid W. Sicotte, July 2, 1963; Henry Cabirac to J. O. Tate, July 23, 25, 1963, folder 2, box 12; R. O. Gerow to Henry Cabirac, July 7, 1963 (first and second quotations); Mathew Ahmann to R. O. Gerow, August 19, 1963; Mathew Ahmann to Henry Cabirac, August 19, 1963; "Report on September 23rd [1963] Meeting with Father Law and Bishop Gerow," memorandum; Henry Cabirac to Matt Ahmann, "January 23, 1964 Visit to Jackson, Mississippi," memorandum; Jack Sisson to Matt Ahmann, "Meeting with Bishop and others in Diocese, May 21, 1964," May 26, 1964, folder 11, box 11; Henry Cabirac to Bernard Law, January 28, 1964, folder 16, box 11; Henry Cabirac to Paul J. Hallinan, August 5, 1963, folder 5, box 4, series 33; R. O. Gerow to Matthew Ahmann, July 25, 1963 (third and fourth quotations), folder 4, box 6, series 11, NCCIJR.

<sup>13</sup> Neil R. McMillen, "Development of Civil Rights, 1956-1970," in *A History of Mississippi*, ed. Richard Aubrey McLemore (Hattiesburg: University and College Press of Mississippi, 1973), vol. 2, p. 162; *Hearings Before the United States Commission on Civil Rights*, volume II: *Administration of Justice*, Hearings Held in Jackson, Miss., February 16-20, 1965 (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1965), 403; "Southern Field Service Report for November 1963 through September 1964 - A Survey of Activities; and General Observations," 11, "Southern Field Service Report Interim Report, October 1964/January 1965," 6, folder 8, box 4, series 30; R. O. Gerow, pastoral letter August 9, 1964, issued August 6, 1964, folder 11, box 11; Benjamin Muse to John P. Sisson, July 13, 1964, folder 16, box 11, series 33, memorandum; Jim McGuire to Matt [Ahmann], "Recommendations from the Chancery Meeting in Jackson, Mississippi 7-7-66," August 4, 1966, folder 5, box 6, series 11, NCCIJR; *New York Times*, August 10, 1964; *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, August 22, 1965; "Diary of Bishop Gerow," vol.: 1960-1966, 1735, Archives of the Catholic Diocese of Jackson, Jackson, Mississippi; "School Mixing in Mississippi," *Alamo Messenger*, August 27, 1965; Gordon A. Martin, "The Church in Mississippi," *Ave Maria* 100 (December 12, 1964): 15.

attempted to forge a new relationship with the chancery, but he noted in November 1965 that Gerow still remained “suspicious of us.”<sup>14</sup>

Neither Gerow, Sisson, the NCCIJ, nor the race relations agencies of Protestant denominations responded when James Meredith, the man who had desegregated the University of Mississippi in 1962, announced in May 1966 that he would soon begin a 220-mile march from Memphis, Tennessee, to Jackson, Mississippi. A maverick, unaffiliated with any civil rights organization, Meredith hoped his quixotic march would encourage hundreds of thousands of eligible but unregistered African Americans in Mississippi to overcome “fear” and register to vote. Although intended as a solo march, Meredith indicated that he would allow other men to join him independently if they wished to, although few did and the major civil rights groups ignored the march.<sup>15</sup>

On June 6, the march’s second day, Aubrey James Norvell, an unemployed white man from Memphis, shot and wounded Meredith south of Hernando, Mississippi. A member of the Catholic Human Relations Council of Memphis (CHRCM) was among the reporters who were present when the shooting occurred, after which Meredith was hospitalized in Memphis. Floyd McKissick, the national director of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), Stokely Carmichael of SNCC, and Martin Luther King Jr., president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), went to Memphis, visited Meredith, and with his consent, promptly resumed the march. They also established a headquarters in south Memphis at Centenary Methodist Church, which was pastored by James Lawson, who had written SNCC’s founding statement in 1960 and also

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<sup>14</sup> “Henry A. Cabirac Jr.,” consulted April 5, 2018, at <<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/azcentral/obituary.aspx?n=henry-a-cabirac&pid=95046912>>; John P. Sisson, untitled resume, folder 26, box 3, memorandum; Jack [Sisson] to Matt [Ahmann], “Visit with Msgr. Kourey, Superintendent of Schools, Diocese of Natchez-Jackson 11/8/65,” November 11, 1965 (quotation), folder 14, box 11, series 33, NCCIJR; “New Director Appointed for Southern Field Service Project of the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice,” press release, May 15 [1964], folder 3, box 25, Archives of the Diocese of Savannah, Georgia, Savannah, Georgia.

<sup>15</sup> *New York Times*, May 12 (quotation), June 1, 5, 12, 1966; *Washington Post*, June 6, 1966; Goudsouzian, *Down to the Crossroads*, 7-8, 17-18; Meredith claimed that 450,000 eligible black Mississippians were unregistered, but the figure was more likely to have been around 300,000 because of 120,000-130,000 registrations in the first eight months after the passage of the Voting Rights Act in August 1965. *New York Times*, June 1, 21, 1966.

worked with the SCLC.<sup>16</sup>

The SFS contacted the CHRCM soon after the shooting, and the CHRCM sent flowers to Meredith's hospital bedside. On June 8, Sisson went to Memphis and "set up headquarters in the Lorraine Motel where all the march leadership was staying." Sisson reported to the NCCIJ that he was "at the Memphis March headquarters when it was established at Centenary Methodist Church, and attended the early strategy meeting at the Lorraine Motel," where he "was one of the few white persons present." Roy Wilkins, executive director of the national NAACP, and Whitney M. Young Jr., executive director of the National Urban League, arrived in Memphis willing to add their organizations to the list of march sponsors. They also joined the other national leaders in addressing a mass meeting at Centenary Methodist Church.<sup>17</sup>

A contingent of the Deacons for Defense and Justice, an armed group founded in Jonesboro, Louisiana, in 1964, arrived in Memphis ready to protect the marchers. Carmichael, supported by McKissick, wanted the Deacons involved, and he also wanted to emphasize black participation in order to keep whites from controlling the march. King, for his part, sought to ensure that the march would be nonviolent, interracial, and welcoming to white participation. The three leaders reached a compromise under which the Deacons provided protection, and the march was open to whites. Supported by Young, Wilkins argued that the march should focus on supporting passage of President Lyndon B. Johnson's next civil rights bill, which prohibited racial discrimination in the sale or rental of housing, included measures to end racial discrimination in state and federal juries, widened federal jurisdiction regarding crimes of racial violence, and broadened the U.S. Justice Department's authority to instigate school

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<sup>16</sup> *Washington Post*, June 7, 8, 11, 1966; *New York Times*, June 8, 1966; Martin Luther King Jr., *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* (New York: Bantam, 1968 [1967]), 27-31; Goudsouzian, *Down to the Crossroads*, 20-33, 46-48; memorandum, Matt Ahmann to [NCCIJ] Board of Directors, "Conference Involvement in the Meredith Mississippi March," June 30, 1966, 1, folder 7, box 16, series 20, NCCIJR; Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 1981), 207; At his trial in November 1966, Norvell plead guilty to assault and battery with intent to kill and received a five year sentence. *Washington Post*, November 22, 1966.

<sup>17</sup> Memorandum, Jack [Sisson] to Matt [Ahmann], "Meredith Mississippi Freedom March, June 6-26, 1966 (Jim McGuire sent a separate report of his activities from June 22 to June 28)," June 30, 1966, 1 (first quotation), folder 11, box 8, series 34, "Report of the Director of the Southern Field Service August, 1966," August 3, 1966, 2 (second quotation), folder 2, box 5, series 30, NCCIJR; memorandum, Jim McGuire to Matt [Ahmann], "Southern Field Service and the Meredith Freedom March," June 29, 1966, 1; Goudsouzian, *Down to the Crossroads*, 35.



desegregation lawsuits. Carmichael proposed a march manifesto that attacked the Johnson administration's civil rights record, and he also wanted the march goals to include voter registration. Carmichael launched into a vituperative verbal attack on Wilkins and Young, dismissing them as Johnson's lackeys. Sisson reported to the NCCIJ that "tensions over the March's direction were very severe." Wilkins and Young refused to sign the manifesto or to participate in the march.<sup>18</sup>

King, Carmichael, McKissick, Charles Evers (who had returned to Mississippi from Chicago in 1963 and replaced his slain brother as the state NAACP's field secretary), the Delta Ministry (a National Council of Churches project to alleviate poverty and assist Mississippi's African American poor primarily in the Delta), and the Madison County Movement in Mississippi signed the manifesto of what they now entitled the Meredith Mississippi Freedom March. The manifesto indicted Lyndon Johnson for failing to enforce "existing federal law to protect the rights of all Americans." It also called for the strengthening of civil rights laws to ensure African Americans' fair representation on southern juries and in law enforcement, the dispatch of federal registrars to "all 600 Deep South counties to register disenfranchised Negroes," and the adoption of a federal budget that would enable impoverished African Americans to make "their own destines [sic]." Claiming his name had been forged on the document, Evers repudiated the manifesto, which he said, echoing Wilkins, was "too critical of President Johnson."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Goudsouzian, *Down to the Crossroads*, 37-41, 90-91; Dittmer, *Local People*, 392-94; Carson, *In Struggle*, 207-208; Peniel E. Joseph, *Stokely: A Life* (New York: Basic Civitas, 2014), 107-108; King, *Where Do We Go from Here*, 31-32; *New York Times*, June 8, 12, 1966; "Report of the Director of the Southern Field Service August, 1966," August 3, 1966, 2 (quotation); Historians disagree about Carmichael's position. Goudsouzian claims that Carmichael sought only to ensure that African Americans controlled the march, Carson that Carmichael thought that "white participation should be deemphasized," and Dittmer that Carmichael wanted to exclude whites entirely from the march. Joseph's biography of Carmichael does not address the issue. Recollections are more in agreement. According to King, Carmichael thought "that the dominant appeal should be made for black participation." SNCC staff member Cleveland Sellers similarly recalled that Carmichael "argued that the march should deemphasize white participation, [and] that it should be used to highlight the need for independent, black political units"; Goudsouzian, *Down to the Crossroads*, 38; Carson, *In Struggle*, 207; Dittmer, *Local People*, 393; King, *Where Do We Go from Here*, 32; Cleveland Sellers with Robert Terrell, *The River of No Return: The Autobiography of a Black Militant and the Life and Death of SNCC* (Jackson and London: University Press of Mississippi, 1990 [1973]), 162.

<sup>19</sup> "Manifesto of the Meredith Mississippi Freedom March," June 9, 1966 (first, second, and third quotations), folder 11, box 8, series 34, NCCIJR; *New York Times*, June 11, 1966 (fourth quotation); On the Delta Ministry, see Mark Newman, *Divine Agitators: The Delta Ministry and Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 2004).

Sisson noted, "At first, national leaders did not consult Mississippi leaders; eventually, because of local pressure, it was agreed that national staff persons would enter towns off the March route to hold rallies, stimulate voter registration and promote participation in the march." The Delta Ministry, in particular, pressed for the march to emphasize voter registration and divert its path through part of the Delta, which had a large, mostly unregistered African American population. Sisson reported, "Many Catholics who had marched at Selma last year (or who wished they had) inquired about whether they should come to Mississippi." Although King had made "a national call for people to come" to the state soon after his arrival in Memphis in the wake of Meredith's shooting, Sisson observed that "The joint March leadership did not want them [white clergy and laity] 'on the road' and would not accept an offer even to bring in experienced voter-registration workers." King succeeded in ensuring that the march was interracial, but Carmichael and McKissick had, for their part, made sure that the Meredith March would not replicate the Selma protests and bring in hundreds of whites from the North and the major faiths.<sup>20</sup>

Historian Adam Goudsouzian estimates that "Between towns on Highway 51, whites composed somewhere between 15 and 30 percent of the marchers." Most of them stayed for short periods, and some were clergy, who came on their own initiative. For example, the Reverend Duncan Howlett, pastor of All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church, Washington, D.C., marched and arranged for some other clergy to participate. A small number from the Catholic Interracial Council of Little Rock also marched, and an integrated group of CHRCM members, including Father Edwin J. Wallin, C.S.P., a chaplain at Memphis State University who was originally from New York City, marched intermittently at the outset. The CHRCM worked with Sisson to provide office help for the march headquarters, rooms for the protesters, and cars to ferry marchers between their accommodations and the march route. Sisson "spent some time marching" during the first week "but worked mainly to support the headquarters staff, scout the march area, judge the temper of local officials, and exchange information with newsmen and the few U.S. officials on the scene." Mississippi Governor Paul B. Johnson Jr. promised to protect the marchers and deployed the state's Highway

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<sup>20</sup> *Washington Post*, June 16, 1966; "Report of the Director of the Southern Field Service August, 1966," August 3, 1966, 2-3 (first quotation on pp. 2-3; second and fourth quotations on p. 3); *Jackson Daily News*, June 8, 1966 (third quotation); Newman, *Divine Agitators*, 118.

Patrol. The federal government sent John Doar, an assistant attorney general in the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department, to observe and mediate between local enforcement and march leaders. As well as keeping in touch with federal officials in the U.S. Justice Department and the Community Relations Service, Sisson kept the chancery of the Diocese of Natchez-Jackson informed about the march.<sup>21</sup>

Although there was still no Catholic interracial council in Mississippi with which he could work, Sisson established a working relationship with Monsignor James McGough, the chancellor of the Diocese of Natchez-Jackson. Gerow, however, maintained his customary caution and kept a public silence about Meredith's shooting and the march. CHRCM members tried to contact Coadjutor Bishop Joseph A. Durick of the Diocese of Nashville, which covered all of Tennessee, to ask him to send condolences to Meredith, but they were unable to reach the bishop who was on a retreat. Sisson believed that had Durick sent a message, the circumspet "Gerow would have sent a similar message." In contrast to Toolen, who had told clergy and nuns not to come into his diocese and join the Selma protests in 1965 and then condemned those who did, McGough told Sisson that Gerow "had given his approval for clergy and religious to come in from outside the diocese to join the march but wanted them to check in with the Chancery," which by June 23 gave "blanket permission for all outside priests." In all, between ten and fifteen Catholic priests eventually participated in the march. However, Gerow remained "undecided about . . . permitting his own priests and religious orders in the march proper."<sup>22</sup>

Some members of religious orders who worked among African Americans in Mississippi were sympathetic and keen to help the march when contacted by Sisson. Within days of its resumption under national civil rights leadership, Father Luke Mikschl, M.S.S.S.T., a Minnesotan

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<sup>21</sup> Goudsouzian, *Down to the Crossroads*, 77-79, 94-98 (first quotation on p. 94); *Jackson Daily News*, June 8, 1966; "Report of the Director of the Southern Field Service August, 1966," August 3, 1966, 3 (second and third quotations); memorandum, Jack [Sisson] to Matt [Ahmann], "Meredith Mississippi Freedom March, June 6-26, 1966 (Jim sent a separate report of his activities from June 22 to June 28)," June 30, 1966, 1; Mathew Ahmann to Edwin J. Wallin, July 1, 1966, folder 11, box 14; Kathleen Woods to James McGuire, December 5, 1966, 4, "Minutes of CIC [Catholic Interracial Council of Little Rock]," July 17, 1966, 1, folder 6, box 2, series 33, NCCIJR; *New York Times*, May 4, 1956, June 8, 16, 17, 26, 1966, November 12, 2014.

<sup>22</sup> Memorandum, Jack [Sisson] to Matt [Ahmann], "Meredith Mississippi Freedom March, June 6-26, 1966 (Jim sent a separate report of his activities from June 22 to June 28)," June 30, 1966, 1 (first quotation), 4 (second and fourth quotations); memorandum, Jim McGuire to Matt [Ahmann], "Southern Field Service and the Meredith Freedom March," June 29, 1966, 1 (third quotation); "Report of the Director of the Southern Field Service August, 1966," August 3, 1966, 5.

who, along with the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, St. Rose Convent, La Crosse, Wisconsin, operated the Holy Child Jesus Mission in Canton secured Gerow's permission to host the marchers when they arrived in the town. Father Walter (Meinrad) Smigiel, O.F.M., a Detroit native who pastored St. Benedict the Moor Church in Indianola and had established the biracial Indianola Improvement Association in 1964, also obtained the bishop's agreement to invite King to speak on his church's grounds.<sup>23</sup>

On June 14, Ahmann wrote to the leaders of the NCCIJ's interracial councils seeking to raise funds for the Meredith March, which he requested, in the spirit of ecumenical cooperation encouraged by the Second Vatican Council, that they send to the NCC's Commission on Religion and Race, which was also supporting the march. He urged councils to support the march manifesto by contacting "Congress by wire, letter and in person to strengthen and get the pending [civil rights] bill passed." Ahmann approvingly quoted the NCC's view that Black Power was "not a rejection of white people or white support" but rather "a conviction that the Negro must present his own concerns, programs and plans for his own economic, political and social relationship to his inheritance in our nation."<sup>24</sup>

Ahmann's appeal demonstrated that the idea of Black Power preceded Carmichael's famous rallying cry for it in Greenwood two days later. Some SNCC workers had already begun to adopt Black Power, and Carmichael, elected as SNCC's chairman in May 1966, had worked with the Lowndes County Freedom Organization in Alabama that had called for "Black Power for Black People" and run candidates for local office. Working in advance teams along the march route, SNCC worker Willie Ricks used Black Power to generate interest and support. Ricks informed Carmichael that black Mississippians had enthusiastically embraced the slogan and

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<sup>23</sup> Memorandum, Jack [Sisson] to Matt [Ahmann], "Meredith Mississippi Freedom March, June 6-26, 1966 (Jim sent a separate report of his activities from June 22 to June 28)," June 30, 1966, 3; Father Luke Mikschl, M.S.S.S.T., "Holy Childhood Mission and the Mississippi Freedom March," *Divine Word Messenger*, 43 (July-August 1966): 106; Father Luke Mikschl, M.S.S.S.T., "Holy Child Jesus Mission and 'The March,'" folder 11, box 8, series 34; "Let's Work Together for Progress," attached to Sister M. Thea [Bowman] to John P. Sisson, May 27, 1967, folder 7, box 10, series 33, NCCIJR; Dorothy Day, "On Pilgrimage - December 1956," *Catholic Worker*, December 1956, 1, 6-7; *Delta Democrat-Times*, October 13, 1960; *Carroll Daily Times Herald*, January 16, 1967; *Our History: Truths, Tales and Tidbits: Assumption Province Franciscans* 51 (January 10, 2010), consulted April 12, 2018, at <[http://www.assumptionprovince.org/History/No.\\_51\\_-\\_January\\_10,\\_2010.pdf](http://www.assumptionprovince.org/History/No._51_-_January_10,_2010.pdf)>.

<sup>24</sup> Memorandum, Matt Ahmann to "Council Presidents and Chairmen and Chaplains; Board of Directors; Key Contacts," "Meredith Mississippi March," June 14, 1966, folder 11, box 8, series 34, NCCIJR.

urged him to proclaim it.<sup>25</sup>

When the marchers reached the Delta town of Greenwood, Father Nathaniel R. Machesky, O.F.M., who had pastored the St. Francis of Assisi mission for African Americans since its opening in 1950, offered them his grounds to pitch their tents. Like many other of the priests from religious orders who staffed black Catholic churches in Mississippi, Machesky was a northerner and had been raised in Detroit. Sympathetic to racial equality, he served as the spiritual adviser to Pax Christi, an interracial secular institute of Catholic women (mostly from the North) who ran the St. Francis Center that had opened in 1952. The St. Francis Center provided its 2,000 African American members with a dispensary, education programs, affordable clothing, a credit union, and a newspaper. In March 1963, Cabirac contacted Machesky to enquire about conditions in Greenwood, and in November, Machesky invited him to conduct a workshop for staff at the mission and with Pax Christi. Cabirac asked Machesky to obtain Gerow's permission, which the bishop, maintaining his ban on Cabirac, refused. After succeeding Cabirac, Sisson maintained the SFS's contact with Machesky and visited him in 1964.<sup>26</sup>

Sisson also consulted Father Machesky in Greenwood on June 13, 1966, three days before the Meredith March arrived in the town. Machesky warned Sisson that racial tensions were very high. Sisson "relayed this information to [the] Community Relations Service and the Justice Dept., who sent men over in advance of the march reaching Greenwood." Preferring to pitch their tents at Stone Street Elementary School in the center of a black community, the march leaders declined Machesky's offer to use his mission's grounds. Long resistant to the civil rights movement, and emboldened further by Governor Johnson's decision to reduce protection for the march when it entered the Delta because, he said, it had "turned into a voter registration campaign," the town's authorities

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<sup>25</sup> Carson, *In Struggle*, 200, 208-209; Goudsouzian, *Down to the Crossroads*, 142 (quotation).

<sup>26</sup> Memorandum, Jack [Sisson] to Matt [Ahmann], "Meredith Mississippi Freedom March, June 6-26, 1966 (Jim sent a separate report of his activities from June 22 to June 28)," June 30, 1966, 5; Henry Cabirac Jr. to Wiley A. Branton, March 5, 1963, folder 9, box 5, series 21, Henry Cabirac, Jr. to Nathaniel Machesky, March 8, November 20, December 9, 1963, Nathaniel Machesky to Henry Cabirac, Jr., November 3, December 3, 5, 1963, folder 1; Nathaniel Machesky to R. O. Gerow, December 3, 1963; John P. Sisson to Hyman Bookbinder, December 14, 1964 and attachment; Mathew Ahmann to Charles Merrill, February 8, 1965 and attachment, John P. Sisson to editor, Harper's Magazine, December 12, 1967; memorandum, John Sisson to Mathew Ahmann, "Report on Greenwood, Mississippi," May 25, 1964, folder 1, box 12; John P. Sisson to James McGough, May 22, 1964, folder 14, box 11; John P. Sisson to Sherrill Smith, July 15, 1964, folder 6, box 17, series 33, NCCIJR.

refused to let the marchers use the school. On June 16, police arrested and jailed Carmichael and two others from an advance team for trespass as they attempted to pitch a tent at the school in defiance. Concerned by rising tension after the arrests, the police allowed the marchers to put their tents up in a public park. Machesky paid Carmichael's bail and that of those arrested with him in the belief, Sisson wrote, that "the tensions would be less with Carmichael out of jail than in." Local resident Bill Virden concurred and recalled that "If he [Machesky] hadn't done it, it [Greenwood] would have burned to the ground." After his release from jail, Carmichael, encouraged by Ricks, called for Black Power at a night rally in Broad Street Park. Local whites subsequently harassed Machesky and other members of his parish because he had provided bail.<sup>27</sup>

After Greenwood, the march continued on through the Delta. However, King, a SCLC contingent, and a group of twenty people from the Meredith March went to Philadelphia in Neshoba County for a march and a memorial to mark the second anniversary of the murder of three civil rights activists by Ku Klux Klansmen in the county on June 21. They joined two hundred others in a march to the Neshoba County courthouse, where a white mob of three hundred hostile whites awaited them. Deputy Sheriff Cecil Price, who had been indicted for the federal crime of depriving the murdered civil rights workers of their civil rights and had remained in his post pending trial, was at the courthouse. King made a speech in which he declared: "I believe in my heart that the murderers are somewhere around me at this moment." Someone in the crowd of whites responded, "They're right behind you." Price, who would be convicted a year later for involvement in the murders, smirked as he stood behind King, who finished his speech among jeers from whites who threw firecrackers and cherry bombs. As the marchers retraced their steps down Main Street, the white crowd launched a barrage of objects at them. Fist fights broke out between whites and blacks, but the police did not intervene to stop the violence until a large group of whites appeared carrying a range of weapons. Appalled by the violence, King vowed to return.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Memorandum, Jack [Sisson] to Matt [Ahmann], "Meredith Mississippi Freedom March, June 6-26, 1966 (Jim sent a separate report of his activities from June 22 to June 28)," June 30, 1966, 3 (first quotation), 5 (third quotation); *Washington Post*, June 17, 1966; *New York Times*, June 17, 1966 (second quotation); Goudsouzian, *Down to the Crossroads*, 133-34, 136, 139-43; Murray, "Father Nathaniel and the Greenwood Movement," 286 (fourth quotation); Mathew Ahmann to Nathaniel Machesky, June 21, 1966, folder 1, box 12, series 33, NCCIJR.

<sup>28</sup> *New York Times*, June 20, 22 (first quotation), 1966; *Washington Post*, June 22, 1966; Goudsouzian, *Down to the Crossroads*, 169-70, 171, 174-76 (second quotation on p. 174), 207.

Although Carmichael and McKissick had successfully resisted King's attempt at the start of the Meredith March to transform it into a Selma-style mass protest with a nationwide appeal to clergy and sympathizers from across the nation, they now supported King in making a "call for clergy and citizens in all walks of life" to come to Mississippi for the last stage of the march, an eight-mile walk from Tougaloo College to the state capitol grounds in Jackson for the closing rally. Mathew Ahmann responded by sending a wire endorsing the appeal to all of the NCCIJ's member councils. During the march's final week, Sisson "spent a good bit of time talking with priests all over the country (Minneapolis, Washington, Memphis, San Antonio, Pittsburgh, etc.) about coming to the March."<sup>29</sup>

King rejoined the Meredith March in Indianola. With Father Smigiel's agreement, St. Benedict the Moor Church in Indianola hosted a large night-time rally, but by this time King had already left for a rally in Yazoo City, where he followed Willie Ricks's call for self-defence with an appeal for nonviolence. After Greenwood, King later recalled, "there was fierce competition between those who were wedded to the Black Power slogan and those wedded to Freedom Now," the usual call of the civil rights movement. "Speakers on each side," King remembered, "sought desperately to get the crowds to chant their slogan the loudest." Concerned by "this widening split in our ranks," King called a meeting with Carmichael and McKissick in an effort to resolve the issue. The meeting occurred on June 22 in the parish house of St. Francis of Assisi, a Catholic church in Yazoo City.<sup>30</sup>

As Yazoo City was on the march route, Sisson had earlier contacted the church's pastor, Father John W. Kist, S.V.D., who offered to let the marchers pitch their tents on church grounds. After the events in Greenwood, Kist withdrew his offer because Sisson reported, "he felt that the parish would suffer or that the pressures on him would be more than he could stand." However, Kist reconsidered and "the marchers stayed on his grounds." The SFS "arranged for someone to go and stay with him

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<sup>29</sup> Goudsouzian, *Down to the Crossroads*, 167, 227 (first quotation); memorandum, Matt Ahmann to [NCCIJ] Board of Directors, "Conference Involvement in the Meredith Mississippi March," June 30, 1966, 2; memorandum, Jack [Sisson] to Matt [Ahmann], "Meredith Mississippi Freedom March, June 6-26, 1966 (Jim sent a separate report of his activities from June 22 to June 28)," June 30, 1966, p. 5 (second quotation); *New York Times*, June 26, 1966.

<sup>30</sup> King, *Where Do We Go from Here*, 34-35 (first quotation on p. 34; second quotation on pp. 34-35; third quotation on p. 35); Goudsouzian, *Down to the Crossroads*, 179.

if trouble developed.”<sup>31</sup>

The march’s leaders and their staffs conferred in Kist’s parish house living room for five hours. While in agreement that blacks needed political power, King called for abandoning the Black Power slogan, which he told Carmichael and McKissick, “would confuse our allies, isolate the Negro community and give many prejudiced whites, who might otherwise be ashamed of their anti-Negro feeling, a ready excuse for self-justification” and imply “black domination rather than black equality.” Carmichael and McKissick were not persuaded by King’s arguments, but they accepted King’s compromise suggestion that the march leaders avoid chanting either Black Power or Freedom Now during the remainder of the march to Jackson. Nevertheless, marchers and supporters continued to chant their favored slogans.<sup>32</sup>

The NCCIJ had responded positively to Black Power before Carmichael’s rallying cry for its adoption on his release from jail in Greenwood brought the slogan widespread media attention. The conference and the SFS subsequently became concerned, like King, by Black Power’s divisiveness and by its more militant, and increasingly vocal, exponents during the march. Militants supported black nationalism, objected to the presence of white marchers, and sometimes chanted “Hey hey, what do you know, honky got to go.” The NCCIJ shared King’s vision of building an interracial society, shorn of racism. In response to Carmichael’s championing of Black Power, Ahmann explained that “we tried to work so as to strengthen Dr. King’s leadership,” and the NCCIJ began to raise money directly “to help SCLC meet the March expenses.”<sup>33</sup>

Less than two months after the march, Sisson wrote approvingly that “it was Dr. King’s charisma, the SCLC organization and a willingness to accept financial responsibility that kept the march together, gave it direction, maintained its non-violent character and assured its full impact, nationally and in Mississippi.” Sisson also claimed that most African

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<sup>31</sup> Memorandum, Jack [Sisson] to Matt [Ahmann], “Meredith Mississippi Freedom March, June 6-26, 1966 (Jim sent a separate report of his activities from June 22 to June 28),” June 30, 1966, 5 (first and second quotations); memorandum, Jim McGuire to Matt [Ahmann], “Southern Field Service and the Meredith Freedom March,” June 29, 1966, 1 (third quotation).

<sup>32</sup> King, *Where Do We Go from Here*, 34-36 (quotations on p. 36); Goudsouzian, *Down to the Crossroads*, 182-83.

<sup>33</sup> Goudsouzian, *Down to the Crossroads*, 161-62 (first quotation on p. 162), 178-81; memorandum, Matt Ahmann to [NCCIJ] Board of Directors, “Conference Involvement in the Meredith Mississippi March,” June 30, 1966, 2 (second and third quotations); Mathew Ahmann to William J. Fleming, June 27, 1966, folder 7, box 16, series 20, NCCIJR.



American Mississippians rejected Black Power. He reported to the NCCIJ: "Another factor contributing to the orderly nature of the March was the generally negative reaction of Mississippi Negroes to the 'black power' cry of several March leaders. Local Negro leaders had experience enough to know that they did not have the power to challenge white structures and that they would be thrown back on their own resources when the March ended."<sup>34</sup>

The response of black Mississippians to Black Power was more enthusiastic and complex than Sisson believed. Accustomed to working with those committed to the integrationist goal of creating a beloved community and, like the NCCIJ, sharing their vision, Sisson seemed unable to appreciate the appeal of Black Power for many African Americans. Sisson and the NCCIJ largely worked with middle class white and African American leaders and Catholics and had limited exposure to, and understanding of, the interests and aspirations of many African American Mississippians from outside of those ranks. Focused primarily on a support role for the march and interacting with the chancery and federal officials, Sisson also spent little time marching and observing the response of African Americans along its route.

Despite being a seasoned civil rights organizer in the Deep South, Carmichael had himself at first disbelieved Ricks when told that African Americans workers along the march route were readily joining in with Ricks's call for Black Power. After observing their enthusiastic response to Ricks himself, Carmichael had decided to incorporate Black Power into his Greenwood speech. Historian John Dittmer explains that "many blacks along the march route were drawn to the slogan and to Carmichael's fiery denunciations of a caste system that had oppressed them for generations. Yet they also revered Dr. King and continued to flock to the roadsides to catch a glimpse of their hero. Black Mississippians did not want to be forced to choose between the two men."<sup>35</sup>

In 1967, Joyce Ladner, who had grown up in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, and joined SNCC while a sociology student at Tougaloo College, found "varying degrees of acceptance of the slogan among Mississippi Negroes," although she acknowledged that some of them rejected it altogether. Ladner found that "many Negro activists in Mississippi had immediately

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<sup>34</sup> "Report of the Director of the Southern Field Service August, 1966," August 3, 1966, 3-4 (first quotation on p. 3; second quotation on pp. 3-4).

<sup>35</sup> Carson, *In Struggle*, 209-210; Goudsouzian, *Down to the Crossroads*, 142-43; Dittmer, *Local People*, 397-98 (quotation).

embraced the black power slogan — because of the already widely-held belief that power *was* [emphasis in the original] an effective tool for obtaining demands from the ruling elite in Mississippi,” and because they believed that efforts to achieve integration had failed to bring significant change in black lives.<sup>36</sup>

Ladner interviewed thirty Black Power activists in the state. She differentiated between two-thirds of those activists, who were “local,” meaning “long-term residents” and generally “uneducated, unskilled adults” and the remainder, half of them from the North, who were “cosmopolitan” and mostly young “urbane, educated” newcomers. Cosmopolitans, Ladner argued, “conceived of black power in highly philosophical terms — as an ideology” of blackness that connected them with “other colored peoples of the world.” Although no less militant, locals were “committed to concrete economic and political programs.” The difference between them was that “cosmopolitans — to varying degrees — endorse such programs but actually have made little effort to realize them.” Unaware of, or unconcerned by, differences among the march organizers, many black Mississippians in the Delta enthusiastically welcomed the march and attended its rallies when it reached their localities.<sup>37</sup>

Following the violence in Philadelphia, Mississippi, and conscious that the Meredith March was about to reach Canton, where authorities had taken a hard line against the local civil rights movement, the NCCIJ attempted, with the chancery’s permission, on June 23 to contact fifteen priests from outside the Diocese of Natchez-Jackson to “come in as mediators.” The conference was able to recruit only three: Father Edwin J. Wallin, who had participated at the start of the Meredith March; Father Sherrill Smith, a Chicago native who was the Archdiocese of San Antonio’s director of social action and pastor of St. Peter Claver Church in San Antonio; and Father William M. Lewers, C.S.C., a Kansas City, Missouri, born law professor at the University of Notre Dame, who was spending the summer in Jackson as a supply pastor at Holy Family Church. Sisson diverted Wallin and a group of Protestant clergy, who had come down with him from Memphis for the Meredith March, to Philadelphia. The

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<sup>36</sup> Joyce Ladner, “What Black Power Means to Negroes in Mississippi,” in *The Transformation of Activism*, ed. August Meier (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1970), 131-54 (first and second quotations on p. 133).

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 132-54 (first through fifth quotations on p. 135; six quotation on p. 139; seventh quotation on p. 140; eighth and ninth eleventh quotations on p. 144).

NCCIJ sent Smith and Lewers to Canton, along with James J. McGuire, the SFS's associate director.<sup>38</sup>

Father Luke Mikschl and Father Patrick Moran, who pastored a white Catholic church in Canton, offered their assistance to the local authorities regarding the march but received no response. Mikschl told the NCCIJ that he, nevertheless, did not expect any trouble in Canton, and he remained willing to allow the marchers to camp on his church's grounds if they requested it. On June 23, King arrived in Canton ahead of the marchers. Hosted by Mikschl and Brothers Maurus and Aaron, M.S.S.T., from Camden, Mississippi, King visited Holy Child Jesus Mission, which hosted one of the eighteen centers in Mississippi for Operation STAR (Systematic Training and Redevelopment), an adult basic education, vocational training and job placement program sponsored by the Diocese of Natchez-Jackson with \$458,000 of diocesan and \$6,963,800 of federal funds. Although open to the poor regardless of race, most STAR trainees were African American.<sup>39</sup>

When two hundred marchers arrived in Canton later that evening and marched to the courthouse, over one thousand local African Americans awaited them. Although local officials had earlier refused permission for the marchers to camp at McNeal Elementary School for Negroes, Carmichael led a march to the school from the courthouse, during which the crowd swelled to thirty-five hundred. Although the police did not intervene to stop tents being delivered, the Mississippi Highway Patrol appeared, heavily armed and wearing riot helmets. Some of the crowd dispersed, but twenty-five hundred people remained as organizers began laying out the tents. Standing on top of a truck, Carmichael announced

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<sup>38</sup> "Mississippi Riot Averted," *Alamo Messenger*, July 1, 1966; memorandum, Jack [Sisson] to Matt [Ahmann], "Meredith Mississippi Freedom March, June 6-26, 1966 (Jim sent a separate report of his activities from June 22 to June 28)," June 30, 1966, 6-7; memorandum, Jim McGuire to Matt [Ahmann], "Southern Field Service and the Meredith Freedom March," June 29, 1966, 1 (quotation); James J. McGuire to Sherrill Smith, July 2, 1966, folder 7, box 16, series 20, NCCIJR; John P. Nelson Jr. unaddressed letter, July 21, 1966, folder 3, box 4, John P. Nelson Papers, Amistad Research Center, New Orleans, Louisiana; *New York Times*, May 5, 1997; Abe Levy, "S.A. to Selma, priest answered 'calls for protecting the weak,'" *mySA*, October 19, 2012, consulted April 11, 2018, at <[https://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local\\_news/article/S-A-to-Selma-priest-answered-calls-for-3959914.php](https://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local_news/article/S-A-to-Selma-priest-answered-calls-for-3959914.php)>.

<sup>39</sup> Mikschl, "Holy Childhood Mission and the Mississippi Freedom March," 106; memorandum, Jim McGuire to Matt [Ahmann], "Southern Field Service and the Meredith Freedom March," June 29, 1966, 1, 2; "Operation 'STAR,'" May 1965, folder 7, box 12, series 33, NCCIJR; "Mississippi Launches STAR – Two-Year Anti-Poverty Program," *Mississippi Register*, August 13, 1965; "Antipoverty Effort Backed by Diocese," *Catholic Week*, August 13, 1965; "Mississippi's Anti-Poverty Program Boldest in Nation, Declares Shriver," *Clarion Herald*, August 19, 1965.

“The time for running has come to an end.” King followed him by appealing for nonviolence and vowed that “If necessary, we are willing to fill up all the jails in Mississippi.” When officials announced that anyone erecting tents would be arrested, Carmichael led the crowd in chanting “Pitch the tents.” As the tents began to go up, highway patrolmen donned gas masks. Father Richard T. McSorley, S.J., a professor at Georgetown University, who was one of the marchers, asked the watching John Doar, “Isn’t there something you can do?” Doar replied, “What can I do? Neither side will give an inch.” The troopers fired tear gas into the crowd and clubbed people at random with rifles and nightsticks until the school grounds were cleared. Those attacked included Father John Pader, a Catholic priest from Chicago, who was hit by a state trooper’s shotgun butt. In response to the attack, Mikschl went to the school with Brother Aaron. They arrived as the tear gas was lifting and those who could were reassembling to march to Asbury Methodist Church, a black church located across the street from the Holy Child Jesus Mission. Mikschl recalled:

At this point, I decided we must become directly involved. The injured were brought to the convent while Mr. [James] Draper of the Community Relations Service asked if all could use our grounds. I readily consented. We checked with Dr. King, Rev. J. McCree, Madison County’s ‘Mr. Civil Rights,’ and others, and all agreed this was most necessary, as hundreds were already outside the small church.<sup>40</sup>

Staff from the Medical Committee for Human Rights and nuns from the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration looked after twenty-one injured people in the convent. Between four hundred and five hundred slept on the auditorium floor of the Holy Child Jesus Mission and others outside on its lawns. In the early hours of the morning, arson destroyed St. Joachim’s School in Carthage, a STAR center that had been subject to a dynamite attack in April. Later that morning, Father John Prater, a Servite based in Chicago and Father McSorley, who had slept at the rectory along with some of the male demonstrators, celebrated Mass with

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<sup>40</sup> *New York Times*, June 24, 1966 (first, fourth and fifth quotations); Goudsouzian, *Down to the Crossroads*, 195-201 (second quotation on pp. 198-99; third quotation on p. 199); The *New York Times*’ report refers to Father John Pader of Chicago being attacked. Father Mikschl noted that Father John Prater of Chicago was among the marchers in Canton. These may be different spellings of the same priest’s last name. Mikschl, “Holy Childhood Mission and the Mississippi Freedom March,” 107.

a few of the marchers and the Sisters.<sup>41</sup>

McSorley, a Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, native, had marched at Selma in 1965. He had driven down with some students to join the Meredith March after hearing King's early appeal for volunteers on television. He recalled, "We walked twenty miles a day and then slept overnight in two large tents, one for men and one for women." When King asked the day after the troopers' attack at Canton for people to accompany him to Philadelphia, sixty miles away, McSorley was among the one hundred volunteers, who drove across the state in a convoy of twenty cars.<sup>42</sup>

Wallin also arrived in Philadelphia, Mississippi. Although there is no evidence that his efforts at mediation were responsible, on this occasion, unlike three days before, the march passed off largely peacefully because, warned of possible federal intervention by John Doar if violence occurred, state and local authorities deployed highway patrolmen and police to contain a crowd of between fifteen hundred and two thousand jeering whites and to protect the marchers. McSorley participated in a mile-long march to the courthouse, where King and Carmichael addressed the marchers, who sang "God Bless America." King ended with a prayer and led the marchers back through town. Law enforcement officers lined the route. McSorley saw a policeman ram his club into the ribs of an African American man, who was marching next to him. The priest dissuaded the man, who swung his arm at the policeman, from further retaliating by saying "Remember what King asked of us, nonviolent response." As the marching columns spread more widely on entering the black neighborhood, a white man tried to drive his car into the marchers, who hurriedly divided into two columns and escaped injury. Police stopped the car and arrested the driver and his passenger. The driver of the car that McSorley was travelling back to Canton in decided not to wait for the convoy because one of the passengers needed to make a flight. A group of whites pursued them in what became an eighty-mile-an-hour car chase, until their pursuers eventually gave up, unable to catch them. Back in Canton, McSorley told Mikschl, "Father, I was ready to die. A better way,

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<sup>41</sup> Mikschl, "Holy Childhood Mission and the Mississippi Freedom March," 106-107 (quotation on p. 107; "'Bombs Can't Kill Ideas' Rural Missioner Says," press clipping dated July 1, 1966, folder 13, box 29, series 20, NCCIJR; On the Medical Committee for Human Rights see John Dittmer, *The Good Doctors: The Medical Committee for Human Rights and the Struggle for Social Justice in Health Care* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2017).

<sup>42</sup> Richard T. McSorley, S.J., *My Path to Peace and Justice: An Autobiography* (Eugene, Oreg: Wipf and Stock, 2010 [1996]), 37, 100-101 (quotation on p. 100).

I can't think of — a priest witnessing for justice.”<sup>43</sup>

While McSorley was in Philadelphia, Prater was one of forty-five volunteers who followed Albert Turner of the SCLC in an eight-mile march from Canton along Highway 51. Prater did not walk any further, but many decided to march a further ten miles to Tougaloo College before taking cars back to Canton that evening.<sup>44</sup>

By then, Smith, Lewers and McGuire had arrived in Canton, where they concluded that Mikschl had “helped save the town” from a riot by allowing the demonstrators to use his mission’s facilities and grounds. While Mikschl’s action certainly aided the marchers, the decisions of the march leaders played a far greater role by managing and positively channeling black anger. Between seven hundred and eight hundred people crowded into the auditorium of Holy Child Jesus Mission that night, where march leaders announced there would be a boycott of downtown businesses and a work stoppage for one day. King also announced a night march, in which six hundred people paraded through Canton peacefully.<sup>45</sup>

According to Goudsouzian, the march leaders also decided that the demonstrators would return to McNeal Elementary School for Negroes and pitch their tents. However, Catholic sources tell a different story. Mikschl’s contemporary account stated that march leaders had not reached a decision on the night of June 23. Jim McGuire noted that during the early evening of June 24, Jim Draper asked for a meeting with the NCCIJ mediating team, who suggested a compromise with city officials in which “the marchers be permitted to use the school grounds without pitching the tent[s].” Draper called Doar who accepted the idea and contacted Mayor Stanley Matthews. Lewers sat in on a strategy meeting of march leaders and state and local civil rights leaders in the home of local merchant George Washington and concluded that most

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<sup>43</sup> Memorandum, Jim McGuire to Matt [Ahmann], “Southern Field Service and the Meredith Freedom March,” June 29, 1966, 1; memorandum, Jack [Sisson] to Matt [Ahmann], “Meredith Mississippi Freedom March, June 6-26, 1966 (Jim sent a separate report of his activities from June 22 to June 28),” June 30, 1966, 5; *Washington Post*, June 25, 1966; *New York Times*, June 25, 1966; McSorley, *My Path to Peace and Justice*, 101-102 (first and second quotations on p. 102); Mikschl, “Holy Childhood Mission and the Mississippi Freedom March,” 108 (third quotation); Goudsouzian, *Down to the Crossroads*, 207-11; Goudsouzian’s account, unlike McSorley’s autobiography, has the priest driving the car. Goudsouzian, *Down to the Crossroads*, 211.

<sup>44</sup> Mikschl, “Holy Childhood Mission and the Mississippi Freedom March,” 107; Goudsouzian, *Down to the Crossroads*, 207.

<sup>45</sup> “Mississippi Riot Averted” (quotation); Mikschl, “Holy Childhood Mission and the Mississippi Freedom March,” 107; Goudsouzian, *Down to the Crossroads*, 203-204.

“were looking for a compromise.” However, Carmichael wanted to pitch the tents at the school, although the tents remained under the control of highway patrolmen who guarded the school ready to repel any attempt to enter its grounds. King sided with local civil rights leaders who favored negotiating with the city to avoid further violence and had declared that they would not accept march leaders telling them what to do.<sup>46</sup>

The agreement reached with the city, which Goudsouzian credits to city authorities, was based on the compromise originated by the NCCIJ team. Under its terms, the marchers would hold a meeting at the school grounds that night but make camp elsewhere. Under pressure from boycotted merchants, state officials, and Justice Department staff, at 9:15 p.m. city leaders accepted the deal negotiated by a delegation of local black leaders. That night, the Highway Patrol withdrew from the school and permitted a rally on its grounds at 10:00 p.m., at which Ralph Abernathy, Sr., vice president of the SCLC, told the demonstrators that the tents had been sent to Tougaloo College. After the rally, the marchers, who had not been notified beforehand of the agreement and had expected to pitch their tents at the school, returned dejectedly to stay a second night at Holy Child Jesus Mission. Back in the mission’s auditorium, Carmichael ripped into the compromise. James Lawson told him that putting tents up at the school would only have brought another vicious attack and that Carmichael had to respect the wishes of local black leaders.<sup>47</sup>

Governor Johnson phoned Gerow the next day to thank him for the Catholic Church’s help in preventing another tragedy in Canton. The NCCIJ sent Mikschl \$250 for costs incurred in feeding the marchers and later sent additional funds to cover other expenses. Mikschl reported that “the Sisters and girls teaching summer school here fed literally hundreds – milk, coolade (sic), sandwiches and soup. It made a deep impression on

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<sup>46</sup> Goudsouzian, *Down to the Crossroads*, 204, 212-13; Mikschl, “Holy Childhood Mission and the Mississippi Freedom March,” 107; memorandum, Jim [McGuire] to Matt [Ahmann], “Group Dynamics of the March Leaders’ Meeting on Friday, June 24, Canton, Mississippi,” June 30, 1966, folder 7, box 16, series 20; James J. McGuire to Robert E. Lucey, July 2, 1966, folder 11, box 8, series 34, NCCIJR; memorandum, Jim McGuire to Matt [Ahmann], “Southern Field Service and the Meredith Freedom March,” June 29, 1966, 2-5 (quotations on p. 4); *New York Times*, June 25, 1966; Goudsouzian does not mention the NCCIJ’s mediators. He argues that Highway Patrol chief Charles Snodgrass invited some local black leaders to the police department and by indicating that “the authorities were reasonable” helped pave the way for negotiations with the city. Goudsouzian, *Down to the Crossroads*, 212-13.

<sup>47</sup> *Washington Post*, June 26, 1966; *New York Times*, June 25, 1966; “Mississippi Riot Averted”; memorandum, Jim McGuire to Matt [Ahmann], “Southern Field Service and the Meredith Freedom March,” June 29, 1966, 5; Goudsouzian, *Down to the Crossroads*, 216-18.

all as they worked long into the morning hours.”<sup>48</sup>

The marchers left Canton on the morning of Saturday, June 25, and walked to Tougaloo College, their final staging post before the march ended in Jackson. That night, African American and white celebrities entertained a crowd of ten thousand at the college, with soul singer James Brown generating the greatest response. Mikschl recalled, “Father McSorley and I attended the rally that night again. Sitting on the grass that night, one felt very close to the masses of humanity struggling for racial justice.” The team the NCCIJ had sent to Mississippi also went to the evening rally and were joined by Sister Mary Peter (Margaret Ellen) Traxler, S.S.N.D., a Minnesotan on the staff of the NCCIJ’s Department of Educational Services, and Curtis Heaston, the NCCIJ’s associate director of employment services. Sister Mary Peter, who had marched in the Selma protests in 1965, wanted to join the next day’s march to Jackson, but Gerow opposed the idea.<sup>49</sup>

At 11:00 a.m. Sunday, about seventeen hundred people began the march from Tougaloo College, including Father Sherrill Smith, who had also marched at Selma, and at least eight other priests from outside the diocese. Evincing his customary caution, Gerow decided at noon that none of his diocesan priests should march or go to the rally. However, the bishop’s decision, McGuire later reported, “was not communicated officially to diocesan personnel,” probably because it came too late to be disseminated. Four priests and eight nuns based in Mississippi attended the rally, along with five seminarians who were working in the state for the summer. After “delicate negotiations with the diocese,” Sister Mary Peter joined the march when it reached the outskirts of Jackson and became the only nun to have marched. Sisson joined the march for the

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<sup>48</sup> Memorandum, Jim McGuire to Matt [Ahmann], “Southern Field Service and the Meredith Freedom March,” June 29, 1966, 2, 5; James J. McGuire to Luke Mikschl, July 2, 1966, memorandum, Jim McGuire to Matt [Ahmann], “Father Luke, Canton, Miss. – Freedom March Expenses,” September 9, 1966, folder 11, box 8, series 34, NCCIJR; Mikschl, “Holy Childhood Mission and the Mississippi Freedom March,” 107-108 (quotation).

<sup>49</sup> Mikschl, “Holy Childhood Mission and the Mississippi Freedom March,” 108 (quotation); Memorandum, Jim McGuire to Matt [Ahmann], “Southern Field Service and the Meredith Freedom March,” June 29, 1966, 5, 6; *New York Times*, June 22, 26, 1966; Goudsouzian, *Down to the Crossroads*, 224-26; Koehlinger, *New Nuns*, 80; Nelson, unaddressed letter, July 21, 1966; Sr. Mary Peter Traxler, S.S.N.D., “After Selma, You Can’t Stay Home Again!,” folder 11, box 2, series 8, NCCIJR.



final three blocks.<sup>50</sup>

The Holy Child Jesus Mission maintained its association with the march. Mikschl wrote, "Sunday, four Sisters, the four girls [who taught in the mission's summer school], and one of our own [African American] Catholic girls, and myself attended the Jackson rally of 16,000." Reminiscent of the media in Selma a year earlier, "Again," Mikschl observed, "the TV camera 'zoomed in' on the Sisters in the white habits in the crowds." More than 90 percent of those at the rally, estimated at between ten thousand and sixteen thousand people, were African American Mississippians, which made the presence of the white nuns even more conspicuous. By contrast, most of the Selma marchers had come from outside Alabama and overwhelmingly from the North.<sup>51</sup>

Although the attendance in Jackson was impressive, the march did not persuade either President Johnson or Congress to strengthen the civil rights bill, which later fell victim to a filibuster in the United States Senate, or to meet the other demands in the march's manifesto. Stung by the manifesto's criticisms and increasingly preoccupied with Vietnam, the Johnson administration had been indifferent to appeals for federal protection following the violence in Philadelphia and Canton, even though the latter, Dimmer notes, "equaled in ferocity the assault on the marchers at the Selma Bridge a year earlier."<sup>52</sup>

The Meredith March both revealed and exacerbated fissures within the civil rights movement. Overriding King's objections, the other march leaders denied Charles Evers's request to speak at the final rally because he had maintained his refusal to sign the march manifesto, despite his joining the march in Greenwood, and his calling on NAACP branches to assist it, as well as working with Jackson officials to determine the march's route to the state capitol. After he agreed to sign the manifesto, march leaders permitted Whitney M. Young Jr. to speak at the closing rally.

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<sup>50</sup> *Washington Post*, June 27, 1966; *New York Times*, June 27, 1966; memorandum, Jim McGuire to Matt [Ahmann], "Southern Field Service and the Meredith Freedom March," June 29, 1966, 6-7 (first quotation on p. 7); "Report of the Director of the Southern Field Service August, 1966," August 3, 1966, 5 (second quotation); memorandum, Jack [Sisson] to Matt [Ahmann], "Meredith Mississippi Freedom March, June 6-26, 1966 (Jim sent a separate report of his activities from June 22 to June 28)," June 30, 1966, 6; Levy, "S.A. to Selma, priest answered 'calls for protecting the weak.'"

<sup>51</sup> Mikschl, "Holy Childhood Mission and the Mississippi Freedom March," 108 (quotations); *New York Times*, June 27, 1966; *Washington Post*, June 27, 1966; *Lexington Advertiser*, June 30, 1966.

<sup>52</sup> Taylor Branch, *At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years, 1965-68* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006), 495-96, 529-30; Dittmer, *Local People*, 398-99, 400-401 (quotation on p. 400); *New York Times*, June 23, 24, 25, 26, 1966.

King concluded after the march that he could not work with SNCC again. Carmichael continued to alternate between calm, reasoned expositions about the need for independent black political mobilization and power, and more incendiary rhetoric that was seized upon by a largely hostile white media, accentuated divisions within the movement, and alienated some white supporters and sympathizers. Both SNCC and CORE adopted Black Power, and later, under new leadership, they expelled or sidelined whites.<sup>53</sup>

The final rally in Jackson had again seen rival SNCC and SCLC groups engage in competing chants of Black Power and Freedom Now, but as Dittmer notes, “the overwhelmingly black audience cheered all the speakers,” especially James Meredith who remained as enigmatic as ever and who was far less concerned about ideological differences among the march organizers. Ten thousand African American Mississippians had walked for part of the march, which along with federal registrars, had succeeded in registering 4,007 African Americans along its route. White supremacy remained entrenched in Mississippi politics, but in subsequent years, a growing black electorate resulting from implementation of the Voting Rights Act elected African Americans to office, ended race-baiting in elections, and exerted some influence on state and local politics.<sup>54</sup>

The Meredith March benefitted the SFS and the NCCIJ. By maintaining contact with the chancery, Sisson helped to overcome Gerow’s reservations about the SFS and the NCCIJ, which for their part, appreciated the bishop’s acquiescence in their efforts to assist the march. Four days after the march ended, Ahmann, who estimated that fifteen Catholic interracial councils had been “directly involved in [supporting the March in] some official way” with donations or volunteers, wrote that “officials in the Diocese of Mississippi [Natchez-Jackson] were most understanding of our role. In addition in contrast to Alabama [meaning Toolen during the Selma protests of 1965], priests calling the Chancery Office to check on the feeling there, were told that whether or not they entered the state to take part in the March ‘was a matter of their individual

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<sup>53</sup> *Washington Post*, June 22, 1966; *New York Times*, June 17, 27, 28, 29, 1966; *Lexington Advertiser*, June 30, 1966; David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York: William Morrow, 1986), 487, 489; Carson, *In Struggle*, 236-42; August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, *CORE: A Study in the Civil Rights Movement, 1942-1968* (Urbana, Chicago and London: University of Illinois Press, 1973), 417-20.

<sup>54</sup> *Washington Post*, June 27, 1966 (first and second quotations); *New York Times*, June 26, 27, 1966; *Northside Reporter*, June 30, 1966; Dittmer, *Local People*, 402 (third quotation), 415-17, 425-28.

conscience' and that the Bishop would be glad if they would just notify him if they were coming."<sup>55</sup>

Sisson built on his frequent contacts during the march with Monsignor McGough, whom he now considered to be "a strong ally," to organize a meeting on July 7, 1966, at the chancery "to evaluate the diocese's involvement and NCCIJ's involvement in the Mississippi March." Twenty priests attended, most of them based in Mississippi, along with members of religious orders that served African Americans. However, the diocese had no African American diocesan priests and only one of the priests from a religious order at the meeting, Father Charles Dixon Burns, S.V.D., a native Mississippian, was black. Gerow was present for the first half of the meeting. After his departure, the Mississippi-based priests voted in favor of recommendations that would permit priests in the diocese "to participate in protest marches" and nuns "in direct action programme exclusive of marches;" the holding of conferences and a workshop for clergy on race relations; the establishment of a Diocesan Human Relations Commission; pulpit exchanges between black and white pastors; and, more realistically, given that Burns was the sole black priest in the state, also between pastors of African American parishes and pastors of white parishes.<sup>56</sup>

The recommendations were subject to Gerow's approval, but the elderly bishop relinquished the running of the diocese to Brunini as apostolic administrator on July 11. In August, McGuire visited Brunini and found him "favorably inclined" toward the recommendations but unwilling to "commit himself in any way on them." McGuire informed Ahmann that Brunini's "attitude regarding race relations and the Church's witness in this regard is not as firm or as deep as that of Bishop Gerow." McGuire believed that it was Brunini's "native Mississippi background" that made him "paternalistic" toward African Americans. However, Brunini partially implemented the recommendations, such as holding a Human Relations Institute for clergy in African American parishes, and he maintained cordial relations with the SFS. When

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<sup>55</sup> Memorandum, Matt Ahmann to [NCCIJ] Board of Directors, "Conference Involvement in the Meredith Mississippi March," June 30, 1966, p. 3.

<sup>56</sup> Jim McGuire and Jack Sisson to James McGough, June 28, 1966; memorandum, Jack [Sisson] to Matt [Ahmann], "Evaluation of Mississippi March, Jackson, July 7, 1966," July 19, 1966 (first and second quotations), folder 7, box 16, series 20; memorandum, Jim McGuire to Matt [Ahmann], "Recommendations from the Chancery Meeting in Jackson, Mississippi, 7-7-66," August 4, 1966, (third and fourth quotations), folder 5, box 6, series 11, NCCIJR.

the NCCIJ considered closing the SFS in 1967 because of financial difficulties, Brunini made a donation and praised the SFS's involvement in the Meredith March, which had "enabled the Chancery to have a clear assessment of the situation." The SFS survived on this occasion, but two years later continued budgetary problems brought its closure and ended an important source of encouragement and support for Catholics in the state who were sympathetic to, or engaged in, the civil rights struggle.<sup>57</sup>

Their involvement in the Meredith March encouraged some priests to take a more active role in the civil rights movement, providing further evidence of the contribution of Catholic priests to the civil rights struggle in Mississippi. In August, Mikschl joined the Canton NAACP and became a board member. Kist spent two and a half months helping to organize the NAACP in Yazoo County, which soon recruited 150 members. In December, Evers presented a charter to the Yazoo City branch. Kist served as membership chairman and, within a year, the county had 1,004 NAACP members. In December 1967, Machesky, serving as "chief tactician," worked with two African American Methodist ministers to organize a two-year boycott of Greenwood that led to the hiring of black clerks and other improvements. However, these white Catholic priests were all members of religious orders, which gave them greater freedom to act than diocesan priests who were answerable to the diocese's bishop rather than an order's superiors, and they ministered to African Americans, not segregationist whites.<sup>58</sup>

White priests of white Catholic churches in Mississippi generally did not become involved in civil rights activities. They were deterred by, if they did not share, the segregationist convictions of most of their parishioners and were anxious not to alienate or divide their flocks, or be reprimanded by their cautious bishop. Sympathetic priests may also have

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<sup>57</sup> "Bishop Joseph Bernard Brunini"; memorandum, Jim McGuire to Matt [Ahmann], "Visit with Bishop Brunini, Jackson – Trip Report," August 18, 1966 (first through fifth quotations), Joseph B. Brunini to Mathew Ahmann, March 27, 1967 (sixth quotation), John P. Sisson to Bernard Law, September 28, 1967, Mathew Ahmann to Joseph B. Brunini, October 6, 1967, folder 14, box 11, series 33; memorandum, John P. Sisson to "Staff," "SFS Report to Staff, July 16-September 30, 1969," 1, folder 5, box 5, series 30, NCCIJR.

<sup>58</sup> Memorandum, Jim McGuire to Matt [Ahmann], "Father Luke Mikschl, M.S.S.T., Canton, Mississippi – Phone conversation 8/17/66," James J. McGuire to Luke Mikschl, September 7, 1966, John M. Kist to John P. Sisson, December 13, 1966, folder 14, box 11, series 33, NCCIJR; "Freedom News," *Crisis* 75 (January 1968): 25; *New York Times*, April 29, 1968 (quotation); Charles M. Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1995), 324-28; Murray, "Father Nathaniel and the Greenwood Movement," 277-78, 287-308.

feared ostracism. After the Greenwood boycott ended in December 1969 and the Greenwood civil rights movement declined, Machesky continued to suffer rejection from a white community with which he had once been close. Consequently, he avoided downtown and retreated to his mission before being transferred in 1981 to Charleston, Mississippi.<sup>59</sup>

Although far fewer in number and less conspicuous than in the Selma protests of 1965, Catholics played a supporting part in the Meredith March that was part of a wider Catholic contribution to the southern civil rights movement and racial change in Mississippi and the region, which historians are beginning to recognize. The march, and the wish of some Catholic clergy to participate, posed particular problems for Bishop Gerow, just as the Selma protests had done for Archbishop Toolen a year earlier. But Gerow proved more amenable than Toolen. Gerow was well aware that most white Catholics in his diocese, like other white Mississippians, were segregationists, who were not reconciled to racial change. At the same time, the bishop sought to bring his diocese into line with Catholic teachings on race. He took a cautious approach to desegregating Catholic institutions and caution also informed his approach to the Meredith March. Gerow quietly sanctioned Catholic clergy coming into the state to support the march and, also without publicity, he permitted priests from religious orders and nuns who worked in African American parishes in Mississippi to assist the marchers. But, after some indecision, he would not countenance diocesan priests, who served the diocese's white churches, marching, because he was concerned that such a public stand would alienate white Catholics, divide the Church, and bring segregationist retribution from those outside it. The march was Gerow's last involvement with the civil rights movement. Soon after, he handed over the administration of the diocese to Brunini, who would succeed him as Bishop in December 1967 at a time when Mississippi was still only beginning to be changed by the black struggle for equality.<sup>60</sup>

Influenced by a series of annual summer riots by African Americans in urban areas outside the South that began in 1964 and by the advent of Black Power, the NCCIJ increasingly concentrated on urban poverty, mostly in the industrial North. At its annual convention in 1967, the NCCIJ focused on "The Church and the Urban Crisis" and a year later on "Black Power and the White Church." The development of Black Power,

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<sup>59</sup> Murray, "Father Nathaniel and the Greenwood Movement," 307-308.

<sup>60</sup> "Bishop Joseph Bernard Brunini," consulted April 29, 2018, at <<http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bbrunini.html>>.

which maintained that black people needed to speak for themselves and determine the course of their struggle for justice, likely contributed to Mathew Ahmann's decision in July 1968 to resign from the NCCIJ. His wife Margaret later recalled, "I think basically he thought, 'A black man needs to run this.'" The appointment of an African American successor, James T. Harris Jr., who had no previous connection to the organization, suggested that the NCCIJ had also reached that conclusion.<sup>61</sup>

In Mississippi, widely acknowledged as one of the most resistant states to desegregation and where Black Power first received national attention, several white Catholic priests from religious orders continued to work with, and were often at the center of, NAACP chapters. Besides Kist and Mikschl in the Delta, they included Josephite priests Philip J. McLoone on the Mississippi Gulf Coast and Father William J. Morrissey, who was vice president of the Adams County NAACP. Their efforts bear testimony to the longevity of the civil rights movement that continued beyond 1965 and also, like the Meredith March, to the underappreciated contribution of Catholics to the movement in Mississippi.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Mark Newman, *Black Nationalism in American History: From the Nineteenth Century to the Million Man March* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 123-24; Mathew Ahmann, "The Church and the Urban Negro," *America* 118 (February 10, 1968): 181-85; "National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice Report of Mathew Ahmann Executive Director April, 1968," folder 1, box 85, Louis J. Twomey Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Loyola University Library, Loyola University New Orleans, New Orleans, Louisiana; Mathew Ahmann to Robert E. Lucey, December 27, 1968," folder "Social Problems Project Equality Natl. Cath. Conf. for Interracial Justice (1961-1969), Archives of the Archdiocese of San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas; Paul T. Murray, "From the Sidelines to the Front Lines—Mathew Ahmann Leads American Catholics into the Civil Rights Movement," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 107 (Spring 2014): 104-105 (quotation on p. 104).

<sup>62</sup> "Gulf Coast, Josephite Dies," *Josephite Harvest* 79 (Summer 1977): 24; "25<sup>th</sup> Jubilee," *Josephite Harvest* 73 (July-August 1971): 20-23.



# The Battle of Chickasaw Bayou

*by Robert L. Durham*

It was Christmas Eve, 1862. A grand ball was being held at the William Balfour House in Vicksburg, Mississippi, for the Confederate officers of the garrison and the gentlemen and ladies of the town. The officers were dressed in their gray uniforms, decorated with gold braid and trim of buff, blue, red, or yellow, depending on their rank and branch of service. The belles, in their rich, gaily colored gowns, made the war seem far away. There were flashes of color as they made their way through the intricate steps of the Virginia Reel and the quadrilles. They danced and celebrated merrily, not aware of two telegraph operators who were watching the Mississippi River for enemy vessels on this cold and drizzly night.<sup>1</sup>

L. L. Daniel, a telegraph operator whose duty was to keep the Mississippi River under observation, manned an observation site at Point Lookout, Louisiana. At about 8:45 p.m., he sighted a Federal gunboat heading south on the river, the first of a fleet of Union gunboats and troop transports. Reaching his office just after midnight, Daniel hurriedly telegraphed the operator at DeSoto, across the river from Vicksburg. This operator was Philip H. Fall, who immediately crossed the river, his small boat tossed about by the waves. Soon thereafter, wet and mud-covered, Fall arrived at the ball and made his way through the dancers to Major General Martin Luther Smith, the acting commander of Vicksburg in Lieutenant General John Clifford Pemberton's absence. Pemberton was at Grenada, Mississippi, facing off against Union Major General Ulysses S. Grant. Once given this warning, Smith made the announcement that "This ball is at an end; the enemy are down the river."<sup>2</sup>

Smith sent Brigadier General Stephen Dill Lee with about five thousand men to defend the Walnut Hills region, north of Vicksburg,

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen D. Lee, "Details of Important Work by Two Confederate Telegraph Operators, Christmas Eve, 1862, Which Prevented the Almost Complete Surprise of the Confederate Army at Vicksburg," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Volume 8 (Oxford, 1904): 53.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 53-54.

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leaving approximately sixteen hundred men to defend the city.<sup>3</sup> Lee hurriedly set his men and many slaves to work preparing rifle pits and artillery parapets. They also cleared most of the willows and other trees to construct abatis in any place that was not defended by swamp or bayou. They left stumps that were three or four feet high and interlaced the branches they had cut, forming an almost impenetrable barrier. The branches, draped with Spanish moss, would later provide cover for the sharpshooters and skirmishers on both sides.<sup>4</sup>

Little did the Confederates know that the Union fleet was no longer steaming downstream; it was anchored at Milliken's Bend, Louisiana, a few miles up-river from Vicksburg. The infantry force on board the transports was the Expeditionary Force, Army of the Tennessee, consisting of approximately thirty thousand Union soldiers commanded by Major General William Tecumseh Sherman. He detached the brigade led by Brigadier General Stephen Gano Burbridge of Brigadier General Andrew Jackson (A. J.) Smith's division. Sherman ordered Burbridge to move inland and destroy part of the Vicksburg, Shreveport, & Texas (VS&T) Railroad near the Tensas River. Burbridge also burned a great deal of cotton, corn, and cloth. When the fleet moved south again, Sherman left A. J. Smith at Milliken's Bend to follow when Burbridge returned.<sup>5</sup>

On Christmas Day, the Federal fleet moved down to the mouth of the Yazoo River. There, Sherman detached Brigadier General Morgan Lewis Smith with one of his brigades on the Louisiana side of the Mississippi to destroy more of the VS&T Railroad.<sup>6</sup> Sherman was in no hurry as he moved down-river; perhaps he should have been. He had departed his headquarters at Memphis, Tennessee, on December 20, and stopped at Helena, Arkansas, to pick up Brigadier General Frederick Steele's division. They moved leisurely down the river, stopping now and then to acquire firewood. They also stopped each night.<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile, the commander of the Army of the Tennessee, Ulysses S. Grant, was north of Grenada, Mississippi, with forty thousand men, moving south against General Pemberton, who commanded the

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<sup>3</sup> Gary Gildner, *Letters from Vicksburg* (Greensboro, NC: Unicorn Press, 1976), 83.

<sup>4</sup> Committee of the Regiment, *The Story of the Fifty-Fifth Regiment Illinois Volunteer Infantry in the Civil War 1861-1865* (W. J. Coulter, Clinton, 1887): 192.

<sup>5</sup> United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series 1, Volume 17, Part 1 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), 605; hereafter OR. All references are to Volume 17, Part 1 unless otherwise noted.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Gildner, 77.

Department of Mississippi and East Louisiana. Most of the forces detailed to defend Vicksburg were with Pemberton. The Federal campaign plan was for Grant to keep Pemberton occupied while Sherman moved against Vicksburg. If Grant kept pressure on Pemberton, the Southern commander would not be able to send any of his soldiers to reinforce the Rebel troops at Vicksburg. If Pemberton broke away completely, Grant would follow him to Vicksburg and reinforce Sherman.

Unknown to Sherman, the plans for the Union campaign fell apart on the same day Sherman left Memphis. Confederate cavalry leader, Major General Earl Van Dorn, raided behind Union lines, and on December 20, 1862, he struck and destroyed Grant's supply depot at Holly Springs, Mississippi. Grant abandoned his part in the campaign but was unable to communicate this information to Sherman, since Sherman had already left Memphis.<sup>8</sup> If Sherman had known, he probably would either have abandoned his role in the campaign or moved more expeditiously because he needed to take Vicksburg before reinforcements from Pemberton could arrive. Any delay was in the Confederacy's favor.

On December 21, Pemberton had ordered Brigadier General John C. Vaughn to take his brigade of East Tennesseans to reinforce the defenders of Vicksburg. On Christmas Eve, learning that the Federal fleet was at the mouth of the Yazoo River, Pemberton ordered Brigadier General John Gregg's brigade to Vicksburg. The next day, he sent the 40th Alabama Regiment to report to Lee. Once these troops reached Vicksburg, there would be a little over thirteen thousand men to defend the town; the Confederates would still be outnumbered, but not by as much, and they held a strong position. Pemberton reached Vicksburg at noon on December 26 and assumed command of the city, while confirming Lee as commander of the troops defending the Walnut Hills.<sup>9</sup>

The Yazoo River/Chickasaw Bayou area north of Vicksburg was cut up by swamps, bayous, and lakes. Since describing this expanse is almost impossible, the reader should refer to the map accompanying this article.

On December 26, under the cover of the gunboats that shelled the banks of the Yazoo River up to Snyder's Mill, Sherman disembarked most of the Union troops at Johnson's Plantation.<sup>10</sup> The next day, he landed

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<sup>8</sup> U. S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant, Volume 1* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1982): 225.

<sup>9</sup> United States War Department, *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion, Series 1, Volume 23* (Government Printing Office, Washington, 1897-1922): 611; Hereafter *ORN*.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*.

Steele's division at the mouth of Chickasaw Bayou. To get into position, the Federal forces first had to push the Confederate troops away from their forward points at Mrs. Lake's plantation and Thompson Lake. Later in the day, Union Rear Admiral David Dixon Porter reported the action taken by the Navy: "We have had stirring times to-day, engaging the Yazoo batteries and taking up the torpedoes. The old war horse, Benton, had been much cut up, and the gallant, noble [Lieutenant Commander William] Gwin, I fear, mortally wounded. He was struck in the right breast with a large rifle shot, which tore off all the muscles of his right arm."<sup>11</sup>

All the approaches were commanded by Confederate sharpshooters who manned the Chickasaw Bayou levee running along the bayou on its opposite bank, with a road immediately behind that led to Yazoo City. This levee and road formed a natural parapet. The road also offered a means of quickly shifting troops to reinforce the different sectors. Behind the levee was a strip of table land upon which were rifle pits and artillery batteries. Further behind the table land was a "high, abrupt range of hills [Walnut Hills] whose scarred sides were marked all the way up with rifle trenches, and the crowns of the principle hills presented heavy batteries."<sup>12</sup>

On the morning of December 27, Brigadier General Francis (Frank) Preston Blair Jr.'s Union brigade was detached from Steele's division. Steele was ordered to advance between Chickasaw Bayou and Thompson's Lake with his other two brigades. Steele said: "While we were cutting the roads through the timber to the levee Admiral Porter called for troops to cross the river and disperse about 400 sharpshooters who were concealed on the west side of the river impeding the progress of the gunboats." Steele sent the 17th Missouri.<sup>13</sup>

When the 17th Missouri returned, General Steele continued his forward movement. Steele stated, "Our progress was considerably retarded by the timber felled across the levee." Soon, they came to deep water, which turned out to be Thompson's Lake. They were on the wrong side of the lake; they should have been between the lake and the bayou. It was too late in the day to retrace their steps, so they bivouacked, with no fires.<sup>14</sup>

Charles Willison of the 76th Ohio told of an unexpected hazard: "Moving forward, our way was through a field overgrown with cockle-

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 574, 576.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 606.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 651.

<sup>14</sup> *OR*, 651.

burrs, a great thicket of them higher than our heads and crowned with the dry burrs which showered down on us at a touch. Midway in this my cap was knocked off and that instant my head was a mass of the prickly things which I had no time to stop and detach. I simply had to clap my cap on top.”<sup>15</sup>

Brigadier General David Stuart’s brigade followed Blair’s brigade until they came to an open field. Stuart was under the command of Morgan L. Smith, who ordered him to send a regiment to investigate some woods on the right of the open field. Stuart dispatched the 55th Illinois accompanied by the 58th Ohio from Blair’s brigade and described their advance: “They crossed a bayou near at hand on a fallen tree,”<sup>16</sup> single-file. When they got to the woods, they ran into Confederate skirmishers. Stuart immediately crossed the remainder of his brigade, which drove the enemy skirmishers across Chickasaw Bayou. When the Union forces reached the bayou, they were met by a heavy volley and forced to take cover in the abatis, where they lay under severe gunfire throughout the night.<sup>17</sup>

The Northern division of Brigadier General George Washington Morgan advanced to the Lake house, where it found a heavy force of the enemy in a wooded area across Chickasaw Bayou. A two-hour battle ensued before the Confederates retreated. Night was coming on, so the men camped at the battle site.<sup>18</sup>

The next morning, December 28, Morgan L. Smith’s Union division found itself facing a narrow sand spit at an Indian mound that would provide a way across the bayou. The Confederates had thrown down abatis along the Federal side of the bayou and occupied the parapet behind the levee, with a system of rifle pits and batteries providing crossfire. Union forces would have to fight their way through these defenses before they reached the bluff.

Smith investigated the crossing during the early morning fog of December 28. According to a member of the 55th Illinois, he “proceeded to the edge of the brush that fringed the slashed timber, took out his glass and began to look into the lifting fog to get a view across the bayou . . . Presently he put up his glass, calmly reined his horse to the rear and returned as he came . . . He had, while looking through his glass, been shot

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<sup>15</sup> Charles A. Willison, *Reminiscences of a Boy's Service With the 76<sup>th</sup> Ohio* (Menasha, WI: George Banta, 1908), 36; Committee, *55<sup>th</sup> Illinois*, 188.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 635.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 637, 649.



*Battles And Leaders Of The Civil War, Volume III. New York: The Century Company, 1887.*

by a rebel sharp-shooter, the bullet striking him near the top of the hip bone and ranging across the back to the spine; yet such was his splendid nerve that the wound, almost mortal, did not cause a tremor of the voice. He fell from his horse when out of sight of his men, and was carried to the boats." Stuart assumed leadership of the division but was placed under the control of A. J. Smith, who was more experienced.<sup>19</sup>

On Stuart's right was A. J. Smith's division. Smith placed Burbridge's brigade next to Stuart, with orders to build rafts to cross his men over the bayou. A. J. Smith's other brigade, commanded by Colonel William J. Landram, was to engage the enemy from the road that led to Vicksburg by moving skirmishers forward into the abatis.<sup>20</sup>

Steele's division was moved to the west side of Thompson's Lake to link up with General Morgan. Frank Blair's brigade, although part of Steele's division, was treated by General Morgan as an autonomous unit. Morgan ordered Blair to move his brigade forward to the left of General M. L. Smith. Colonel John B. Wyman of the 13th Illinois Infantry was killed around this time, "shot through the breast, from left to right, by a rifle-ball which was found lodged in the underclothing on the right side of

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 607; Committee, *55<sup>th</sup> Illinois*, 192.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

his body,”<sup>21</sup> and Lieutenant Colonel Adam B. Gorgas assumed command of the regiment.

Sherman’s skirmishers and sharpshooters tried to force their way through the abatis. The fight settled down into a fire fight between the artillery and skirmishers on both sides. Some of the skirmishers covered their hats and uniforms with the Spanish moss they took from the abatis, making a natural camouflage.<sup>22</sup>

Captain Jacob T. Foster, commander of the 1st Wisconsin Light Artillery, got into a duel with an enemy battery. He described their time under fire: “Here the bursting of shells, the crashing of trees, the thunder of our own guns, and the showering of bullets seemed enough almost to drive us back, but bravely did our men stand their ground, and although many of them were knocked down, strange to say none were hurt, but several were severely shocked for a moment. Lieutenant Nutting had a shell to burst in the ground about 2 feet under him, raising him several feet into the air and completely stunning him for several minutes without otherwise injuring him.”<sup>23</sup>

That night, Stuart sent out a scouting party that discovered an old ford. He described the terrain: “The enemy had obstructed [the ford] by felling heavy trees which formed an impassable entanglement. On the opposite shore [of the bayou], the bank was near . . . 20 feet high and deeply underworn by the water.” There were Confederate rifle pits across the bayou, on the left of the ford, which commanded the crossing perfectly. There was also a battery opposite the ford. Stuart had the abatis cleared that night by a working party.<sup>24</sup>

Stuart was ordered by Sherman to advance skirmishers to keep the Confederate troops occupied. One of his regiments detailed for this purpose was the 55th Illinois. According to one of its members, “They were directed to scatter out among the logs and keep up an incessant fire at the top of the levee beyond.” The companies were sent out one company at a time. When it became F Company’s turn, “It was led forward by Captain Casper Schleich. With his arm outstretched for the purpose of directing one of his followers to a place of safety, apparently not thinking of his own peril, he

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<sup>21</sup> Committee of the Regiment, *Military History and Reminiscences of the Thirteenth Regiment of Illinois Volunteer Infantry in the Civil War in the United States 1861-1865* (Women’s Temperance: Chicago, 1892), 239.

<sup>22</sup> Committee, *55<sup>th</sup> Illinois*, 194.

<sup>23</sup> *OR*, 643.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 635.

was struck fair in the breast by a bullet, and with a gush of blood from his great heart he fell dead into the arms of his comrades.”<sup>25</sup>

The Federals attempted to build a pontoon bridge across one of the bayous on the morning of December 29.<sup>26</sup> In the words of F. H. Mason of the 42nd Ohio Infantry, “every effort was made to lay the bridge, under a heavy fire from the enemy’s artillery and sharp-shooters, but the boats were heavy, the enemy’s shells sunk two of them, and the bridge would not span the bayou.”<sup>27</sup>

The rest of the Federals started the morning as the subjects of an artillery barrage against their entire line. Captain Foster of the 1st Wisconsin Light Artillery described the cannonade: “The cannonading was opened at 7:30 a.m. and was truly terrific to us. Shell after shell burst among us and in the air just in front, sending in our midst a hail-storm of bursting shell.”<sup>28</sup>

Around 10:30 a.m., the Union forces opened a cannonade on the Confederate lines, which lasted for an hour and a half, allowing the Federals time to arrange their forces into assault columns. Confederate Colonel Winchester Hall of the 26th Louisiana Infantry described the bombardment from the Confederate side: “A terrible storm of shot and shell now burst upon us, and in its fury it seemed as if no living thing about us could escape. When at its height I cried out at the highest pitch of my voice: ‘That’s the music!’” This simple statement seemed to calm his troops.<sup>29</sup>

When the cannonade was over, the Union troops were ordered to assault all along the line. However, most of the regiments on the flanks were not able to penetrate the abatis, so the main attack was on the center of the Confederate line. Blair’s brigade waded back to the east side of Chickasaw Bayou before the offensive. According to Lieutenant Simon T. Josselyn of the 13th Illinois, “General Blair rode along as we were about crossing a muddy bayou, and said: ‘I’ll see if you can stand mud and water as well as you can stand fire.’”<sup>30</sup> Blair formed his brigade

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 635; Committee, *55<sup>th</sup> Illinois*, 193.

<sup>26</sup> *OR*, 647.

<sup>27</sup> F. H. Mason, *The Forty-Second Ohio Infantry: A History of the Organization and Services of that Regiment in the War of the Rebellion* (Cobb, Andrews and Company: Cleveland, 1876), 24.

<sup>28</sup> *OR*, 643.

<sup>29</sup> Winchester Hall, *The Story of the 26<sup>th</sup> Louisiana Infantry in the Service of the Confederate States* (Old South Books: Leavenworth, KS, 1890), 46.

<sup>30</sup> *OR*, 655; Committee, *13<sup>th</sup> Illinois*, 241.

in a wood between Thompson's Lake and the bayou.<sup>31</sup> When he had them formed in a double line, he ordered the men forward. Colonel John F. DeCourcy, of Morgan's division, positioned his brigade along the abatis, in a double line of battle. Brigadier General John Milton Thayer of Steele's division arrayed his Iowa brigade in a column with the 4th Iowa in the lead. They were to support DeCourcy's brigade. Thayer went in person with the 4th Iowa and ordered each of the other regiments to follow the regiment in front of it.

When the order to advance was given, DeCourcy's two right regiments (22nd Kentucky and 42nd Ohio) "found themselves immediately engaged under a hot fire in the toils of a nearly impassable abatis of heavy timber." John Harrington of the 22nd Kentucky Infantry wrote in a letter home: "One poor fellow received a ball full in the forehead who was right in front of me he turned over gave a rattling groan and expired."<sup>32</sup> DeCourcy's two left regiments (54th Indiana and 16th Ohio) had an easier approach to the bayou and raced down the road in column formation. The rugged Westerners surged over a corduroy bridge that spanned the bayou and formed a line of battle in a belt of land that the soldiers dubbed the "Bloody Triangle." They fought across the Triangle to the County Road at the base of the Chickasaw Bluff but were unable to advance farther.<sup>33</sup>

Between Blair's formation and the enemy "was an entanglement formed by cutting down small cotton trees, leaving the trees entwined among the stumps. The bed of the bayou (a feeder stream of Chickasaw Bayou) was about 100 yards wide, quicksand, and about 15 feet wide, water 3 feet deep. The bank on the opposite side was steep and obstructed by abatis, crowned by a line of rifle pits." Another line of rifle pits was behind the first.<sup>34</sup>

Blair led his troops through the abatis and across the stream into the "Bloody Triangle." Albert H. Sibley of H Company, 13th Illinois said: "The front was bold and magnificent, and the battle maintained with courage and splendor – if such things can be called splendor, that take men's lives."<sup>35</sup> Blair and his men fought their way past the two lines of rifle pits.

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<sup>31</sup> *OR*, 652.

<sup>32</sup> Stuart W. Sanders, "'I Have Seen War in All Its Horrors': Two Civil War Letters of John T. Harrington, Twenty-second Kentucky Union Infantry Regiment." *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society*, 105, no. 4 (2007), 657-77. <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.snhu.edu/stable/23387259>: 663.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 649.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, 652, 655.

<sup>35</sup> Committee, *13<sup>th</sup> Illinois*, 246.



Above the second line of rifle pits was a group of small willows and some of the Confederates took cover there. The 13th Illinois drove them out in a hand-to-hand fight.<sup>36</sup> The brigade progressed to the levee in front of the county road, but were unable to advance farther. Blair stated that “Some reached the foot of these formidable works only to pour out their lives at their base.” His troops were falling fast around him.<sup>37</sup>

General Lee of the Confederate army stated that “As soon as they began to get close to the Confederate line they were literally mowed down by the fire of the infantry in their front and both flanks.”<sup>38</sup> Troops from Louisiana captured four colors and 332 Union soldiers before the Federals retreated in confusion.<sup>39</sup>

Meanwhile, the 4th Iowa, of General Thayer’s Iowa brigade, had crossed the corduroy bridge over the bayou. According to Lurton Ingersoll, “They carried the first line of works, drove the rebels from their second line, and there remained under a terrible fire waiting for support.”<sup>40</sup> When Thayer looked around for his backup regiments, he found that there were none. He re-crossed the bayou and found the second regiment in line, the 30th Iowa. Before it was able to fulfill Thayer’s orders, it had been ordered by General Steele to move off to the right to support General Morgan.<sup>41</sup> Each of the other three regiments in line followed the 30th Iowa, according to orders.<sup>42</sup>

Thayer returned to the 4th Iowa, and walked the line, “absolutely shedding tears at sight of so many brave men falling around.”<sup>43</sup> “It was nothing but slaughter for it to remain.” Thayer ordered the 4th back across the bayou.<sup>44</sup>

J. E. Gaskell of the 17th Louisiana described the Iowans’ fight from the Confederate side: “They were within good rifle range from the time they left the old field, and the slaughter was terrible. We rounded up

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<sup>36</sup> W. J. Tenney, *The Military and Naval History of the Rebellion in the United States* (Stackpole Books: Mechanicsburg, PA, 2003), 334.

<sup>37</sup> *OR*, 652.

<sup>38</sup> Stephen D. Lee, “The Campaign of Generals Grant and Sherman Against Vicksburg in December, 1862, and January 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1863, Known as the ‘Chickasaw Bayou Campaign,’” *Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society* (Oxford, 1901), VI, 33.

<sup>39</sup> *OR*, 682.

<sup>40</sup> Lurton Dunham Ingersoll, *Iowa and the Rebellion* (J. B. Lippincott: Dubuque, IA, 1867), 44.

<sup>41</sup> *OR*, 649, 661.

<sup>42</sup> Ingersoll, 86; *OR*, Part 1, 659.

<sup>43</sup> Ingersoll, 86.

<sup>44</sup> *OR*, 659-660.

many prisoners. Those who could get away did not stand upon the order of their going.”<sup>45</sup>

Colonel Hall of the 26th Louisiana said, “Under cover of shot and shell, the enemy advanced, with a force quite sufficient to carry our weak lines, for the men in the pits were in single file, and we had no reserve force. Artillery and infantry, on both sides, soon became hotly engaged. The enemy’s line continued to advance, although every weapon on our side was warm, and every man was doing his best. Some approached within fifty yards of our line, but it was their last assault.”<sup>46</sup>

Farther to the right, Colonel Giles A. Smith’s Federal brigade of Stuart’s division was directed to storm an Indian mound. The troops made it through the abatis, and two regiments were deployed behind the bank of the bayou as sharpshooters. One company of the 6th Missouri was ordered to cross and construct a road up the bank of the levee. When they got to the levee, the men decided that they would have to dig through the levee, and began to do so. While they were working, Smith discovered a narrow path leading up the levee about 100 yards to the left. It was wide enough to allow two men to walk abreast.<sup>47</sup>

Smith “immediately ordered the Sixth to cross, which they did in fine style under a heavy fire.” It formed under the levee and waited for the working party to finish cutting its way through. According to Sherman, “The men of the Sixth Missouri actually scooped out with their hands caves in the bank, which sheltered them against the fire of the enemy, who, right over their heads, held their muskets outside the parapet vertically, and fired down.” By now, it was getting dark. Smith deployed two more regiments as sharpshooters and ordered the 6th Missouri to retreat under cover of the darkness and covering fire of the sharpshooters. Even then, they had to retreat one man at a time.<sup>48</sup>

The 60th Tennessee of Vaughn’s brigade was on the extreme Confederate left. They were not attacked but were subjected to a heavy Union artillery barrage. R. L. Bachman of the 60th, with his regiment, “was ordered to move into the blockade of fallen timber . . . for protection. While obeying this order, a shell from the enemy’s battery fell into

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<sup>45</sup> J. E. Gaskell, “Battle of Chickasaw Bayou,” *Confederate Veteran* (Nashville, TN, 1915), XXIII, 128.

<sup>46</sup> Hall, 46.

<sup>47</sup> *OR*, 633-634.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 634; Committee, *55<sup>th</sup> Illinois*, 195; William T. Sherman, *Memoirs of General William T. Sherman* (Da Capo: New York, 1984), I, 292.



*Harper's Weekly. "The Battle At Vicksburg - Gallant Charge Of The Sixth Missouri Regiment." January 31, 1863: 77.*

our company . . . It passed through one man, then exploded, mortally wounding five others. A fragment of the same shell tore the cover off of the haversack of another soldier and broke the bayonet in its scabbard hanging by his side."<sup>49</sup>

Stephen D. Lee, whose horse was killed under him by a cannon shot, was seen everywhere on the Confederate line, especially where the fighting was heaviest. According to A. S. Abrams, "At last, a flank movement was made by our forces, sallying from the breastworks and attacking the enemy on his [left] flank, routing him . . . This coup de etat put an end to the battle, the enemy having been punished too severely to attempt another assault."<sup>50</sup>

General Sherman concluded that he could not break the Confederate line "without being too crippled to act with any vigor afterward." He described the end of the attack: "When the night of the 29th closed in we stood upon our original ground and had suffered a repulse." It rained heavily that night. Willison of the 76th Ohio described what he went

<sup>49</sup> R. L. Bachman, "That Perilous Ride," *Confederate Veteran* (Nashville, TN, 1902), X, 409.

<sup>50</sup> A. S. Abrams, *A Full and Detailed History of the Siege of Vicksburg* (Intelligencer Steam Power Presses: Atlanta, 1863), 13; Gaskell, 128.

through: "Rain poured down in torrents all night and my rubber poncho, which I put up for shelter, did not save me from the thick, sticky, miry clay in which I had to wallow trying to get a little sleep."<sup>51</sup>

Sherman visited Admiral David Dixon Porter that night and suggested that he would hold the present ground and give Porter ten thousand infantry. He wanted Porter to advance up the Yazoo as far as possible, near the battery on Drumgould's Bluff, disembark, and attack the Confederate lines there. He assigned Steele's division and Giles Smith's brigade of Stuart's division to board the transports for this effort. The attack was scheduled to take place at 4:00 a.m. on December 30, 1862. However, when it came time for the fleet to start up the river, "the admiral had found the fog so dense on the river that the boats could not move."<sup>52</sup>

On December 31, Union General Morgan sent a flag of truce, asking for four hours to collect his wounded and bury the dead. The Confederate general granted the four hours, but there was no firing on either side for the rest of the day.<sup>53</sup>

Sherman and Porter decided to try on the night of January 1, 1863, for the surprise attack at Drumgould's Bluff. Before the fleet moved, Sherman got a note from Porter: "Inasmuch as the moon does not set tonight until 5.25 the landing must be a daylight affair, which in my opinion, is too hazardous to try." Sherman agreed, and the attack was called off.<sup>54</sup>

The men not on the transports were camped on low, swampy ground that would have been turned into a quagmire if it rained again. There were high water marks on the trees ten to twelve feet above the roots. Sherman could see "no good reason for remaining in so unenviable a place any longer." He gave orders to embark his troops, and they were all on their transports by sunrise of January 2. He could hear trains coming and departing Vicksburg all the time and was sure that more Rebel reinforcements were arriving. There were rumors that Grant had fallen back from Grenada, so there was no chance that he would arrive to reinforce Sherman as planned.<sup>55</sup>

The Union forces did not board their transports without some response from the Confederates. General Lee reported that he: "With the 2nd Texas [Cavalry] and two Tennessee regiments [3rd and 30th], pursued the

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<sup>51</sup> *OR*, 608-609; Willison, 38.

<sup>52</sup> *OR*, 609.

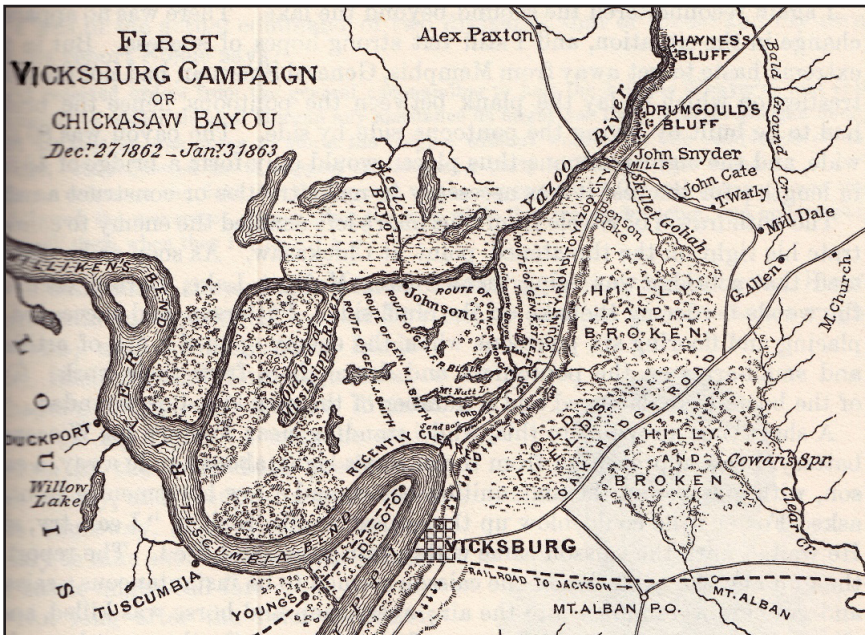
<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, 684.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, 608.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, 609-610.

enemy . . . The 2nd Texas was deployed as skirmishers . . . and got close to the boats and opened fire on them, but the enemy had gotten aboard, and were moving off."<sup>56</sup>

On January 3, the Union troops were back at Milliken's Bend. Major General John Alexander McClernand met Sherman there. Outranking Sherman, he took over command. At Sherman's suggestion, they moved up-river and captured Arkansas Post a week later, somewhat mitigating the disaster of Chickasaw Bayou, where they had suffered almost two thousand casualties in contrast to fewer than two hundred for the Confederates. Nevertheless, the Union military was not finished with Vicksburg with the conclusion of the Chickasaw Bayou Campaign. The Federals would return under General Ulysses S. Grant, and they would not stop until Vicksburg was theirs.



*Battles And Leaders Of The Civil War, Volume III. New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1956.*

<sup>56</sup> Lee, "The Campaigns of Generals Grant and Sherman," 35.

# **Southerners Divided: The Opposition of Mississippi Whigs to Texas Annexation during the Presidential Election of 1844 as Portrayed by *The Republican* of Woodville, Mississippi**

*by Laura Ellyn Smith*

The historic Mississippi newspaper *The Republican* is an important source that provides insight into the socio-political divisions that defined the antebellum South. Most significantly, during the presidential election of 1844, *The Republican* editor opposed Texas annexation due to fears over its potential impact on the slave economy in Mississippi. The election-year issues of *The Republican* provide a new perspective into the calculated risk some Southern Whigs took in opposing Texas annexation while prioritizing the security of their own state's slave economy. The risk in opposing annexation was that it ran contrary to the consistent anxiety of Southern slaveholders to bring more slave states into the Union, a fear that had shaped politics throughout the antebellum era.

*The Republican* yields crucial insight into Mississippi's divisive antebellum politics from the distinct perspective of a local community dominated by the planter class. The newspaper represented the political opinion of the white inhabitants of Woodville, the county seat of Wilkinson County and one of the state's earliest towns dominated by Whigs.<sup>1</sup> Whigs were frequently viewed as "the party of property," and indeed from the 1836 presidential election to the 1844 election, "the most consistently high correlation is between Whig voting strength and high percentages of slaves within the total population."<sup>2</sup> The enduring approval received by *The Republican* is evident from the newspaper's creation in 1823

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<sup>1</sup> Mississippi Department of Archives and History, "About The Republican," *Library of Congress: Chronicling America*, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84020022/> (accessed March 31, 2018); David Nathaniel Young, "The Mississippi Whigs, 1834-1860" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Alabama, 1968), 48-49.

<sup>2</sup> Young, "The Mississippi Whigs, 1834-1860," 50, 56.

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to its continued publication today, making it the oldest newspaper in Mississippi.<sup>3</sup> It was, and continues to be, published weekly. Similar to other antebellum newspapers, *The Republican* reprinted articles from across the nation, which enhances its usefulness as a source by providing different regional perspectives.

The significance of *The Republican* as a neglected source and its historic longevity as a newspaper is emphasized in comparison to other Mississippi newspapers. Although antebellum Mississippi politics has not received a lot of scholarly attention, David Nathaniel Young wrote his 1968 doctoral dissertation on “The Mississippi Whigs, 1834-1860.”<sup>4</sup> While Young’s discussion of Texas annexation is brief, he describes how divergent views concerning the controversial matter proliferated amongst Mississippi Whigs.<sup>5</sup> Young concisely summarizes that Mississippi Whigs could be identified as either preferring Texas to remain as an independent republic or supportive of annexation within a particular context—specifically, for example, in a peaceful manner that would avoid war.<sup>6</sup> Young does not mention *The Republican* or cite an example of a newspaper in favor of the concept of annexation. Nevertheless, he does discuss how both the *Vicksburg Whig* and *Jackson Southron* opposed annexation, with the *Vicksburg Whig* specifically expressing concerns over war and the *Jackson Southron* emerging as “the best champion” of opposition to immediate annexation, in support of the continuance of Texas as an independent republic.<sup>7</sup> Together, *The Republican*, *Vicksburg Whig*, and *Jackson Southron* represent a consensus of Whig opposition to Texas annexation within the western region of Mississippi, a region dominated by planters predisposed to support Whigs.<sup>8</sup>

Nonetheless, displaying the strength of anti-annexation sentiment in Wilkinson County, *The Republican* of Woodville remains a neglected and significant source, with its endorsement of Whig presidential candidate Henry Clay in opposition to the pro-annexation Democrat Party candidate James K. Polk. The strength of these beliefs is evident both in the newspaper editor’s fervent writing and the fact that *The Republican* continued to thrive as the town’s trusted and established newspaper. As

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<sup>3</sup> Mississippi Department of Archives and History, “About *The Republican*.”

<sup>4</sup> Young, “The Mississippi Whigs, 1834-1860.”

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 139-140.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

the leader of the Whig Party and an eminent statesman with extensive political experience, Clay easily gained his party's nomination. While Clay ran for the presidency without success in the disputed election of 1824 and the election of 1832, he endured as an imposing political figure.<sup>9</sup> For the Whigs, Clay's leadership in passing the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and mitigating the Nullification Crisis of 1833 made him a formidable candidate who represented Whigs' devotion to the Union, a devotion that was clearly apparent amongst Mississippi Whigs in 1844.<sup>10</sup> Michael F. Holt accurately states that the conviction the Whigs had "in the appeal of Clay . . . was well placed," considering Clay's distinguished political career, in contrast with the inconspicuous Democrat Polk.<sup>11</sup>

While different in character and political outlook, Clay of Kentucky and Polk of Tennessee nonetheless exhibited some similarities.<sup>12</sup> Both candidates were slaveholders who described slavery as a necessary evil, while possessing no intention of abolishing the practice.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, Polk owned a cotton plantation in Yalobusha County, Mississippi.<sup>14</sup> Historians including Daniel Walker Howe and David S. and Jeanne T. Heidler, have explained Clay's defeat by emphasizing the role in the election of the antislavery Liberty Party and its presidential candidate James G. Birney.<sup>15</sup> While *The Republican* stresses its anti-annexation, pro-slavery stance, the newspaper mentions the threat of abolitionism more than Texas. This editorial position exemplifies the newspaper's attempt to exploit the Southern fear of abolitionism in order to depict annexation as a threat to slavery and thereby garner more opposition to Polk. Notably, *The Republican* does not fully discuss Clay's inconsistent reaction to Texas, likely in order to avoid any speculation amongst Southerners over whether Clay could be trusted to protect slavery.

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<sup>9</sup> Scott Farris, *Almost President: The Men Who Lost The Race But Changed The Nation* (Guilford, CT: Lyons Press, 2012), 20.

<sup>10</sup> "John Q. Adams to Polk: 1825-1849," *The Presidents*, Vol 1, directed by Craig Haffner and Donna E. Lusitana (New York: The History Channel, 2005), DVD; Young, "The Mississippi Whigs, 1834-1860," 142.

<sup>11</sup> Michael F. Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party: Jacksonian Politics and the Onset of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 201.

<sup>12</sup> "John Q. Adams to Polk: 1825-1849," *The Presidents*.

<sup>13</sup> John Seigenthaler, *James K. Polk* (New York: Times Books, 2003), 96.

<sup>14</sup> Amy S. Greenberg, *A Wicked War: Polk, Clay, and the 1846 U.S. Invasion of Mexico* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012), 33.

<sup>15</sup> Daniel Walker Howe, *The Political Culture of the American Whigs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 196; David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler, *Henry Clay: The Essential American* (New York: Random House, 2011), 392.



The presidential election of 1844 was a pivotal moment in the lead up to the Civil War and foretold the eventual demise of the Whig Party through the sharpening of sectional divisions. The question of American territorial expansion, specifically understood as “the Texas question,” was fiercely debated and the slavery controversy ominously re-emerged in 1844. Both the election of 1844 and the issue of Texas annexation had sectional as well as partisan consequences. In producing one of the narrowest results in American presidential electoral history, the election clearly demonstrates strong partisanship. Clay seemed invincible during the spring of 1844. However, the election results reflect one of the most remarkable transformations of electoral fortunes. In Wilkinson County, a county that demonstrated a strong base of Whig supporters throughout the antebellum presidential elections, the Whigs received only 55 percent of the total vote in 1844 compared to 82 percent in the rambunctious 1840 contest.<sup>16</sup> While this outcome and the survival of *The Republican* both demonstrate that the majority opinion in the county at large was opposed to annexation, it simultaneously exhibits the divisiveness of Texas annexation.<sup>17</sup> The election of 1844 was extremely close with the thirty-six Electoral College votes from New York determining victory.<sup>18</sup> Notably, *The Republican* mentions New York frequently, clearly understanding the political importance of the state within the context of the highly contentious issue of abolitionism.

Historians have tended to overlook political divisions within the antebellum South as evidenced by the election of 1844. The majority of historians assume that Whig support must have been relatively modest as the Democrats swept the Deep South’s electoral votes.<sup>19</sup> Indeed within Mississippi, the Whig Party has been dismissed as irrelevant considering the 19,206 votes Clay gained in contrast to Polk’s 25,126 votes in the state.<sup>20</sup> The relegation of Mississippi Whigs to largely “southwestern counties,” reflected the socio-political environment, “where politics were dominated by the conservative, slaveholding planters.”<sup>21</sup> While Wilkinson County is an example of this demographic trend, Whig support within

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<sup>16</sup> Young, “The Mississippi Whigs, 1834-1860,” 48-49, 167.

<sup>17</sup> Young, “The Mississippi Whigs, 1834-1860,” 167; Heidler, *Henry Clay*, 312.

<sup>18</sup> Heidler, *Henry Clay*, 392.

<sup>19</sup> John Bicknell, *America, 1844: Religious Fervor, Westward Expansion, and the Presidential Election That Transformed the Nation* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2014), 227.

<sup>20</sup> Westley F. Busbee, Jr., *Mississippi: A History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), 97.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

the county has not been adequately researched. *The Republican* provides evidence of Mississippi Whig's political strength that has been neglected by historians. Following Clay's defeat the newspaper emphasized that, "The gallant Whigs of 'Old Wilkinson' have achieved a GLORIOUS VICTORY" in the majority of the county having voted for Clay.<sup>22</sup> *The Republican* is thereby a significant example of the degree of party loyalty maintained within some areas in the South, despite the sectional divisiveness encouraged by the campaign and the key issue of Texas annexation.

Despite the common perception of slavery having unified white Southerners, this case study on the 1844 election and its central campaign issue of Texas annexation as portrayed by *The Republican* clearly demonstrates the complex diversity of opinions on how best to strengthen the slave economy. The issue of westward expansion further exacerbated the inherently fractious nature of the Whig Party. The majority of historiography focuses on the geographical/sectional divide among Whigs, neglecting political divisions within regions. Indeed, in his tome *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party: Jacksonian Politics and the Onset of the Civil War*, Holt briefly attributes the problematic nature of the Texas question for southern Whigs in general to a class and socio-economic divide.<sup>23</sup> Holt explains that, "Texas [was] a compelling issue in the South . . . especially to nonslaveholders."<sup>24</sup> While this explanation is persuasive, Holt generalizes that, "Some Whigs went so far as to argue, indeed, that annexation would weaken rather than strengthen slavery."<sup>25</sup> Holt's analysis exemplifies how the most dominant recent books concerned with antebellum politics neglect the special dilemma of Mississippi Whigs.

*The Republican* is thereby an important source that contributes to understanding the election of 1844, the divisive antebellum politics it represented, and the fractured nature of the Whig Party, which foretold its eventual demise prior to the Civil War. As some anti-slavery Whigs became affiliated with the Liberty Party, Democrats utilized the southern fear of abolitionism while successfully attacking anti-annexation sentiments.<sup>26</sup> The response of *The Republican* to the central and intertwined campaign

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<sup>22</sup> *The Republican*, November 9, 1844, University of Mississippi Archives and Special Collections. J.D. Williams Library, (Oxford, MS).

<sup>23</sup> Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party*, 178-79.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, 178.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>26</sup> Reinhard O. Johnson, *The Liberty Party, 1840-1848: Antislavery Third-Party Politics in the United States* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009), 42.

issues during the 1844 election provides evidence of the divisions amongst Southerners. This article will focus on these campaign issues by firstly examining Texas annexation and slavery and secondly by analyzing abolitionism.

### Texas and Slavery

The misperception of the South in general and Mississippi specifically, as having been united in support of Texas annexation has been based on the verbal and physical support some Mississippians gave to Texas prior to the 1844 election. White Mississippians had supported efforts for American migration to Texas and were motivated during times of economic hardship to migrate themselves, leaving the abbreviation for “Gone to Texas” (G.T.T), on their doors.<sup>27</sup> Mississippians supported both the Texas Revolution in 1836 and the recognition of the independent Republic of Texas in 1837.<sup>28</sup> However, the issue of Texas did not promote political consensus within the South or even Mississippi, as historians such as Westley F. Busbee have generalized.<sup>29</sup>

The divisiveness of the issue of Texas annexation is apparent in that it received neither unified sectional nor partisan support. Holt quotes a Whig newspaper’s description of the Democrats’ pro-annexation resolutions in the Mississippi legislature in February 1844, as “supremely ridiculous.”<sup>30</sup> However, Holt does not analyze the fact that nearly two-thirds of Mississippi’s Whig legislators voted in opposition to the Democrats’ resolutions.<sup>31</sup> While this fact provides evidence of a degree of party unity and policy cohesion, it also demonstrates that Mississippi Whigs were already divided, with one-third voting in favor of Texas annexation. This voting pattern among southern Whigs was replicated a year later in Congress, thereby providing evidence of the continued lack of sectional unity among Whigs.<sup>32</sup> In contrast to these regional divisions, both historians Joel H. Silbey and Rachel A. Sheldon concur that in the

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<sup>27</sup> Busbee, *Mississippi: A History*, 92-93; Dennis J. Mitchell, *A New History of Mississippi* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2014), 108.

<sup>28</sup> Busbee, *Mississippi: A History*, 93.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party*, 177.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Joel H. Silbey, *Storm Over Texas: The Annexation Controversy and the Road to Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 86-87.

short-term, the Whigs maintained national unity.<sup>33</sup>

Anti-annexation Whigs were representative of the divided response to annexation amongst southern Whigs. Mississippi Whigs would have been well aware of the divergence within the state legislature. Additionally, Whig Senator John Henderson of Mississippi was the only southern Whig not to vote in opposition to President John Tyler's annexation treaty following the Democrats' pro-annexation endorsement.<sup>34</sup> In contrast to the mounting evidence of the divisiveness of annexation amongst Mississippi Whigs, *The Republican* confidently stated, "The Whigs of Mississippi have great reason to take courage" in an attempt to portray extensive and unified Whig support within the state.<sup>35</sup>

In opposing the pro-annexation platform of the Democrats, *The Republican* used cogent arguments, at first questioning the suitability of slavery in Texas by quoting a report made to the House of Representatives. This report included the statement that, "Slavery forbid by nature may be interdicted by organic law there [Texas]," therefore there was no reason for Southerners to support annexation, as there would be no lucrative gain for their slave economy.<sup>36</sup> On the contrary, the newspaper stressed that by the report's estimation the logical conclusion was that, "annexation instead of increasing the power or representatives of slavery in the union, will . . . certainly and greatly diminish their relative weight."<sup>37</sup> While recognizing the consistent concern amongst Southerners over the sectional balance of power in the Union, the newspaper followed the logic from the report of slave agricultural labor being incompatible with the topography of Texas and thereby depicted annexation as a threat, rather than a gain. *The Republican* editor concluded by asking, "What argument remains to tempt the South to the perpetration of an act of political suicide?"<sup>38</sup> This anti-annexation argument clearly preyed on the political and sectional fear of the South becoming dominated by the North, a fear that had persisted since America's founding.

However, the following week's issue of *The Republican* demonstrated

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<sup>33</sup> Silbey, *Storm Over Texas*, 87; Rachel A. Sheldon, "Not So Strange Bedfellows: Northern and Southern Whigs in the Texas Annexation Controversy, 1844-1845," in *A Political Nation: New Directions in Mid-Nineteenth Century American Political History*, eds., Gary W. Gallagher and Rachel A. Sheldon (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012), 26-27.

<sup>34</sup> Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party*, 177-178.

<sup>35</sup> *The Republican*, July 27, 1844.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

the divisiveness of annexation amongst Mississippi Whigs by providing a completely different portrayal of Texas, while continuing to oppose annexation. In contrast to the previous week's assessment, the newspaper altered its characterization of Texas, describing it as, "admirably adapted to the production of sugar, long staple cotton, and tobacco – the other articles, with the exception of rice, which are produced by slave labor."<sup>39</sup> It is possible that this change in the portrayal of the conditions for slavery in Texas was in response to the lack of credibility Southerners gave the previous report, as Southerners widely considered Texas as possessing the necessary attributes for slave agriculture. Although *The Republican* now depicted Texas as having the potential to become a slave state, the newspaper utilized this vision to continue to depict the potential harm of expanding the southern slave economy.

The change in *The Republican's* description of the topography of Texas likely reflected how white Southerners, across the political spectrum, associated Texas annexation with the spread of slavery. This contemporaneous association has encouraged the historiographical misconception that Texas annexation was overwhelmingly popular within the South. Silbey asserts that, "Most of the Southern Whigs went along with their party's anti-annexation position, however, although they did not intend to emphasize the issue in upcoming election campaigns."<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, the newspaper's two different portrayals of Texas both focus on the sectional issue of slavery rather than making a partisan appeal.

Representative of Mississippi Whigs, *The Republican* emphasized the importance of slave labor and by extension cotton to the southern economy. The newspaper cogently declared that, "It is the price of cotton which regulates exclusively the value of slaves."<sup>41</sup> Having now depicted Texas as possessing a suitable climate for cotton cultivation, the newspaper continued to explain its anti-annexation position. In a verbose manner, *The Republican* editor declared:

... if the price of cotton is not ruinously reduced by over production, it will not be denied that slave labor can be employed in Texas with at least twice the profit which it yields in the average of the slave states of the Union. Our slaves will then be carried to Texas by the force of a law as fixed and certain as that by which

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<sup>39</sup> *The Republican*, August 3, 1844.

<sup>40</sup> Silbey, *Storm Over Texas*, 48.

<sup>41</sup> *The Republican*, August 3, 1844.

water finds its level.<sup>42</sup>

In making a sectional appeal to voters to support Clay and oppose the pro-annexation Democrats, *The Republican* clearly emphasized the potential negative impact of Texas annexation to the strength of the slave economy within Mississippi. The newspaper's ominous warning to fellow slaveholding Southerners concerning the fate of their valuable slave economy is representative of some southern Whig anti-annexation sentiments, which are only ever fleetingly mentioned in the historiography of the election of 1844. Holt briefly mentions the advent of explanations by southern Whig opponents to Texas annexation as a response to the Democrats' libel, which affiliated the Whigs alongside any opponents of immediate annexation with abolitionism.<sup>43</sup> In Holt's convincing portrayal, southern Whig espousal of anti-annexation that stressed the potential impact on the southern economy, stemmed from their belief in the need to defend their loyalty to the South and slavery.<sup>44</sup> However, it is possible that some slaveholding Whigs, enjoying high economic status and personal political influence in the South, might have believed that annexation would have a detrimental impact on their plantations, while simultaneously feeling the need to defend their "peculiar institution."

Arguably, the potential rise of an abundance of non-slaveholding whites to competing planter status also contributed to anti-annexation Mississippi Whigs' concern over the impact of Texas on the slave economy, as described in *The Republican*. Slaveholding Mississippians represented the large migration of slavery into the Deep South that occurred throughout the antebellum era in response to the advent of King Cotton. From 1820 to 1860, Mississippi's white population increased eightfold, while the state's slave population increased tenfold.<sup>45</sup> In the decade from 1840 to 1850, Mississippi's overall population rose by over sixty percent with the white population expanding by sixty-five percent and the slave population rising by fifty-nine percent.<sup>46</sup> The economic benefit derived from this spread of cotton cultivation and slavery suggests that the anxiety of anti-annexation Mississippi Whigs may have reflected a personal fear of

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party*, 178.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Census, "Statistics of Slaves," *Decennial Census*, <http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/00165897ch14.pdf> (accessed March 31, 2018).

<sup>46</sup> Young, "The Mississippi Whigs, 1834-1860," 58-59.

losing their coveted influence through the expansion of the planter class, rather than the expressed angst over the impact on the southern slave economy as a whole. *The Republican's* decision to oppose annexation may have reflected the concerns of the established planter community of Woodville. Therefore, the decision could have been motivated both by an attempt to retain elite political influence in Mississippi and as a means of uniting the Whig Party.

When considering the frequently disparate responses of southern Whigs to annexation, as evident in the 1844 Mississippi legislature's voting record and the 1845 vote in Congress, it would seem pertinent to contemplate both longer-term and contextual causal factors leading to the advent of anti-annexationist southern Whigs. Attempts to consolidate national party unity were a key long-term factor. Historian Randolph Campbell persuasively explains the failure of the annexation treaty in the U.S. Senate in June 1844.<sup>47</sup> He wrote "the annexation of Texas [as] a campaign issue ... cost the treaty the support of many Southern Whigs who otherwise would have voted for the addition of a new slave state."<sup>48</sup> Desperate to enact Whig policies after the disappointment of Tyler's presidency and having expelled him from their party, Whig unity was critical for a victorious election in the short-term and to endure as a national party in the long-term.<sup>49</sup> When referring to Tyler, *The Republican* even stated, "But the Ides of March are coming!"<sup>50</sup> This foretelling of disaster demonstrates the anxiety over annexation that *The Republican* clearly hoped would motivate voters to support the Whigs and, at least in the short-term, oppose annexation.

Nevertheless, partisanship and sectionalism are intertwined and equally important to understanding Southerners' divided response to Texas annexation in the election of 1844. The increasing realization of the danger of sectionalism to the unity of the Whig Party likely contributed to the open opposition of some southern Whigs to annexation. *The Republican* clearly depicted this fear of sectional strife as the newspaper described, a "vote for James K. Polk, (is a) vote for a dissolution of the Union, and the

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<sup>47</sup> Randolph B. Campbell, *Gone to Texas: A History of the Lone Star State*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 183.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Sam Walter Haynes, *James K. Polk and the Expansionist Impulse* (London, United Kingdom: Pearson Longman, 2006), 57.

<sup>50</sup> *The Republican*, July 27, 1844.

formation of a Southern Confederacy.”<sup>51</sup> This statement is representative of the Whig attempt to promote national unity and specifically, the attempt of anti-annexation southern Whigs to inspire national unity at the expense of the sectional issue of Texas annexation.<sup>52</sup> Indeed during the 1844 campaign, support for Clay was evinced by Mississippi Whigs’ combined support for Clay’s vision of an empowered federal government and the Union.<sup>53</sup>

The focus of the Whigs on national unity directly contrasted with the Democrats, who successfully exploited the sectional divisions exacerbated by the intertwined issue of annexation and slavery. This manipulation of sectional division allowed the more unified Democrats, supported by what Howe accurately describes as, “a handful of Southern Whigs [who] provided the crucial margin,” to win the election.<sup>54</sup> Through exploiting sectional divisions, the Democrats thereby achieved short-term success in their electoral victory but at the terrible cost of war both in the short-term with the Mexican-American War and in the long-term with the coming Civil War.

Despite the focus of the Whigs on national unity, *The Republican’s* particularly strong anti-annexation stance indicates that both sectional and regional divisions undid the Whigs. Historian Michael A. Morrison briefly describes that, “In the South, anti-annexationists perforce stood by Clay’s moderate position on Texas,” referring to Clay’s convoluted stance of being willing to discuss the eventual possibility of Texas annexation but opposing the immediate annexation policy of the Democrats.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, the consistent and potent anti-annexationist sentiments displayed by *The Republican* question the historiographical trend of understanding anti-annexation southern Whigs as “moderate” by necessity.

The clear pro-annexation platform of the Democrats placed Clay in an awkward position. As demonstrated through his previous leadership as the “Great Compromiser” during past crises, Clay prioritized the Union and as a candidate for president he naturally wanted to avoid alienating

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid, August 10, 1844.

<sup>52</sup> Sheldon, “Not So Strange Bedfellows,” 17.

<sup>53</sup> Young, “The Mississippi Whigs, 1834-1860,” 142.

<sup>54</sup> Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 700.

<sup>55</sup> Michael A. Morrison, “Westward the Curse of Empire: Texas Annexation and the American Whig Party,” *Journal of the Early Republic*, 10, no. 2 (Summer 1990): 245.



either section.<sup>56</sup> Additionally, Clay wanted to focus on his national economic programs, collectively entitled the “American System” and could not comprehend that this issue did not appeal to voters as much as Texas annexation.<sup>57</sup> In contrast to Clay, *The Republican* clearly recognized that annexation had captured the imagination of the voters. The newspaper therefore discussed annexation, while ensuring to avoid descriptions of Clay’s apparent vacillating on the matter.

As exemplified through *The Republican*, explicit anti-annexation sentiments of Mississippi Whigs can be partially understood through the need to respond to the popularity of Democrats’ pro-annexation stance in the South. *The Republican* reprinted an article from the *Lynchburg Virginian* that explicitly identified the sectional divisiveness of the Texas question and attempted to portray their anti-annexation stance in support of party loyalty as a viable alternative to the sectional controversy. The newspaper stated that, “There are Northern as well as Southern friends of the annexation of Texas; but the arguments adapted to their degree of latitude not being exactly suited to ours, it is not surprising if they occasionally come in conflict with and refute each other.”<sup>58</sup> The fact that another southern newspaper expressed this anti-annexation sentiment in support of party unity further demonstrates the divisiveness that plagued the Whig Party and encouraged regional, rather than sectional, loyalty.

In contrast to the divided response of southern Whigs to the question of annexation, southern Democrats remained confident in their unity. Indeed, Democratic Senator Robert J. Walker of Mississippi declared that, “The Texas question will carry the South.”<sup>59</sup> *The Republican* reprinted an article from the *Wheeling Times* that quipped that the “*Locofoco Declaration of Principles*” consisted of a list of nine features that included Polk and repeatedly listed “Annexation,” “Texas,” “Texas Annexation,” and “Annexation of Texas.”<sup>60</sup> Locofoco was a disparaging term used by the Whigs to refer to the Democrats. Through the inclusion of Polk, this article portrays the Democrats as a one-issue party yearning for political power through that one issue. While southern Whigs identified and ridiculed the campaigning tactic of the Democrats, combating the effectiveness of

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<sup>56</sup> Heidler, *Henry Clay*, 229.

<sup>57</sup> Robert V. Remini, *Henry Clay: Statesman for the Union* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991), 634.

<sup>58</sup> *The Republican*, July 27, 1844.

<sup>59</sup> Walter R. Borneman, *Polk: The Man Who Transformed the Presidency and America* (New York: Random House, 2009), 115.

<sup>60</sup> *The Republican*, August 10, 1844.

the appeal of Texas became an insurmountable problem.

Whig policies needed to be clearly distinct from the Democrats. In contrast to the explicit pro-annexation platform of the Democrats, the Whig Party platform ignored the issue of Texas, focusing instead on national economic programs detailed in Clay's "American System."<sup>61</sup> However, Whig economic policies could not compete with the allure of westward expansion, as promoted by the Democrats.<sup>62</sup> Whigs were thereby forced to take a position on Texas, and Clay's equivocation failed to ensure that annexation remained a partisan issue, rather than a sectional or regional one dividing his party. *The Republican* demonstrates the existence of regional divisions within the South that prioritized sectional over partisan matters, as evident in the newspaper going beyond Clay's opposition of immediate annexation by appearing to oppose annexation entirely. Although the debate over Texas occurred amidst heightened partisanship during the 1844 election, annexation and slavery were both integrally sectional issues that existed within a context of rising sectionalism, evident in the fear of abolitionism.

### Fear of Abolitionism

Fear of abolitionism was a powerful sentiment within the South throughout the antebellum era, but this fear was exacerbated during the election of 1844 as both Democrats and Whigs tried to utilize the anxiety to their political advantage. Howe explains that during the Second Party System, both "parties committed themselves to nationwide organization, and in both cases, the party's felt need to maintain a southern wing inhibited criticism of slavery."<sup>63</sup> While this is arguably accurate, the Democrat and Whig attempts to gain nationwide support in the 1844 election enhanced sectional divisions, evident through the vilifying of abolitionism that proliferated throughout the South irrespective of party.

As the explicitly pro-annexationist party, Democrats were able to easily identify the divided southern Whigs with abolitionism. Holt accurately describes the Democrats' ability to convincingly associate "opposition to immediate annexation with abolitionism" and ferment sectional concerns amongst white Southerners over being dominated

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<sup>61</sup> Greenberg, *A Wicked War*, 41, 47.

<sup>62</sup> Farris, *Almost President*, 43.

<sup>63</sup> Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 511.

by the North.<sup>64</sup> In targeting sectional loyalties, “Democrats castigated Clay and the Whig Party as traitors to the South.”<sup>65</sup> In response, *The Republican* devoted a distinctly greater proportion of articles to the danger of abolitionism than to Texas annexation. This position is likely due to The Republican’s awareness of the need to respond to the Democrat attacks that associated Clay with abolitionism. Furthermore, it is possible that *The Republican* regarded exploiting the fear of abolitionism by attempting to depict the Democrats as abolitionists and convincing voters to support the Whigs, as a more potent approach than subduing the fascination with Texas annexation within the South.

Anti-annexation southern Whigs were consistently forced to defend themselves against being disparaged as so-called abolitionists. Democrats even stigmatized Clay as an abolitionist, a ludicrous misrepresentation considering that Clay himself was a slaveholder. *The Republican* continuously attempted to refute the conspiratorial claim emphasizing Clay’s political experience as “that great statesman” and referring to those who slandered Clay with the term abolitionist as “uneducated political quacks.”<sup>66</sup>

Notably, while annexation was a unique component of the 1844 election, abolitionism was a persistent “slander” throughout the antebellum era. Amy S. Greenberg concisely notes that, “Democrats perennially linked Whigs with abolitionists.”<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, the publication of a letter written by Clay’s abolitionist cousin Cassius M. Clay on August 13, 1844, in the *New-York Daily Tribune*, encouraged scrutiny of Clay’s pro-slavery stance.<sup>68</sup> Cassius Clay wrote the letter in an attempt to convince antislavery Northerners to vote for Henry Clay and the Whigs, as opposed to the abolitionist Liberty Party.<sup>69</sup> Reflecting this intent, the published letter portrayed Henry Clay’s sentiments as “with the [abolitionist] cause.”<sup>70</sup>

Clay was painfully aware of the sectional divisiveness of the campaign. He exasperatingly described his predicament of being depicted in the South “as a Liberty Man, [while] at the North I am decried as an ultra

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<sup>64</sup> Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party*, 178.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *The Republican*, August 17, 1844.

<sup>67</sup> Greenberg, *A Wicked War*, 116.

<sup>68</sup> Gary J. Kornblith, “Rethinking the Coming of the Civil War: A Counterfactual Exercise,” *Journal of American History*, 90, no. 1 (June 2003): 93.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

supporter of slavery; when in fact I am neither one nor the other.”<sup>71</sup> Association with the term “Liberty,” in the context of slavery and particularly with reference to the abolitionist Liberty Party, was especially detrimental to the Whig campaign in the South, despite the fact that it distorted Clay’s convictions as a fellow slaveholder. While attempting to clarify his stance on slavery, Clay described the letter as “doing great mischief to the Whig cause.”<sup>72</sup> *The Republican* demonstrates the amount of “mischief” that occurred through the Democrats’ endeavor to slander and divide the Whigs.

Undoubtedly, abolitionism was a “slanderous” term and deemed an insult to white southern character and honor. In responding to attacks on Clay in July, *The Republican* stated that, “The price of greatness is the envy and hatred of meaner minds.”<sup>73</sup> The consistency of the Democrats in attacking Whigs as abolitionists is evident in that the allegation that Henry Clay was an abolitionist had existed prior to the publication of Cassius Clay’s letter, and *The Republican* had rebuked the charge throughout the summer of the campaign. In an article entitled, “Mr. Clay And His Revilers,” *The Republican* attempted to emphasize the good character of the Whigs in contrast to the Democrats.<sup>74</sup> The newspaper described how, “Every patriotic heart must be pained at the recital of the scenes of riot and disorder that come to us on the wing of every wind.”<sup>75</sup> This attempt on the part of *The Republican* to inspire party unity by portraying the innocent Whigs being viciously denigrated by the Democrats was altered later in the campaign.

In October and November, perhaps as a result of perceiving the fissures amongst southern Whigs, *The Republican* attempted to rouse party loyalty by attacking the Democrats with reference to abolitionism. The issue published on October 26, 1844, contains two striking headlines.<sup>76</sup> One heading urged “WHIGS AWAKE!!” and encouraged party unity as, “It is high time that every true Whig girden his armor and go forth to battle.”<sup>77</sup> The other enlarged heading, “BIRNEY (ABOLITIONIST) FOR

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<sup>71</sup> Melba Porter Hay, ed., *The Papers of Henry Clay: Candidate, Compromiser, Elder Statesman: January 1, 1844-June 29, 1852*, vol. 10 (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1991), 114-115.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>73</sup> *The Republican*, July 27, 1844.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, October 26, 1844.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

POLK!" illustrated the sectional stakes of the election.<sup>78</sup> In attempting to provide evidence that associated the Democratic Party with abolitionism, *The Republican* openly implored voters, "Will you of the South never take heed? Will you of the South never become alive to the insidious designs of the enemy?"<sup>79</sup> This sectional appeal, depicting the South as cohesive through its protection of slavery, demonstrates *The Republican's* effort to minimize both the appearance of sectional and party divisions that the question of Texas annexation had encouraged throughout the heat of the campaign.

Honor was an explicit component in *The Republican's* attempt to slander the Democrats as abolitionists. Referring to an article from the "locofoco paper," the *Philadelphia Spirit of the Times*, the Democrats were disparaged by *The Republican* as possessing "the honor of being 'opposed to the traffic in human flesh!'"<sup>80</sup> The emphasis of the term "honor" both confronted the abolitionist portrayal of slaveholders, and especially slave traders, as dishonorable men, while simultaneously it connoted the supposedly chivalrous code of southern honor that was meant to define society and the behavior of white gentlemen of the planter class. *The Republican's* endeavor to incite the widespread sectional concern shared by white Southerners over abolitionism is further evident in the emphasis of another quote from *Philadelphia Spirit of the Times* that stated, "FREEDOM FOR THE BOUND!"<sup>81</sup> It is easy to deduce that *The Republican* was trying to depict the Democrats as untrustworthy on the issue of slavery.

In attempting to convince more Southerners that the Democrats could not be trusted to protect slavery, *The Republican* also invoked Martin Van Buren, the last Democrat to hold the office of President. Referring to Van Buren's re-election attempt during the presidential election of 1840, *The Republican* stated, "You need not be reminded of your indignation against the abominable abuses of Van Buren's government – the chicanery of the loco party – the prostitution of its presses . . . you contended against . . . negro suffrage."<sup>82</sup> The emphasis on "negro suffrage" was likely intended to stoke fear amongst white Southerners by associating the Democratic Party with abolitionism and thereby encourage southern voters to

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, November 2, 1844.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> *The Republican*, October 19, 1844.

support the Whigs. As a northern Democrat, Van Buren was an easy target for southern Whigs to encourage suspicions over his opinions on slavery, although Van Buren had recognized the importance of sustaining the Democrats as a national party by previously courting southern planters.<sup>83</sup> It is probable that as southern Whigs “feared association with abolitionists,” they considered it necessary to strongly oppose the Democrats’ allegations and respond in kind with libelous charges, as demonstrated by *The Republican*.<sup>84</sup> This fear of southern Whigs correlated to the understanding that the sectional nature of abolitionism represented an insurmountable challenge to the viability of a nationally unified party.

In their final issue prior to the election, *The Republican* made a direct appeal to Wilkinson County voters that reflected concerns over both the future of southern interests and the Union. Following their presentation of the Democrats as abolitionists, the newspaper asked, “Which party now do you consider the abolition party?”<sup>85</sup> Confident of their ability to persuade voters, the article continued by stating, “Vote then for Henry Clay. He is the only hope of the South – the only hope of the Union.”<sup>86</sup> The use of the term “Union,” which avoided any reference to the North, is significant within the context of portraying Clay as a candidate representative of white southern interests, while simultaneously suitable to be entrusted with the national interests. In contrast, Holt describes how white Southerners, “could indeed be excited by Democratic warnings that it was now or never for Texas and that on the issue of annexation, the future of the South was at stake.”<sup>87</sup> It is therefore important to understand *The Republican*’s comparative emphasis on the election and the Democrats’ pro-annexation platform as being simultaneously detrimental to the future of slavery and therefore the South, as well as the future of the Union.

Intertwined fears existed amongst some white Southerners over anti-annexation sentiments and abolitionism. These fears were equally integral to the advent and persuasiveness of the apocalyptic predictions the Democrats made over the future of the South during the campaign. *The Republican* attempted to effectively respond to the fears of some white Southerners that had been fueled by the Democrats. The newspaper did this by incorporating the catastrophic predictions of the Democrats

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<sup>83</sup> Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 508-509.

<sup>84</sup> Greenberg, *A Wicked War*, 116.

<sup>85</sup> *The Republican*, November 2, 1844.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party*, 179.

that would have been familiar to southern voters, into their rationale for supporting the Whigs. *The Republican* focused on encouraging party unity within the South. In an article entitled, "SOUTHTRONS!" the newspaper prayed that, "God grant it may not be too late," to inspire sectional party unity.<sup>88</sup> Referring to New York, *The Republican* predicted that Polk would "receive the whole abolitionist vote of that State!"<sup>89</sup> The newspaper illustrated this prediction as further evidence of the connection between Democrats and abolitionism, describing "The Polk battery is now fully unmasked!"<sup>90</sup> Furthermore, *The Republican* presented the supposed association between Democrats and abolitionism as a conspiracy, "To conceal their own turpitude towards the South, the cry has been raised and kept up, that Henry Clay was an abolitionist!"<sup>91</sup> Nevertheless, the Democrats were very successful in their tactic of adapting and localizing their campaign platform of westward expansion to effectively respond to widespread sectional sentiment.

In the South, Democrats emphasized the necessity of Texas annexation as a bulwark against the impending threat of abolitionism. By comparison, Democrats in New York did not advocate their party's policy of annexation due to recognizing the strength of the abolitionist Liberty Party within the state.<sup>92</sup> *The Republican* endeavored to expose the sectional contradictions within the Democrats campaign in an article entitled, "*The Whig Spirit in New York*."<sup>93</sup> The article optimistically described how, "The late effort to scratch Texas from the democratic ticket has brought utter disorganization and hopeless confusion into the party."<sup>94</sup> The Democrats' tactic of making separate appeals to the North and South was clearly apparent to *The Republican*, but its effectiveness appeared impossible to diffuse amongst divided southern Whigs.

The Democrats clearly modified the appearance of their pro-annexation platform in order to gain support amongst both Northerners and Southerners. Nevertheless, Howe emphasizes the long-term distinction between the parties evident in that, "The Whigs tolerated antislavery among their Northern supporters, while the Democrats

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<sup>88</sup> *The Republican*, November 2, 1844.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party*, 175.

<sup>93</sup> *The Republican*, August 31, 1844.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

did not.”<sup>95</sup> This analysis seems to be a generalization that contrasts with the 1844 campaign in New York, when it would appear that the Democrats altered the focus from their pro-annexation platform so as to attract antislavery supporters in this extremely close election. However, the difference between the parties that Howe stresses is significant in demonstrating the Whigs’ longstanding focus on the Union and desire to retain a national party, despite its members representing sectional divisions within the Whig Party’s increasingly non-cohesive coalition.

*The Republican* utilized the final publication of the newspaper prior to the election in another effort to expose and emphasize the hypocrisy of the Democrats. The newspaper described the repeated Democratic slander that accused, “against all truth, Mr. Clay of having a Northern and a Southern face.”<sup>96</sup> The Democratic portrayal of the Whigs as a party divided by section was hypocritical to *The Republican* considering how Democrats, “wear themselves sore on the Texas hobby, while they kick it out of the question at the North.”<sup>97</sup> This characterization of the Democrats portrays how they had successfully turned the election into a referendum on Texas annexation. The depiction of Clay as a vacillating sectional candidate was arguably effective in veiling the sectional nature of the Democrats’ campaign.

For *The Republican*, the result of the election was evidence that the Democratic tactic of utilizing sectional divisions had triumphed over the Whigs. Following Clay’s defeat, the newspaper described how, “the false charge of Abolitionism against Mr. Clay has been preserved.”<sup>98</sup> Indeed *The Republican* came to the conclusion that the Democrats were responsible for causing “every sectional feeling” to have been incited.<sup>99</sup> While this was clearly an exaggerated partisan response to the electoral defeat of their favored candidate, the role of the Democrats in increasing sectional tension by making westward expansion the core of their campaign cannot be denied. The centrality of sectionalism in determining the campaign result is evident specifically through Clay’s loss of New York and overall in Polk’s victory being a result of a campaign that utilized sectional discord to exploit the divisions within the already fractured Whig Party.

Explaining the Whig Party’s loss of the election of 1844 remains a

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<sup>95</sup> Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 511.

<sup>96</sup> *The Republican*, November 2, 1844.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, November 9, 1844.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*



controversial question. The majority of historiography has reflected the party's explanation for its loss in emphasizing the role of the Liberty Party in New York, which took 3.3 percent of the vote away from Clay.<sup>100</sup> In fact, if Clay had won only one-third of the Liberty Party's votes in New York, he would have won the election.<sup>101</sup> In contrast, the Democrats inspired unity through a campaign focused on westward expansion that actively sought to exacerbate sectional divisions so as to cause a schism within the Whig Party. However, the divided response of Southerners to the question of Texas annexation demonstrates that regional divisions were one of the unforeseen consequences of the Democrats' campaign. The Democrats had not acknowledged that some voters in the Deep South would support the Whig Party and openly advocate against annexation as a threat to their slave economy.

As demonstrated by *The Republican*, despite being a national party some southern Whigs seem to have felt compelled to respond to the abolitionist "slander" by defending their identity as white Southerners. A defense of slavery and slaveholders as honorable defined this identity, which some southern Whigs, as reflected by *The Republican*, argued was compatible with opposing annexation. However, the unintended consequence of this method of responding to the Democrats' attacks by emphasizing the Whigs' identity as representative of one section, was that it became impossible to depict the Whigs as a unified national party. As Greenberg explains, "Because the Whigs and the Democrats were national parties, a candidate who alienated the mass of his supporters in one or another region lost all hope of winning a national election."<sup>102</sup> This accurately describes the inability of the Whigs to coalesce as a national party under the increasing pressure of sectionalism.

## Conclusion

*The Republican* provides an insightful lens that increases understanding of the divisions amongst Mississippi Whigs during the election of 1844. The newspaper clearly demonstrates how the intertwined issues of Texas annexation and abolitionism incited division amongst the Whigs on both a sectional and regional level. *The Republican* also

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<sup>100</sup> Vernon L. Volpe, "The Liberty Party and Polk's Election, 1844," *Historian*, 53, no. 4 (June 1991): 706.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 691.

<sup>102</sup> Greenberg, *A Wicked War*, 14.

demonstrates that through the existence of some southern Whigs opposing annexation, Texas was simultaneously a sectional and regionally divisive issue. Contrastingly, abolitionism persistently divided Northerners against Southerners.

Although the Democrats' sectional campaign tactics of focusing on Texas and tarring anti-annexationists as abolitionists exacerbated these divisions, the schism they aggravated had greater implications in foretelling the eventual demise of the Whig Party. Abolitionism and anti-slavery sentiments were constant representations of the sectional divide that threatened the existence of the Whig Party. While Whigs consistently sought to inspire national unity, representative of the party's devotion to the Union, the intertwined nature of the question of Texas annexation and the future of slavery fanned the flames of sectionalism.

Through its anti-annexation stance, *The Republican* demonstrates the necessity of recognizing how this neglected source demonstrates the existence of regional divisions in Mississippi. The newspaper thereby provides a unique perspective of the 1844 election specifically and the socio-political environment of the antebellum South more broadly. *The Republican* stood strong against the Democrats' sectional campaign favoring annexation, instead arguing that annexation would threaten the slave economy. *The Republican* thereby defies the perception of the Deep South as united in favor of westward expansion and significantly demonstrates how Southerners were divided.



## Awards Presented at the 2018 Mississippi Historical Society Annual Meeting



*Charles Eagles accepts the McLemore Prize from Elizabeth Payne.*

The Mississippi Historical Society held its annual meeting March 1-3, 2018, at the Two Mississippi Museums—the Museum of Mississippi History and Mississippi Civil Rights Museum—in Jackson, where it honored its award winners. The McLemore Prize for best Mississippi history book of 2017 went to Charles Eagles for *Civil Rights, Culture Wars: The Fight over a Mississippi Textbook*, which was published by University of North Carolina Press.

“Eagles’s book helps the reader to see the much-needed changes that Tougaloo College professor James Loewen and Millsaps professor Charles Sallis addressed in their 1974 textbook *Mississippi: Conflict and Change*,” said Elizabeth Payne, University of Mississippi history professor and chair of the McLemore Prize committee. “Until Eagles’s work, little to no attention had been paid to the pioneering work of Loewen and Sallis.”

MDAH Museum Division director Lucy Allen received the Dunbar Rowland Award for her lifelong contributions to the preservation, study, and interpretation of Mississippi history. Allen came to the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) in 1978, working as an assistant curator of exhibits and director of education and programs. She



*Lucy Allen receives the Dunbar Rowland Award from John Marszalek.*

has been the director of the Museum Division since 2002. In 2011, Allen was named the Two Mississippi Museums project director and worked for five years leading a complex, intensive, accelerated process to plan and design the 200,000-square-foot facility.

“More than any other person, these buildings are a credit to the vision, commitment and the persistence of Lucy Allen,” said MDAH director Katie Blount. “She always envisioned these museums as world-class institutions, and she never shrank from that vision, not when support was absent, not when money was tight, not when time was slipping away. No staff person has done more for these museums, over more years, than Lucy Allen.”

Puckett High School teacher Jennifer Leigh Johnson received the John K. Bettersworth Award, presented to an outstanding history teacher. An instructor with eleven years of school experience, Johnson teaches U.S. history, world history, psychology, and law at Puckett High School. The Bettersworth Award includes a \$300 cash award.

Allison Collis Greene received the *Mississippi History Now* Award for her article “The Great Depression and Religion in Mississippi,” which was posted in April 2017. The work is based on her 2016 book *No Depression in Heaven: The Great Depression, the New Deal, and the Transformation of Religion in the Delta*. Greene is associate professor of history at Mississippi State University.

Michael Ballard posthumously received the William E. “Bill” Atkinson Award for his outstanding lifelong contributions to the study and interpretation of Mississippi Civil War history. Ballard wrote eleven



*Missy Jones (left) presents the John K. Betterworth Award for best history teacher to Jennifer Leigh Johnson of Puckett High School.*

books including *A Long Shadow: Jefferson Davis and the Final Days of the Confederacy*, *Pemberton: A Biography*, and *Vicksburg: The Campaign That Opened the Mississippi*. In 2005, Ballard received the Dunbar Rowland Award from the Mississippi Historical Society in recognition of his scholarly publications and other contributions to the documentation of Mississippi history.

Katrina Rochelle Sims, assistant professor of history at Hofstra University, was awarded the Franklin L. Riley Prize for her doctoral dissertation “‘Take the Mountain’ The International Order of the Twelve Knights and Daughters of Tabor and the Black Health Care Initiative in the Mississippi Delta, 1938–1983.”

Lisa Carol Foster, University of Southern Mississippi, was awarded the Glover Moore Prize for her master’s thesis “‘To Mississippi, Alone, Can They Look for Assistance’: Confederate Welfare in Mississippi.”

Crystal Sanders, professor of history at Pennsylvania State University, was awarded the Willie D. Halsell Prize for the best article published in the *Journal of Mississippi History*. Her article “Dignity in Life and Death: Undertaker Clarie Collins Harvey and Black Women’s Entrepreneurial Activism” appeared in the Fall/Winter 2014 issue.

The Itawamba Historical Society received the Frank E. Everett, Jr. Award for its outstanding contributions to the preservation and interpretation of local history.

Awards of merit were presented to the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi and University Press of Mississippi for their publication of the *Mississippi Encyclopedia*; the Chickasaw Inkana Foundation for its exemplary work in preserving the history and culture of the Chickasaw homeland; Gordon Cotton, director emeritus, Old Courthouse Museum in Vicksburg, for his series of articles written in commemoration of Mississippi's bicentennial; Ron Hague for his visionary leadership in establishing and administering the Pearl River Community College Museum in Poplarville; the Mississippi Department of Archives and History for effectively planning and administering the Two Mississippi Museums project; the Mississippi Museum of Art for its outstanding exhibit *Picturing Mississippi, 1817-2017, Land of Plenty, Pain, and Promise*; Duffy Neubauer for his work in establishing the Starkville Civil War Arsenal and for his outstanding contributions to living history; the Old Capitol Museum for "Present Meets Past," an exemplary living history program; the Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library for its exemplary work in preserving and making accessible the papers of President Grant and for creating engaging interpretive exhibits; and retired Rhode Island Chief Justice Frank J. Williams and Virginia Williams for the donation of their magnificent collection of Lincolniana to Mississippi State University.



*Stephen Cunetto (center) and John Marszalek (right) accept an Award of Merit for the Grant Presidential Library from Walt Grayson.*

# Program of the 2018 Mississippi Historical Society Annual Meeting

*by Kevin Greene*  
*Chair, Program Committee*

The Mississippi Historical Society (MHS) held its annual meeting March 1-3, 2018, at the Two Mississippi Museums in Jackson—the Museum of Mississippi History and Mississippi Civil Rights Museum. The program began on Thursday afternoon, March 1, with a meeting of representatives of the Federation of Mississippi Historical Societies, followed by the welcoming reception at the Old Capitol Museum. Afterward, the Society's board of directors gathered at the Fairview Inn for its annual dinner meeting.

The program sessions began on Friday, March 2, with welcoming remarks by Susannah J. Ural, president, MHS; Katie Blount, director, Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH); and Elbert Hilliard, secretary-treasurer, MHS.

The morning program began with two concurrent sessions. Kevin Greene, director, Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage, University of Southern Mississippi, moderated a panel on blues music. Panelists were Rolando Herts, director, The Delta Center for Culture and Learning and MS Delta National Heritage Area, Delta State University; Scott Barretta, researcher and writer, The Mississippi Blues Trail and Instructor of Sociology and Anthropology, The University of Mississippi; and Jacqui Sahagian, editorial assistant, Living Blues Magazine. Herts addressed the International Delta Blues Project at Delta State University. Barretta discussed the work of Alan Lomax in the Delta, and Sahagian discussed the history of race records.

Pamela Junior, director, Mississippi Civil Rights Museum, moderated a session on the Civil Rights Movement, featuring panelists Flonzie Brown Wright, Civil Rights Movement veteran; Daphne Chamberlain-Wilson, assistant professor of history, Tougaloo College; and Stephanie Rolph, associate professor of history, Millsaps College.

Following the morning break, two more concurrent sessions took place. Mimi Miller, executive director, Historic Natchez Foundation, moderated





*Flonzie Brown-Wright, Civil Rights Movement veteran, speaks about her book, Looking Back to Move Ahead.*

a discussion about local preservation efforts.

Sarah Smith McEwen, president, Friends of the Mississippi River Basin Model, spoke about efforts to preserve and restore the model; Jessica Fleming Crawford, southeast regional director, The Archaeological Conservancy, discussed the conservancy's preservation of Prospect Hill Plantation in Jefferson County; and Marks Sokolosky-Wixon, executive director, La Pointe-Krebs Foundation, gave an update on work at the La Pointe-Krebs House in Pascagoula.

Andrew Wiest, founding director of the Dale Center for the Study of War and Society, The University of Southern Mississippi, moderated a panel on Mississippi and the Great War to mark the centennial of the war's end. Chad Daniels, former director, Mississippi Armed Forces Museum, talked about Camp Shelby during the Great War. Anne L. Webster, former director of reference services, MDAH, discussed her book *Mississippi Women and the Great War*.

Bo Morgan, professor of history, University of Southern Mississippi, delivered the keynote address at lunch about Mississippi during World War I. Page Ogden, vice president, MHS, presided and introduced Morgan. Rolando Herts delivered the invocation for the luncheon.

Additionally, the education section of MDAH presented a teacher

workshop on incorporating technology and best teaching practices into the social studies curriculum.

Following lunch, participants toured the Two Mississippi Museums, which had opened just four months earlier. That evening the president's reception and banquet were held at the Old Capitol Inn. For the third consecutive year, the winner of the McLemore Prize for the best book written on Mississippi history was the featured speaker at the banquet. Charles W. Eagles, William F. Winter professor of history, The University of Mississippi, won the McLemore Prize for his book *Civil Rights Culture Wars: The Fight over a Mississippi Textbook*. Elizabeth Payne, former director, McDonnell-Barksdale Honors College, University of Mississippi, presented the award to Dr. Eagles. Otis Pickett, assistant professor, Mississippi College, delivered the invocation.

On Saturday morning, March 3, the annual business meeting took place in the Craig H. Neilsen Auditorium of the Two Mississippi Museums. Afterward, two concurrent sessions were held. Daphne Chamberlain-Wilson moderated a panel called "Would Rather Die and Go to Hell: Mississippi Women's Suffrage." Panelists included Rebecca Rotter, Ph.D. candidate in history, University of Southern Mississippi, who presented a



*Lucy Allen (center) and Cindy Gardner accept an Award of Merit from Walt Grayson for planning and administering the Two Mississippi Museums project.*

paper, “The Man Lives Who is Astonished That Women Should Have Any Interest in Politics”; Derek Webb, special collections librarian/university archivist, Mississippi University for Women, who discussed suffragists at MUW; and Rebecca Tuuri, assistant professor of history, University of Southern Mississippi, who talked about black women’s suffrage in the state.

Susannah J. Ural, president, MHS, presided over the awards luncheon. Deanne Stephens, professor of history, University of Southern Mississippi, delivered the invocation. Incoming president Page Ogden of Natchez adjourned the meeting.

The following members of the program committee deserve thanks for an interesting program: Kevin Greene (chair), James F. Barnett, Jr., Peggy W. Jeanes, Mary Carol Miller, Christian Pinnen, Kenneth H. P’Pool, Alysia Burton Steele, Susannah J. Ural, and Andrew Wiest. In addition, secretary-treasurer Elbert Hilliard and the staff at MDAH are to be commended for helping organize and implement the many details that made the annual meeting a success.



*2017 MHS President Susannah J. Ural passes the gavel to 2018 MHS President Page Ogden.*

**MISSISSIPPI HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL  
BUSINESS MEETING  
MARCH 3, 2018**

The annual business meeting of the Mississippi Historical Society was held at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 3, 2018, at the Two Mississippi Museums, Jackson, Mississippi. Susannah J. Ural, president, Mississippi Historical Society, called the meeting to order and presided.

Elbert R. Hilliard, secretary-treasurer, acted as secretary for the meeting. Timothy Davis, administrative technician, Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH), recorded the minutes.

The following business was transacted:

I. The secretary-treasurer moved that the minutes of the March 4, 2017, annual business meeting of the Mississippi Historical Society be approved as distributed. The motion was seconded by Fred Miller and unanimously approved.

II. The secretary-treasurer presented for the information of the members the following financial report for the year ending December 31, 2017:

**BANK BALANCES**  
As of December 31, 2017

**Regions Bank**

Heritage of Mississippi Series	31,386.36
Daily Interest Operating Account	

**Trustmark National Bank**

Certificate of Deposit	11,894.67
Due March 9, 2018 (0.45%)	
Certificate of Deposit	5,300.00
Due April 19, 2018 (0.45%)	

Certificate of Deposit	45,970.77
Life Membership Account	
Due March 26, 2018 (0.45%)	
Glover Moore Prize Fund	10,999.56
Certificate of Deposit	
Due March 8, 2018 (0.45%)	
Mississippi Historical Society	44,983.17
Daily Interest Operating Account	
Mississippi History NOW	15,001.48
Adine Lampton Wallace Endowment	
Certificate of Deposit	
Due March 24, 2018 (0.45%)	
Frank E. Everett, Jr., Award	3,729.47
Certificate of Deposit	
Due March 26, 2018 (0.45%)	
<b><u>BanCorpSouth Bank</u></b>	
Mississippi History NOW	3,090.49
Money Market Account	
<b><u>Origin Bank</u></b>	
Heritage of Mississippi Series	22,125.50
Money Market Account	
<b><u>Fidelity Investments</u></b>	
Elbert R. Hilliard Oral History Award	4,397.89
Halsell Prize Endowment	8,694.66
John K. Bettersworth Award Fund	4,556.35
William E. Atkinson Mississippi	
Civil War History Award Endowment	11,599.39
Heritage of Mississippi Series	2,526.17
MHS Operating Account	7,751.57
Fidelity Investment Total	39,526.04

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>234,007.51</b>
Restricted	118,107.33
Unrestricted	115,900.18
Total	234,007.51

**Operating Account**  
 Summary Report  
 1/1/2017 through 12/31/2017

**INCOME**

Annual meeting - 2017	14,080.00
Annual meeting - 2018	
Contributions –	
2018 Annual meeting	2,000.00
Contributions – Teachers Workshop	
2018 Meeting	1,300.00
Registration fees -	165.00
Total annual meeting - 2018	3,465.00
Total annual meeting	17,545.00

**Donations**

Paypal Refund	0.67
Atkinson MS Civil War History Award	400.00
Bettsworth Award	560.12
Halsell Prize Endowment	200.00
Miscellaneous Contributions	355.00
Mississippi History Now	2,130.00
Total Donations	3,645.79
Interest earned	123.35
Membership	
College	105.00
Contributing	3,400.00
Corporate	2,100.00
Federation	500.00

Joint	2,135.00
Life - new life members	1,000.00
Patron	1,200.00
Single	10,020.00
Student	55.00
Supporting	1,350.00
Total membership	21,865.00
Transfers	
Bettsworth money market –	
To be transferred to fidelity	4,419.08
Atkinson money market –	
To be transferred to fidelity	11,249.94
Total transfers	15,669.02
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>58,848.16</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Accounting Fees	1,500.00
Advertising	640.00
Annual Meeting Expenses	19,447.81
Atkinson Award Expense	400.00
Atkinson Award	
Transfer To Fidelity Account	11,249.94
Bank Charges	
Bank Box Rent	80.00
Bank Service Charge	38.40
Total Bank Charges	118.40
Bettsworth Award	616.29
Bettsworth Award CD Transfer	100.00
Bettsworth Award	
Transfer To Fidelity Account	4,419.08
ERH Oral History Award	
Transfer To Fidelity Account	4,252.78
Everett Award	300.00
Grant Awards	
Junior Historical Society	1,000.00
Total Grant Awards	1,000.00
Halsell Prize	200.00
Honoraria / History Is Lunch	350.00
Journal Of Mississippi History	3,891.86

Mclemore Prize	700.00
Membership Refund	25.00
Miscellaneous Expenses	72.74
Office Expenses	365.94
Paypal Fees	44.01
Postage	830.58
Transfer Mississippi History Now Donations	2,130.00
Website Expense	1,184.34
Willie D. Halsell Prize Endowment Transfer To Fidelity Account	8,407.78
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>62,246.55</b>
2017 Net Income (Loss)	3,398.39
December 31, 2016 Account Balance Forward	48,381.56
December 31, 2017 Account Balance	44,983.17

**Mississippi History NOW**  
Summary Report  
1/1/2017 through 12/31/17

**INCOME**

Donations Transferred From MHS Operating Account	2,130.00
Donations Total Donations	2,905.00 5,035.00
Interest Earned	2.08
Mississippi Humanities Council Grant	3,000.00
MDAH Grant	10,000.00

**TOTAL INCOME** **18,037.08**

**EXPENSES**

Annual Meeting - MHN Award	44.42
Authors' Fees	1,250.00
Bank Service Charge	60.00
Lesson Plans	750.00
Professional Fees	13,750.00
Use Fees	100.00



<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>15,954.42</b>
2017 Net Income (Loss)	2,082.66
December 31, 2016 Account Balance Forward	1,007.83
December 31, 2017 Account Balance	3,090.49

The secretary-treasurer thanked Page Ogden, Fred Miller, Ann Simmons, Dale Shearer, William “Brother” Rogers, Robert Benson, and Marshall Bennett for their help with the Society’s investments and finances. Page Ogden gave a brief update on the implementation of the Society’s investment plan.

The secretary-treasurer thanked the employees of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History for all of the work that they do for the Society.

III. The president expressed her appreciation to the members of the Program Committee: Kevin Greene, chair; James F. Barnett, Jr., Toby Bates, Peggy W. Jeanes, Mary Carol Miller, Christian Pinnen, Ken P’Pool, Alysia Burton Steele, and Andrew Wiest for their outstanding work in planning and coordinating arrangements for the annual meeting program.

The president also expressed her appreciation to the members of the Local Arrangements Committee: Elizabeth Coleman, co-chair; Diane Mattox, co-chair; Marshall Bennett, Elbert Hilliard, Rita Johnson, Lolly Rash, William “Brother” Rogers, and Erica Speed for their outstanding work in planning and coordinating the annual meeting.

The president thanked the annual meeting sponsors: Marshall Bennett, Steven and Elizabeth Coleman, Elbert and Claire Hilliard, Natchez Historical Society, Fred Miller, Page Ogden, William “Brother” Rogers, Susannah Ural, the Dale Center for the Study of War and Society, the Center for the Study of the Gulf South, and the Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage at the University of Southern Mississippi.

The president recognized and expressed appreciation for the following individuals who were completing their terms of service on the board of directors of the Society: Walt Grayson, Max Grivno, Andy Harper, Peggy Jeanes, Fred Miller, and Michael Vinson-Williams.

IV. Brother Rogers reported on the progress that is being made in addressing the backlog in the publication of the *Journal of Mississippi History*. He stated that there is an issue currently with the printer that should be mailed to the Society members by the end of March.

V. John Marszalek gave a brief update on the progress of the *Heritage of Mississippi Series*. Dr. Marszalek stated that Lori Fulton's book *Literature in Mississippi* was recently published. Dr. Marszalek stated that Connie Lester, Bo Morgan, Jere Nash, Clay Williams and Mike Bunn, Max Grivno, Charles Weeks, and Christian Pinnen are continuing to work on their respective volumes in the series. He informed the members that there are still three volumes that need an author: *Mississippi 1841 to 1861*, *Mississippi in the Jim Crow Era*, and *Mississippi in the Civil Rights Era*.

VI. Missy Jones, editor, *Mississippi History NOW*, reported on the status of *Mississippi History Now (MHN)*. Ms. Jones stated that she is working to secure the completion of the last two articles for the current publication season and that these articles will be published in March and April. Ms. Jones stated that this publishing season will be her last as editor of *MHN* and thanked the Society for having been granted the opportunity to serve in this capacity.

The secretary-treasurer thanked Missy Jones for her dedicated work during the period of her service as *Mississippi History NOW* editor.

VII. Deanne Stephens gave a brief report on the *Junior Historical Society and National History Day*. Dr. Stephens stated that twelve public schools and two private schools with a total of 314 students had participated in the *National History Day* program.

VIII. Ann Simmons reported on the progress that has been made in reactivating the *Federation of Mississippi Historical Societies*.

IX. The secretary-treasurer on behalf of Brian Pugh, chair, *Meeting Sites Committee*, presented the report of the *Meeting Sites Committee*. He stated that the *Mississippi Historical Society* annual meeting will be held in Natchez in 2019 and in Cleveland in 2020. He further reported that the Society's board of directors had approved the *Meeting Sites Committee's* recommendation that the 2021 annual meeting be held in Jackson.

X. Anne Webster, chair, Resolutions Committee, presented the following resolutions:

### **RESOLUTION OF CONDOLENCE**

**WHEREAS**, Eva Ann Dickins Boschert departed this life on June 8, 2017; and

**WHEREAS**, a native of Clarksdale, Mississippi, Boschert attended Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, where she was a member of Eta Epsilon Gamma Sorority; and

**WHEREAS**, Boschert was a talented musician and served as the organist for Duncan Baptist Church for forty years; and

**WHEREAS**, Boschert was deeply committed to the healthcare field as witnessed by her faithful service as a nursing home administrator for many years; and

**WHEREAS**, Boschert, along with her husband of sixty-five years, Thomas N. Boschert, had a lifelong interest in the study of history, serving as a faithful member of the Bolivar County Historical Society and the Mississippi Historical Society and dedicated supporter of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History; and

**WHEREAS**, Boschert, who served as the Society's "First Lady" during her husband's presidency in 1984-1985, will long be remembered for her pleasant nature and ever-present smile that lifted the spirits of those with whom she came in contact at the Society's annual meetings;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Mississippi Historical Society, assembled on March 3, 2018, in Jackson, Mississippi, mourns the death of Eva Ann Dickins Boschert and expresses its sympathy to her family.

### **RESOLUTION OF CONDOLENCE**

**WHEREAS**, Annette Cook Redden departed this life on January 15, 2018; and

**WHEREAS**, a native of Turrell, Arkansas, Redden, who was reared in Blue Mountain, Mississippi, was a graduate of Blue Mountain College; and

**WHEREAS**, Redden, who had a deep and abiding appreciation of the importance of education, taught high school English for thirty years; and

**WHEREAS**, Redden, along with her husband of fifty-eight years, Walter Redden, Jr., had a lifelong interest in the study of history, serving as a faithful member of the Mississippi Historical Society and ardent supporter of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History; and

**WHEREAS**, Redden served as a sterling ambassador for the state of Mississippi through her thirty years of dedicated volunteer docent service at the Mississippi Governor's Mansion; and

**WHEREAS**, Redden will long be remembered for her pleasant nature, gracious manner, and ever-present smile that lifted the spirits of those with whom she came in contact at the Governor's Mansion, the Society's annual meetings, and the MDAH History Is Lunch programs that she regularly attended along with her husband, Walter;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Mississippi Historical Society assembled on March 3, 2018, in Jackson, Mississippi, mourns the death of Annette Cook Redden and expresses its sympathy to her family.

### **RESOLUTION OF COMMENDATION**

**WHEREAS**, William F. Winter recently celebrated his ninety-fifth birthday on February 21, 2018; and

**WHEREAS**, an extraordinary public servant, Winter served in the Mississippi House of Representatives from 1948 to 1956, as state tax collector from 1956 to 1964, as state treasurer from 1964 to 1968, as lieutenant governor from 1972 to 1976, and as governor from 1980 to 1984; and

**WHEREAS**, Winter served on the Board of Trustees of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) for fifty years, presiding with wisdom, humor, and patience; and

**WHEREAS**, Winter is a longtime member of the Mississippi Historical Society who was instrumental in the Society's reorganization in 1953, has served as president and in countless other leadership roles, including the drafting of the Society's constitution and initial bylaws, and has faithfully attended the annual meetings over the years; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1996, Winter was the recipient of the Society's Dunbar Rowland Award, given in recognition of lifelong contributions to the study, preservation, and interpretation of Mississippi history; and

**WHEREAS**, Winter's contributions to the Mississippi Historical Society, MDAH, and the state of Mississippi are unmatched;  
**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the members of the Mississippi Historical Society, assembled on March 3, 2018, in Jackson, Mississippi, congratulate William F. Winter on the occasion of his birthday and commend his outstanding public service.

### RESOLUTION OF COMMENDATION

**WHEREAS**, Samuel B. Olden will celebrate his ninety-ninth birthday on March 27, 2018; and

**WHEREAS**, a native of Yazoo City, Olden, as a child and teenager, was a frequent visitor to the B. S. Ricks Memorial Library, the oldest privately funded library in Mississippi; and

**WHEREAS**, at an early age, Olden, influenced by his grandmothers and his reading at the Ricks Memorial Library, developed an avid interest in foreign travel and history that led to his enrollment in 1935 at age sixteen in the University of Mississippi, where he earned his B.A. with a double major in history and English and his M.A. degree in Southern history; and

**WHEREAS**, Olden secured a position in the American Foreign Service of the U. S. State Department in 1941 prior to the United States' entry into World War II, rising to the rank of vice consul in the U. S. Embassy in Quito, Ecuador; and

**WHEREAS**, Olden served with distinction in the United States Navy from July 1943 to July 1946, serving at the end of the war in Europe in the office of the naval attaché in the U. S. Embassy in Paris; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1947 Olden was recruited to join the newly-formed Central Intelligence Group, the predecessor of the CIA; and

**WHEREAS**, having secured the approval of Richard Helms, the CIA's director of European Operations and future CIA director, Olden was transferred to Vienna, Austria, where he served for two years prior to his employment by the Mobil Oil Corporation; and

**WHEREAS**, Olden's employment by Mobil Oil led to his working in the West African colonies of Great Britain and France, i.e., East and West Nigeria, the British Cameroons, French Cameroon, French Congo, Chad, and Gabon from 1952-1957; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1957 Olden joined Mobil's Government Relations

Department in New York, where he served as Mobil's observer at the United Nations, coming in contact with

Adlai Stevenson, Eleanor Roosevelt, and other luminaries; and

**WHEREAS**, Olden returned to North Africa in 1961 to serve as general manager of Mobil's affiliate in Tunisia, and then in 1963 as general manager in Algeria, followed by similar stints with Mobil affiliates in Lima, Peru, and Madrid, Spain; and

**WHEREAS**, following his retirement in 1974, Olden returned to his beloved family home in Yazoo City, where he became actively involved in cultural and historical matters; and

**WHEREAS**, Olden, through his generous personal contributions, helped fund and spearhead the establishment of the Yazoo Historical Society's museum that now bears his name; and

**WHEREAS**, Olden has been a faithful and dedicated member of the Mississippi Historical Society, serving on the Society's board of directors and numerous committees, and as the Society's president in 1996-1997; and

**WHEREAS**, Olden in his nineties, established and helped fund the Yazoo Memorial Library Walkway, which stretches between the Samuel B. Olden Museum (originally the elementary school that Olden attended) and the B. S. Ricks Library and honors and memorializes more than one hundred citizens of Yazoo County whose literary works have been published; and

**WHEREAS**, Olden, a world traveler who has visited more than 150 foreign nations and is fluent in six languages, is one of Mississippi's most outstanding citizens and a true "Renaissance" man, who has brought great credit to the Mississippi Historical Society and to our state and nation;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Mississippi Historical Society, assembled on March 3, 2018, at the Two Mississippi Museums in Jackson, Mississippi, congratulates Samuel B. Olden on the occasion of his approaching ninety-ninth birthday and commends his dedicated and outstanding public service.

#### **RESOLUTION OF COMMENDATION**

**WHEREAS**, the Oxford Conference for the Book will celebrate its twenty-fifth year in 2018; and

**WHEREAS**, the conference is presented by the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi and Square Books; and

**WHEREAS**, the conference has become a renowned literary event, attracting authors of local, regional, and national stature, as well as editors, publishers, journalists, and book lovers; and

**WHEREAS**, the addition of playwrights, filmmakers, and others have enhanced the conference's reputation as a forum for culture; and

**WHEREAS**, the Children's Book Festival is held each year in conjunction with the conference, with more than 1,200 first and fifth graders receiving a book and attending a presentation by the author; and

**WHEREAS**, the conference strengthens Mississippi's longtime reputation for excellence in literature;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Mississippi Historical Society, assembled on March 3, 2018, in Jackson, Mississippi, congratulates and commends the organizers of the Oxford Conference for the Book on the occasion of its twenty-fifth anniversary.

### RESOLUTION OF COMMENDATION

**WHEREAS**, the Mississippi Historical Society is comprised of individuals who are committed to the preservation and interpretation of Mississippi history; and

**WHEREAS**, the Society benefits immensely from the volunteer work of its members, both academicians and interested laypersons; and

**WHEREAS**, the Journal of Mississippi History is published by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) in cooperation with the Society; and

**WHEREAS**, the Journal is provided to Society members as a benefit of membership; and

**WHEREAS**, the publication of the Journal has been delayed for a period of time due to MDAH staff changes and significantly expanded workloads associated with the planning and opening of the Two Mississippi Museums (Museum of Mississippi History and the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum); and

**WHEREAS**, Dominique Pugh of Brandon has rendered an invaluable service to MDAH and the Society through the generous in-kind

contribution of her time and services in laying out and designing two issues of the Journal;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Mississippi Historical Society, assembled on March 3, 2018, in Jackson, Mississippi, commends Dominique Pugh for her generous contribution to MDAH and the Society's members.

### **RESOLUTION OF COMMENDATION**

**WHEREAS**, the Mississippi Historical Society is aware that the Local Arrangements Committee, co-chaired by Diane Mattox and Elizabeth Coleman, and the Program Committee, chaired by Kevin Greene, invested a considerable amount of time, thought, and effort in planning the 2018 meeting of the Society in Jackson; and

**WHEREAS**, the Local Arrangements Committee succeeded in hosting an enlightening, entertaining, and memorable annual meeting; and

**WHEREAS**, the Program Committee succeeded in planning informative and scholarly meeting sessions;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Mississippi Historical Society, assembled on March 3, 2018, in Jackson, Mississippi, that the Local Arrangements Committee and Program Committee be officially recognized and commended for their splendid efforts.

The president moved that the resolutions be approved. The motion was seconded by Ann Simmons and unanimously approved.

XI. Aubrey Lucas, chair, Nominations Committee, reported that the committee recommended the following slate of officers and board members:

#### **Officers for the term 2018-2019**

**President** – Page Ogden, former president & CEO, Britton & Koontz Bank, Natchez

**Vice President (president-elect)** – Charles Westmoreland, professor of history, Delta State University

**Secretary-Treasurer** – Brother Rogers, director, Programs and Communication Division, MDAH

Susannah Ural will serve as immediate past president.



The following six individuals are nominated to serve **three-year terms** on the Society's Board of Directors (2018-2021).

**Shennette Garrett-Scott**, assistant professor of History & African American Studies, University of Mississippi

**LaToya Norman**, general manager, African American Military History Museum, Hattiesburg

**Dierdre Payne**, retired Exxon Mobile marketing specialist, Ridgeland

**Christian Pinnen**, assistant professor of History and Political Science, Mississippi College

**James Robertson**, former Mississippi Supreme Court Justice, Jackson

**Stephanie Rolph**, associate professor of History, Millsaps College

The following individuals are nominated to serve unexpired **two-year terms** (2018-2020).

**Rebecca Tuuri**, assistant professor of History, University of Southern Mississippi

**Marks Sokolosky-Wixon**, executive director, LaPointe Krebs Foundation

### **Board of Publications**

**Jim Barnett** and **John Langston** are nominated to serve another three-year term (2018-2021) on the Board of Publications.

The president moved that the aforementioned slate of nominees be accepted by acclamation. The motion was seconded by Anne Webster and unanimously approved.

XII. Katie Blount, director, Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH), briefly reported on various MDAH activities and highlighted accomplishments from the past year such as; the Two Mississippi Museums had a very successful opening on December 9, 2017, and the museums' visitation is exceeding projections, new programming, marketing, and exhibits for the Department's historic sites, new plans

for various Department properties, including Windsor Ruins, Winterville Mounds, and the Manship House.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by the president.

Susannah S. Ural, President  
Elbert R. Hilliard, Secretary-Treasurer



## Recent Manuscript Acquisitions to Historic Repositories in Mississippi

by *Mona Vance-Ali*

This is the fortieth annual compilation citing manuscript acquisitions to appear in *The Journal of Mississippi History*. The collections listed below were acquired by libraries during 2017-2018. Unless otherwise noted, all collections are open to researchers.

Carl Brown Photographs Collection. Approximately twenty-five cubic feet. 1940s-1980s. Additions made include training certificates, photographs, poems, and newspaper clippings relating to the Carl Brown Photography Studio in Columbus and members of the Brown family. Collection already includes over twenty-five thousand photographic negatives and prints taken by professional photographer Carl Brown. Photographs include commercial, portrait, and advertising work. Collection being processed. Billups-Garth Archives in the Local History Department at the Columbus-Lowndes Public Library.

Columbus Church of Christ Records. 9 cubic feet. c. 1960s-c.1990s. Consists of minutes, correspondence, photographs, slides, VHS tapes, and ephemera from the Columbus Church of Christ in Lowndes County. Collection not processed. Billups-Garth Archives in the Local History Department at the Columbus-Lowndes Public Library.

Columbus Classroom Teachers Association Minutes. One ledger. 1980-1995. Consists of one minute book for the Columbus Classroom Teachers Association. Collection not processed. Billups-Garth Archives in the Local History Department at the Columbus-Lowndes Public Library.

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*MONA VANCE-ALI is an archivist at the Columbus-Lowndes Public Library in Columbus, Mississippi and a former member of the board of directors of the Mississippi Historical Society.*

Hayley Gilmore's Women's March Posters. Four posters. 2017. Collection contains four posters of protest art designed and printed by Lowndes County graphic designer Hayley Gilmore. One poster titled "A Woman's Place is in the Resistance" was used in the Women's March on Washington in 2017. Collection not processed. Billups-Garth Archives in the Local History Department at the Columbus-Lowndes Public Library.

Mary A. McClure Hutchinson Martin Letters. Two cubic feet. 1945-1954. Collection contains over one hundred and forty letters relating to Martin's Lowndes County farm and family. It also includes correspondence through the United States Displaced Persons Commission with ten European families. The Commission's purpose was to relocate individuals displaced by World War II with work in U.S. businesses and farms. Billups-Garth Archives in the Local History Department at the Columbus-Lowndes Public Library.

Pratt and Franklin Family Letters. Three cubic feet. 1771-1937. Consists primarily of over two hundred and fifty letters between Henry Merrill Pratt and Lilla Young Franklin Pratt of Columbus, Mississippi from 1904 to 1905, but also includes newspaper clippings, photographs, and ephemera. Billups-Garth Archives in the Local History Department at the Columbus-Lowndes Public Library.

Bobby Joe Family Collection. Eight linear feet. Collection of statuaries, tea service, plates, bowls, soup spoons, chop sticks, pictures, vases, fans and other family housekeeping memorabilia. Delta State University.

Cannizzaro-Trigiani Family Collection. .50 linear feet. Two volumes of Cannizzaro Family History; some reproduction restrictions are set. Delta State University.

Cleveland Garden Club Collection. Six linear feet. Includes flower shows brochures, yearbooks, programs and minutes of meetings and luncheons, newspapers. Also evaluation, grading and floor planning of flower shows along with awards received by members and by the Garden Club. In addition, there are two scrapbooks the history of

Cleveland Garden Club for the years 1940-1941 and 1943-1944. Delta State University.

Floyd Wilsford Collection. .25 linear feet. Collection consists of one Mississippi State baseball game ball given to Wilsford who played basketball and baseball at Mississippi State University from 1938 to 1942. Delta State University.

Ford-Horne-Baird Collection. .25 linear feet. 1880-1904. Sue Evans Baird's diary documenting her experiences in and around Inverness, Mississippi. Delta State University.

George Jue Family Collection. Collection of Pat Jue's Pharmaceutical Materials and DVDs of family and pharmaceutical photographs. Delta State University.

Hewey Purvis Collection. .25 linear feet. Hand-colored maps of the Mississippi Delta river basin. Delta State University.

Hoo Family Collection. One 18" x 22" framed and matted silk embroidery depicting four individuals taking part in a ceremony with open temple food and candles. Delta State University.

James H. Chow Family Collection. .25 linear feet. Black and White photographs of James Chow and his Cub Scout troop. Delta State University.

J. N. Wun Family Collection. Three linear feet. Collection includes ephemera from the J. N. Wun store in Merigold, Mississippi. Delta State University.

Keith Fulcher Family Collection. .25 linear feet. Lebanese in the Delta project: digitized family photographs. Delta State University.

Lions Club Collection. .25 linear feet. The minutes of Lion's Club meetings. Delta State University.

Mike Dean Family Collection. .25 linear feet. Lebanese in the

Delta project: digitized family photographs. Delta State University.

Pang-Chinn Family Collection. .25 linear feet. Digital files of four scrapbooks related to the Pang families and their descendants, originally from Dublin and Marks, Mississippi. Delta State University.

Patterson Family Collection. .50 linear feet. 1951-1956. Includes Boyle High School yearbooks, 1951 & 1952; Delta State yearbooks, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956. Delta State University.

Robert "Bobby" Sferruzza Collection. Seventy-six linear feet. Collection consists of drafts and sketches along with final products of architectural renderings of businesses and homes primarily in the Mississippi Delta and the state while some projects are in Texas and international countries. Delta State University.

Susan Allen Ford Collection. Nineteen linear feet. Collection includes the research and teaching materials of Dr. Susan Allen Ford, Professor of English and the coordinator for Delta State University's Writing Center. Delta State University.

Shelby, Mississippi Collection. 9.30 linear feet. United Methodist Church, Shelby, MS: record books, rolls, photographs of congregation & church building and grounds, alter cross, communion and waifer trays, offering plate, tapestries; Lion's Club International Charter, minutes and programs; Bank of Bolivar County time book; guest book and photographs of opening of Bank in Duncan, MS; Rotary Club of Shelby, MS, 1939; spiral bound ledger from a cotton gin in 1953; and a map of Shelby. Delta State University.

Tiffany Abraham Family Collection. Twenty-five linear feet. Lebanese in the Delta project: digitized family photographs. Delta State University.

Voss Family Collection. .25 linear feet. 1935-2000s. Collection pertains to the Voss Plumbing company which began in Cleveland, MS in 1935 continues to operate under the leadership of Julius

Voss, the grandson of the founder. Considered the second oldest continuously operating African-American owned business in Cleveland, MS, the company has donated its archive of photographs. Delta State University.

Winston Ho Collection. .25 linear feet. "The Chinese Tomb at Cypress Grove Cemetery" by Winston Ho. Delta State University. Delta State University.

Yee Jue Family Collection. .25 linear feet. Collection consists of photos of Leland Food Store and Amy Yee's Memorial Service, 1923-2017. Delta State University.

Zengaro Family Collection. .25 linear feet. Two DVD's of the documentary, "I Sopravvisutti: The Survivors: Italian Americans in the Mississippi Delta" and a program from the first public showing.

SonEdna Foundation, Inc. Collection. Eleven linear feet (print) and 5 GB (digital). 2004-2017. The SonEdna Foundation celebrated and promoted the literary arts and writers of all genres and backgrounds in the Delta, in Mississippi, and the world. This collection includes governance records, programs and financial records, digital images, 5 GB of digital records containing photographs, websites, and Facebook pages via Google Drive. This Collection was donated to by Ms. Myrna Colley-Lee, founder of the SonEdna Foundation on October 23, 2017. Margaret Walker Center at Jackson State University.

Alphonse Michael "Mike" Espy Papers (approx. 102 cubic feet). New additions include approximately 102 cubic feet of additional materials to the papers of former Congressman Alphonse Michael "Mike" Espy, donated in July 2017. Contents include constituent correspondence, reports, and subject files. The materials are in process and are closed. Congressional and Political Research Center collections at Mississippi State University Libraries.

Frank and Virginia Williams Collection of Lincolniana. The collection contains fifteen thousand books, pamphlets, and journals and over twelve thousand artifacts, numismatics, philately,



miniatures, photographs, broadsides, artwork, and ephemera. All items were collected by Chief Justice (Ret.) Frank J. Williams and his wife Virginia of Hope Valley, Rhode Island, from a variety of auction houses, private collectors, antique shops, and bookstores. The collection is currently in process but is open for research. Mississippi State University Libraries.

John Hailman Papers. Twenty cubic feet. Additions made to the approximately twenty cubic feet of subject file materials and research notes. The Hailman papers are in process and are closed. Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library at Mississippi State University Libraries.

Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library. Recent additions include a collection of original correspondence, photographs, engineering drawings, reminiscences, and ribbons from President and Mrs. Ulysses S. Grant, their son Fred Grant, and their grandson, Ulysses S. Grant, III, donated by Mrs. Claire Ruestow Telecki, President Grant's great-great granddaughter. Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library at Mississippi State University Libraries.

Bridgforth Family Papers. 4.5 cubic feet. Correspondence, photographs, genealogy records, and artifacts from the Bridgforth family and related families of Pickens, Mississippi. Mississippi State University Libraries Special Collections, Manuscripts Division.

Claiborne County/Port Gibson Historical Collection. .33 cubic feet. 1839-c.1990s. Collection consists of notes, correspondence and other material related to Port Gibson Pilgrimage, c. 1990s; ledger, 1866; *Daily Southern Reveille*, 7/19/1859; and Bank of Port Gibson Stock Book, 1839-1844. Mississippi State University Libraries Special Collections, Manuscripts Division.

Claude Dinkins Smith Navy notebook. c. 1940. Mississippi State University Libraries Special Collections, Manuscripts Division.

Danforth Fellowship Notes. One volume. 1944. Composed of two photographs and a scrapbook containing notes, photographs, and publications collected during a two-week internship at Purina Coun-

ty. Mississippi State University Libraries Special Collections, Manuscripts Division.

Emmett Till Trial Transcript (Partial). One folder. A fully legible copy of the typescript transcript of the second half of the trial for the murder of Emmett Till. Mississippi State University Libraries Special Collections, Manuscripts Division.

Fay Fisher Collection, composed of four 24"x48" jazz-themed paintings. Mississippi State University Libraries Special Collections, Manuscripts Division.

Glover Family Sheet Music Collection. 1892-1948. Composed of approximately eight pieces of sheet music. Mississippi State University Libraries Special Collections, Manuscripts Division.

Henry Haven Letters. .66 cubic feet. Collection includes approximately one hundred and five of the letters written by Henry Haven and others during World War II, and one photograph featuring Henry Haven. Mississippi State University Libraries Special Collections, Manuscripts Division.

Holt Collection. .33 cubic feet. 1861-1891. Collection contains papers from John and Joseph Holt including correspondence, manuscript notes, a letterbook, and pamphlets. Mississippi State University Libraries Special Collections, Manuscripts Division.

James Canizaro Architecture Collection. 66 cu. feet and seventy-two tubes of drawings. 2013-2017. composed of architectural drawings and records. Mississippi State University Libraries Special Collections, Manuscripts Division.

Jennings Family Papers. .66 cubic feet. Collection includes World War II-era correspondence. Mississippi State University Libraries Special Collections, Manuscripts Division.

John Robertson Henry Papers. One cubic foot. 1938-1955. Includes working papers of journalist John Robertson Henry, including clippings, correspondence, telegrams, and other materials. Mississip-

pi State University Libraries Special Collections, Manuscripts Division.

Kellum Family Papers. One cubic foot. Includes books, farm journals, medical instruments, and other family papers. Mississippi State University Libraries Special Collections, Manuscripts Division.

Luther and Fannye Rhodes WWII Letters. .66 cubic feet. Collection consists of World War II-era correspondence and newspapers. Mississippi State University Libraries Special Collections, Manuscripts Division.

Manilla (Slave Token). One item. 1843. One child-sized piece of manilla (slave token) from the wreck of the English Schooner DUORO off the Isles of Scilly in 1843. Mississippi State University Libraries Special Collections, Manuscripts Division.

Nancy Margaret Curry Ballard Collection. One cubic foot. which includes a wool coverlet, carding tools, photograph and biographical information. Mississippi State University Libraries Special Collections, Manuscripts Division.

Preston Davidson Letter. One folder. Collection consists of one letter discussing the proposed appointment of Davidson to the position of lighthouse keeper in Pascagoula, plus associated research materials related to the letter. Mississippi State University Libraries Special Collections, Manuscripts Division.

Starkville-MSU Symphony Orchestra Collection. One cubic foot. 2017. Includes reel to reel tapes of recordings of performances, as well as correspondence, board minutes, treasurer's reports and other documents. Mississippi State University Libraries Special Collections, Manuscripts Division.

Starkville Pride Collection. .33 cubic feet. Collection includes buttons, stickers, carabiners, banners, signs, t-shirts, the inaugural issue of *Queer Magnolias*, newspaper articles, and other papers. Mississippi State University Libraries Special Collections, Manuscripts Division.

T.D. and Myree Woodard Collection. .33 cubic feet. Collection includes World War II era photographs from the Air Force Base in Greenville, Mississippi and booklet from Greenville United Methodist Church. Mississippi State University Libraries Special Collections, Manuscripts Division.

William Garbo Collection. Twenty-five cubic feet and rolled drawings. Collection consists of architectural drawings, project files, slides and other materials related to the professional landscape architecture career of William Garbo. Mississippi State University Libraries Special Collections, Manuscripts Division.

William Hinds Papers. .33 cubic feet. Fifteen Civil War letters. Mississippi State University Libraries Special Collections, Manuscripts Division.

Yonge Family Collection. Collection includes photographs, a postcard and an insurance policy. Mississippi State University Libraries Special Collections, Manuscripts Division.

Charles Hogarth Records. Three linear feet. 1919-2007. Correspondence, personal notes and writings, photographs, clippings, and ephemera by Charles P. Hogarth relating to his time as president of Mississippi State College for Women. Beulah Culbertson Archives and Special Collections, Mississippi University for Women.

Fant Family Papers. Sixteen inches. 1895-1929. Correspondence and photographs of John Clayton Fant (president of Mississippi State College for Women 1920-1929) and Mabel Beckett Fant, mostly during their courtship. Beulah Culbertson Archives and Special Collections, Mississippi University for Women.

Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science Records. Ten linear feet. 1983-2017. Yearbooks, photo albums, scrapbooks, clippings, DVDs, VHSs, picture slides, posters and images relating to the school from its founding until 2017. Beulah Culbertson Archives and Special Collections, Mississippi University for Women.

Cherry Burns Papers. Twenty five cubic feet. At the age of nineteen, Cherry Fellner Burns (1926-2013) became the youngest woman of the Denver press corps. Throughout her travels, Burns maintained extensive correspondence and journals that chronicle Germany during the Marshall Plan years and her later travels across the globe. Her extensive slide collection likewise documents her travel. Special Collections, University of Southern Mississippi.

Christopher Wilson Freedom Summer Collection. One cubic foot. The collection chronicles the Freedom Summer of 1964 in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Christopher Wilson, a student at Stanford University in 1964, worked in Hattiesburg with the local chapter of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) and with the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), the organization that oversaw efforts by the various civil rights groups. This collection contains personal correspondence with his parents and their fundraising materials and correspondence from donors. Other materials include newspaper clippings, canvassing materials for Students for Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and MFDP, and educational materials designed to overcome obstacles designed to prevent African Americans in Mississippi from voting in elections. Special Collections, University of Southern Mississippi.

Edythe Evelyn Gandy Personal Collection. Two cubic feet. The collection contains over five hundred photographs capturing the personal and political life of Evelyn Gandy (1920-2007). Additionally, it includes correspondence from her lieutenant governor campaign, speeches, newspaper articles, and family information. Special Collections, University of Southern Mississippi.

Emilye Crosby Civil Rights Collection. 21.5 cubic feet. The collection is comprised of primary and secondary research materials related to civil rights activities led by Charles Evers in Claiborne County, Mississippi that included a boycott that ultimately was resolved in the United States Supreme Court Case *NAACP v. Claiborne Hardware Co* (1982). Materials include extensive copies of court transcripts, depositions from *Evers v Birdsong*, Federal Bureau of Investigation files, and National Labor Relations Board documents, and

census and income data. Special Collections, University of Southern Mississippi.

Gulf Islands Conservancy Collection. Ten cubic feet. The records address the BP oil spill, casino and resort development, marina and mooring development, barrier islands, and the shrimp industry. Includes board minutes from 1996-2000 and numerous federal and state governmental reports on environmental issues impacting the Gulf Coast. Special Collections, University of Southern Mississippi.

Harold Branton 103d Infantry Division Collection. Twelve cubic feet. Reference material for Harold Branton's and Roger Cranston's book, *103rd Infantry Division: "the Trail of the Cactus,"* 2010 and documentation of the 103d engagements in the European theatre during World War II including a scrapbook, general orders, newsletters, and maps. The collection also contains post-war materials from reunions and monuments. Special Collections, University of Southern Mississippi.

Hattiesburg Civic Light Opera. Two accruals. 1.5 cubic feet. Seventy-four playbill spanning from 1986-2016 and two posters. Special Collections, University of Southern Mississippi.

Hattiesburg Track Club. Two accruals. .75 cubic feet. Clippings, photos, documents, and regalia. Special Collections, University of Southern Mississippi.

Jerry Keith Collection. 1.75 cubic feet. This collection consists primarily of still photography in taken by local commercial photographer, Jerry Keith, capturing the Hattiesburg area and the state of Mississippi during the late 1950s through early 1970s. A large number of the photos capture storefronts, graphics and products of local businesses. Highlights include photos of a Citizens Council meeting, the inauguration of Governor Coleman, military bases, and the Parchman state penitentiary. Still photography is in negative, slide and print formats. There are also moving images as well as accompanying newsclippings and subject files. Special Collections, University of Southern Mississippi.

John “Jack” Eckert scrapbook. One item. Compiled by Second Lieutenant, 16<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regiment of the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, the scrapbook chronicles the regiment’s movement and engagements in the European Theater of World War I. Special Collections, University of Southern Mississippi.

Just Over the Rainbow Theater Collection. .5 cubic feet. Sixty-two playbills spanning from 1987-2016. Special Collections, University of Southern Mississippi.

Kenneth Uriel Gutsch Collection. Accrual. One cubic foot. Papers of University of Southern Mississippi psychology professor, Kenneth U. Gutsch. The collection consists of correspondence regarding his classes and publications, annotated publications, the manuscript of *Objective Measurement in Instrumental Music Performance*, 1991, which he co-authored with Davide A. Sisemore and five photographs. Special Collections, University of Southern Mississippi.

L.N. Dantzler Lumber Company Collection. Eighty-one cubic feet. Land deeds, plats, maps, timber estimates, title research, and photographs chronicling Mississippi’s early timber and associated railroad industries. Special Collections, University of Southern Mississippi. Special Collections, University of Southern Mississippi.

Max Grivno Research Collection. Twelve items. Documents and photographic materials pertaining to the institute of slavery and its aftermath. Highlights of the collection include two early 19<sup>th</sup> C letters and two engravings from Frank Leslie’s *Illustrated History of the Civil War*, 1892. Special Collections, University of Southern Mississippi.

Mike Mulhern Research Collection. .5 cubic feet. Compiled by Mike Mulhern while researching Sylvester Magee, whose claim to have been an enslaved man who served in the Civil War led to his notoriety in the 1960s. The collection consists of correspondence, news clippings, and photos. Special Collections, University of Southern Mississippi.

Mississippi Teachers’ Strike 1985 Photographs. Fifty-four items.

These photographs were taken during the prolonged Mississippi Teachers Strike of 1985 in which 9,429 teachers participated and halted classes for one hundred and seventy-five thousand students across the state. The strike culminated with a raise enacted by a legislative override of a gubernatorial veto. Special Collections, University of Southern Mississippi.

Stovall Family Papers. Accrual. .5 cubic feet. These accruals provide additional information on: the early Stovall settlers in Virginia; Quincy Alexander Stovall, who served in the Confederate Army; and the First United Methodist Church in Jasper, Alabama. The accrual also contains material from various family reunions. Special Collections, University of Southern Mississippi.





## BOOK REVIEWS

### *In the Wake of War: Military Occupation, Emancipation, and Civil War America.*

By Andrew F. Lang.

(Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2017.

Acknowledgements, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. xi, 317. \$47.50 cloth.

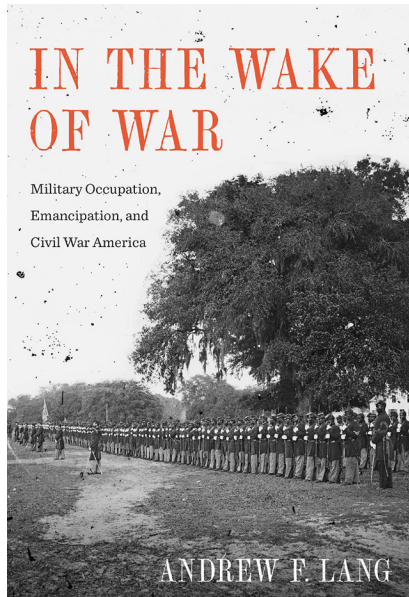
ISBN: 978-0-8071-6706-9.)

For all the attention heaped upon the Union army's performance in battle, its most important task has been largely overlooked – occupation. The great task befalling the Union army from the beginning of the Civil War was to defeat Confederate military forces and hold Confederate territory until military forces surrendered and civilians acquiesced to restoration of the Federal Union. As the war unfolded, a third task of destroying slavery emerged, and its progress depended on the successful defeat of Confederate armies and white southern acceptance of the reality of emancipation. That these three tasks proved to be exceedingly difficult has been explained mostly as a matter of white southern intransigence and problematic Union

military and civilian leadership.

*In the Wake of War: Military Occupation, Emancipation, and Civil*

*War America* by Andrew F. Lang offers a different interpretation, and it is a deeply consequential one – occupation ran contrary to American republican values. The core identity of the nineteenth century American citizen-soldier was that of a temporary, volunteer warrior ready to defeat his country's enemies before returning to civilian life.



American republican tradition rejected both standing armies of occupation and revolutionary military brigades imposing radical social change at the point of bayonet. The demands of an increasingly revolutionary Civil War incorporating vast expanses of territory put great strains upon this

military republican tradition. By the end of Reconstruction, most white Americans chose “faith in democratic majority rule and self-determination at the ballot box – however distasteful and violent – over the idealism of racial equality” (235).

Lang has contributed an indispensable book to the study of civilian-military relations, American political culture, and the course of the Civil War and Reconstruction. *In the Wake of War* is clearly written, richly informed by current historiography, and supported by a truly impressive array of sources including dozens of Union soldier letters and diaries as well as government documents. Lang allows the voices of soldiers and officers to speak for themselves, giving readers a textured analysis of military culture.

The book begins with the Mexican War, finding in that conflict early evidence of American discomfort with military occupation. Most of the boys wanted to go back home, comfortable that they had done their martial duty. The task of occupation fell to the much smaller regular army, which continued its professional, hierarchical, and un-republican ways in the 1850s garrisons of the Far West.

To the American soldier-citizen, long-term military occupation encouraged boredom, lethargy, corruption, and criminality. That would be true in the Civil War as well as in Mexico. It was especially the case in the Western Theater where Union forces successfully conquered the Tennessee, Cumberland, and Mississippi valleys by July 1863. Occupation duty remained a central task of the Union army in the state of

Mississippi, for example, longer than in most other parts of the South.

As Lang notes perceptibly, the Emancipation Proclamation, along with the Militia Act of 1862, challenged this limited citizen-soldier ideal by turning soldiers into liberators and by enrolling African Americans into the Union army. The proclamation also reinforced the white republican ethos by relegating black soldiers to garrison duty so as to free up white soldiers for offensive operations. Black soldiers viewed garrison duty as less onerous, however, because it offered them direct opportunities to undermine the white supremacist racial order of the South.

Curiously, Lang pays scant attention to the Freedmen’s Bureau, which was organized under military auspices and tasked with the sort of deep social responsibility that so disquieted white republican citizen-soldiers. At the same time, the Bureau foreshadowed a far larger Federal government presence in the twentieth-century South.

Students of Mississippi’s Civil War and Reconstruction history will find *In the Wake of War* especially timely, complementing the recent work of Jarret Ruminski on Mississippi civilian life under occupation (*The Limits of Loyalty: Ordinary People in Civil War Mississippi*, 2017). Lang’s book is essential reading in its own right as a study of the relationship between American republicanism and the American military, a tension that animates and complicates American politics into the twenty-first century.

Aaron Astor  
Maryville College

***Keep the Days: Reading the Civil War Diaries of Southern Women.***

By Steven M. Stowe (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018. Acknowledgements, bibliographical references, and index. Pp. xxv, 199. \$29.95 paper. ISBN: 9781469640969.)

In this elegantly-written volume, Steven M. Stowe explores the acts of diary writing and diary reading, specifically the diaries of elite southern white women during the Civil War. Stowe's foray into this subject begins with several important questions for himself and for the reader: How can we as diary readers, so far removed from the world and mentality of these southern women, begin to understand them? In what ways can diaries be used as historical sources and what can they tell us about the Civil War? What does the process of editing a diary for publication do to reveal and/or hide the woman writing?

Stowe insists that anyone who wants to read these diaries to understand the lives and times of these women must have empathy for them. He looks at the Civil War diaries of twenty different southern women, focusing on the years 1863 and after. Most of the women are younger, with a few of them middle-aged. Some started their diaries before the war, and some continued after the war, with the majority writing only during the war itself. Three women were Mississippians while many other featured diarists were from the Carolinas and Georgia. Although they may be worlds apart from their readers, "We do not understand in

order to empathize; we empathize in order to understand" (xii). Whether the reader of his book is a historian, a mere student of the Civil War, or a connoisseur of memoir, diaries, and autobiography, all are encouraged to bring that attitude of empathetic listener to these women and their stories. In that spirit, Stowe's writing style is personal, with much of the text reading as stream-of-consciousness. This approach is fitting, considering diaries themselves are profoundly personal.

Stowe also understands that using diaries as sources introduces unique problems, as well as opportunities, for historians of the Civil War. Because diaries are written as life events unfold, their entries present moving targets. Thus, endeavoring to learn anything concrete about the big-picture Civil War through their diaries is akin to pinning down a shadow. However, as Stowe aptly notes, we can still learn about the war in the personal, day-to-day Civil War of these women: "A diarist wrote to fit brazen war into her life, not to fit her life into war" (48).

The editing and publication of these diaries reveals another set of complications. Who edits the diaries and what story or portrayal of the author they want to highlight most assuredly shapes what surfaces in a published volume. Stowe argues that this process can alter a diary's original form into something entirely different. Furthermore, editors can hide aspects of the author that might cast more light on who she was. If this is the case, can we really know the woman who wrote the diary? In addition to advising readers to learn as much

as possible about a published diary's editing process, Stowe contends that, as much as any diary can show us a person, we can still know her.

While Stowe could have easily teased out any number of topics from these diaries, he chose three: wartime, men, and slavery. These three topic chapters all utilize the key methods outlined in the initial two chapters ("Reading the Diary" and "Keeping the Diary"), then culminate in a final chapter, "Herself." Here he circles back to his argument about understanding the women themselves. With the last chapter, Stowe persuasively concludes that – for a reader who keeps in mind the nature of diaries and editing processes, while maintaining an attitude of empathy – a diary "will answer for all that it can and give us a woman as real as we are" (157).

Angela M. Alexander  
*University of Georgia*

***The Guerrilla Hunters: Irregular Conflicts during the Civil War.*** Edited by Brian D. McKnight and Marton A. Myers. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2017. Acknowledgments, illustrations, maps, notes, index. Pp. ix, 399. \$49.95, cloth. ISBN: 0807164976.)

As the editors of this volume acknowledge, edited books can be difficult to review. In this case, they need not have worried. *The Guerrilla Hunters: Irregular Conflicts during the Civil War* presents a well-organized, cohesive collection of essays. Featuring the work of seventeen historians, including both leading and emerging Civil War scholars, it demonstrates

how irregular conflicts shaped the conduct of the Civil War and defined the experiences of combatants and noncombatants alike. In the process, *The Guerrilla Hunters* proposes a new synthesis in Civil War scholarship to better incorporate irregulars into the military history of the Civil War.

Although traditional military historians have long regarded irregular conflicts as a largely irrelevant side-show to the conventional Civil War, the contributors to this collection demonstrate that irregular conflicts played a significant, if complicated, role in its outcome. Ranging far beyond the front lines, irregular conflicts blurred the distinction between home front and battle front. They were also populated by unconventional actors—combatants and noncombatants alike—who operated on the basis of obscure personal motivations and conducted themselves beyond accepted modes of combat. Thus, the history of irregular conflicts in the Civil War fundamentally muddies the waters of a conflict historians thought they understood. It is no longer a clear-cut affair with two distinct sides, well-defined aims, and decisive battles. "Embracing that historical problem," *The Guerrilla Hunters* argues, "not running from it, will help us find a better synthesis of these very different kinds of warfare" (5).

Given that its ultimate objective is to prompt military historians to reconsider their approach to the Civil War, *The Guerrilla Hunters* is intended for an academic audience. That being said, there is still plenty for general readers to enjoy. The essays are grounded in a series of complimentary themes, including

the broad scope of irregular conflicts and the challenge of categorizing irregulars. *The Guerrilla Hunters* takes into account the geographic expanse of irregular conflicts, highlighting those raging across Appalachia and along the Missouri-Kansas border. None of the essays focuses exclusively on Mississippi, but both the Confederacy and the Trans-Mississippi Theater of the Civil War are well-represented. Many of the authors treat irregular conflicts as a particularly southern problem with disastrous consequences for the Confederacy.

The essays also grapple with the challenge of defining irregular combatants. Nearly every piece begins by categorizing its irregular actors variously as guerrillas, partisans, bushwhackers, warlords, wild men, or saboteurs. The authors take pains to point out, however, that their definitions are far from universal and, in some places, multiple types of irregulars operated at once. *The Guerrilla Hunters* also illustrates how fine the distinction between regular and irregular forces could be. For example, several authors address the unique role of partisan rangers, who were technically accountable to Confederate command even though they embraced guerrilla tactics. In an especially compelling essay, “The Union War on Women,” Lisa Tendrich Frank argues that Union soldiers also employed irregular tactics—particularly against Confederate households. The bias of conventional military history towards what Frank describes as a “masculine understanding of destruction” has led scholars to overlook the devastating

impact of soldiers invading intimate, feminine spaces (175).

*The Guerrilla Hunters* persuasively demonstrates the breadth, complexity, and significance of the irregular conflicts that shaped the Civil War, but still leaves room for further research. Taken together, the essays successfully complicate the accepted military history of the Civil War, but a greater emphasis on the chronology of irregular conflicts would have strengthened its argument. There can be no better way to challenge the conventional narrative of the Civil War than to challenge its very timeline. Several contributors hint at the potential of expanding the study of irregular conflicts to include pre-war Regulator violence and post-war vigilantism. Such research would further illustrate the need for a more all-encompassing military history of the Civil War and its era.

Amy L. Fluker

*Youngstown State University*

***Strategic Sisterhood: The National Council of Negro Women in the Black Freedom Struggle.*** By Rebecca Tuuri. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018. Acknowledgements, illustrations, notes, index. Pp. xi, 313. \$90 cloth, \$29.95 paperback. ISBN: 9781469638898.)

*Strategic Sisterhood* examines the National Council of Negro Women’s (NCNW) activist challenges to racism, poverty, and sexism in the mid- to late twentieth century. Rebecca Tuuri probes the NCNW’s strategic activism as the organization

cultivated alliances with presidents, foundations, and grassroots activists to enact important changes in black communities both nationally and internationally. She argues that NCNW members have largely been overlooked “in favor of more visible, outspoken, and radical” civil rights activists. At first, the NCNW embraced moderate and perhaps even conservative strategies that reflected the whims of a largely elite organization. Founder Mary McLeod Bethune formed the council in 1935 to galvanize the resources of black women’s sororities, professional organizations, and auxiliaries to not only enhance their political and professional power, but to also center their concerns and those of their communities in national political debates (2).

The NCNW’s positions evolved over time, however. While some members advocated a more conservative style of activism during the black freedom movement, under Dorothy Height’s leadership, the council increasingly shifted its position to bridge a generational divide and to support moderate and radical activists. By mining archives throughout the nation and interviewing black activists, Tuuri has provided a more complex and nuanced picture of the NCNW’s endeavors. The council’s leadership included some of the most prominent black women leaders in the nation. Further, while black men assumed most of the formal leadership roles in the civil rights movement, Tuuri highlights NCNW members who were leaders as well and consultants to “presidents,

business leaders, and leaders of voluntary organizations” (2). The NCNW consisted of organizations such as African American sororities that gave access to important networks. The council later labored to include poor and working class women but a socioeconomic and educational divide made it difficult to do so. But over time, the council’s initiatives were increasingly informed by its ability to bring women together across racial, class, and political lines. NCNW members acted as “bridge-builders, communicators, and catalysts” as they engaged in civil rights activism (3, 5). For instance, following the 1963 March on Washington, the NCNW and an interracial delegation of women investigated the appalling conditions protestors endured in Selma, Alabama’s jails. This inquiry led to the establishment of Wednesdays in Mississippi (WIMS), the NCNW’s first significant civil rights project during Freedom Summer 1964. This coalition of elite women further cultivated local networks with Mississippi-based rural grassroots activists, most notably, Fannie Lou Hamer and Annie Devine.

The NCNW increased its focus on anti-poverty work in Mississippi and throughout the nation in the late 1960s, particularly after obtaining 501(c)(3) status from the Internal Revenue Service. The council then applied for external grants rather than merely relying upon membership fees. Tuuri also explores how the council membership expanded to include non-elite women in its anti-poverty campaign. This infusion of new members and the genesis of

fresh ideas challenged older members' respectability politics, particularly as they engaged in what some considered radical activism during the Black Power Movement. Under Dorothy Height's leadership, however, the council embraced the movement's evolution and became an organization that represented all black women regardless of their politics.

The NCNW's uplift-minded activism was not merely limited to black women in the United States. By the mid-1970s, the council had become an international advocate for women throughout the African diaspora although it refused to disavow American liberalism. Because of its carefully measured steps, the council received funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in order to support conferences and economic development opportunities for women in southern Africa. In doing so, the NCNW followed a model similar to its own work to aid economically and politically marginalized African Americans in Mississippi.

Tuuri renders a convincing picture of how the council "displayed flexibility and creativity as it adapted to shifting political terrains." The NCNW's role in the black freedom movement has seldom been heralded, and Tuuri's stellar mining of myriad sources does this well. The NCNW's national and international networks permitted it to access important resources and remain a force for change in African-descended communities until the present day. In the final analysis, *Strategic Sisterhood* is an important addition to the ever

growing scholarship on black women's organizations and their critical roles in the black freedom movement.

Cherisse Jones-Branch  
*Arkansas State University*

***Environmental Disaster in the Gulf South: Two Centuries of Catastrophe, Risk, and Resilience.***

Edited by Cindy Ermus. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2018. Pp. 1-206. \$45 hardcover. ISBN-978-0-8071-6710-6.)

The history of the Gulf South is wrought with challenges, most, if not all, tied to the volatile environment that shapes its identity. The new edited collection by Cindy Ermus unpacks this sordid story by reviewing select disasters plaguing the region over the past two centuries.

The collection is timely, building on the ever-expanding field of disaster and hazard studies that emphasizes how historical decisions shape long-term vulnerabilities. *Environmental Disaster in the Gulf South* emerges at a peak moment in Gulf South studies. As a result, the volume could easily find its way into a variety of college classes, least of all those that include a focus on the history of residents or environs of the Gulf South. In fact, not since *American Disasters* was issued in 2001 by New York University Press has a text attempted to do so much in the way of region-specific disaster history. This is mainly due to editor Cindy Ermus's efforts to seek out a wide range of collaborators. The volume contains articles by historians, geographers, sociologists, and anthropologists who



have produced essays on significant disasters. Well-known culprits such as hurricanes like Katrina, Andrew, and the 1935 Okeechobee Hurricane are included, as are less familiar disasters such as the 1849 Flood and global public health initiatives to eradicate yellow fever.

The collection does an excellent job concentrating on both biotic and abiotic disaster and draws “valuable lessons from the Gulf South’s familiarity with natural hazards and social irregularities, which in many ways, are applicable across time and space” (3). For example, “Swamp Things,” by Ermus and co-author Abraham Gibson, reviews the introduction of invasive species ranging from kudzu to pythons, all of which are moderately recent phenomena that have historical roots dating to the introduction of species like pigs, fire ants, and nutria. Meanwhile, Andy Horowitz reexamines the 1900 Galveston Storm by providing a necessary link between post-Civil War debates over lynching and the racial and poverty disparities that influence the perception of looters in post-storm periods.

Overall, the main critique of this collection is that it rarely shifts in focus from the Louisiana/Florida areas and their connections to the Caribbean. The essays do not give extensive coverage to Texas, Mississippi, and Alabama. Despite this concern, Ermus et al., should be commended for their efforts to provide a valuable addition to the environmental histories of the region. The compilation is an enjoyable read that exemplifies the future of its field

and is highly recommended in its entirety.

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***In Remembrance of Emmett Till: Regional Stories and Media Responses to the Black Freedom Struggle.*** By Darryl Mace. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2014. Preface, introduction, illustrations, acknowledgements, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. xi, 212. \$40 cloth. ISBN: 978-0-8131-4536-5.)

A grocery store in Money, Mississippi, a watery grave in the Tallahatchie River, a hot courthouse in nearby Sumner—these are the places that the historian Pierre Nora called lieux de mémoire. Such sites triangulated the abbreviated life and the reverberant death of Emmett Till, the Chicago teenager whom at least two white men murdered for ostensibly having whistled at a white woman. Because the killing occurred after the traditional forms of Southern lynching had disappeared, because the victim was only fourteen years old, because the offense (if it occurred at all) was too innocuous to have merited death, and because an all-white jury expeditiously exonerated the murderers, the case attracted extraordinary attention. The breadth of the media interest, therefore, amply justifies Darryl Mace’s effort to categorize and distill how newspapers covered

the case in the late summer and early fall of 1955. The press de-provincialized what in an earlier era would have been an ordinary racial crime, the sort of homicide that would have been vindicated by white supremacists and ignored by the rest of the nation. The glare of the media that Mace confirms inaugurated what the succeeding six decades have amplified: collective memory has ensured that the case never got cold. For black Americans especially, the force of communal recollections has guaranteed the significance of the death of Emmett Till.

The author argues that it “raised America’s conscience” (136) and accelerated the drive for equal rights. The evidence can be located, he claims, in the press; Mace should be commended for having examined a huge number of newspapers. They range across both South and North, Midwest and West, and were aimed at black readers as well as everyone else. Mace has amply demonstrated how widespread the press treatment was, when the corpse was discovered, when J. W. Milam and Roy Bryant were arrested and tried, when Mamie Till-Mobley came down from Chicago to testify in an atmosphere of rampant bigotry, and when justice was thwarted when the half-brothers were acquitted. The extensive recognition in the press of the lethal implications of white supremacy, thus, became the prelude for the remembrance that this book seeks to record.

But, the author has not licked the problem that bedevils all

such studies drawn from primary research in newspapers. Their accounts tend to blur into one another because the number of different ways that reporters can describe the same event is finite. By dividing what amounts to the same story into regional groupings, Mace has not established sufficient variety of perspective, and, thus, the attentiveness of readers is bound to sag. Nor has the research that he has conducted in newspaper archives (the term “morgues” hints at the danger of such an approach) yielded any real surprises. The wire services, like the Associated Press and the United Press, aimed at the asymptotic ideal of objectivity, so that the passion of particular voices was deliberately suppressed in that journalistic era. *In Remembrance of Emmett Till* also cites magazines like *Jet*, which featured the terrifyingly mutilated face of the youngster, and *Look*, which recorded the confessions (for profit) of murderers who were immune from further prosecution. But, Mace’s indebtedness to newspapers as sources obliges him to miss the impact of the photojournalism of *Life*, which vividly portrayed the mockery of the trial.

Though Mace promises to “expound . . . on previous scholarship” (4), the gaps in his bibliographic apparatus are large enough to be noted. One egregious instance is the omission of Davis W. Houck and Matthew A. Grindy’s *Emmett Till and the Mississippi Press* (2008). Though Christopher Metress provides a blurb for Mace’s

book, its bibliography does not list a key work in the formation of collective remembrance about the case, Emmett Till in *Literary Memory and Imagination* (2008), which Metress as well as Harriet Pollack edited. The first monograph to recount the episode and to trace its aftermath in the civil rights movement is *A Death in the Delta: The Story of Emmett Till*, which this reviewer published in 1989. It is not cited either. Nor is confidence restored by the persistence with which Mace describes the crime as a lynching. He provides no definition. Yet, Milam and Bryant did not belong to a mob that was seeking to exact public, communal vengeance. Their motives were racial, but their method bore no resemblance to the open, blatant vigilantism that had characterized Southern lynchings, say, half a century earlier. Like ordinary criminals, the pair hoped to conceal the homicide that they perpetrated. They failed to do so, nor has it sunk into oblivion.

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***The Annotated Pickett's History of Alabama And Incidentally of Georgia and Mississippi, from the Earliest Period.*** Edited by James P. Pate. (Montgomery: New South Books, 2018. Notes, acknowledgements, illustrations, index. Pp. 600. \$60.00. ISBN: 978-1-58838-032-6.)

Albert J. Pickett became one of the earliest historians of the South with his monumental

two-volume *History of Alabama And Incidentally of Georgia and Mississippi from the Earliest Period*. Pickett painstakingly wrote a comprehensive history that covered the time period from Hernando DeSoto's expedition to 1820 immediately after Alabama gained statehood. Pickett gathered primary documents and accounts of events and conducted multitudes of interviews to complete his seminal work. Regarded as the first important history of the state, it has been an invaluable source for scholars interested in this formative period of not only Alabama history, but of the surrounding area. Originally published in 1851, it has been reprinted sporadically since then, but this new edition is well worth the wait.

James P. Pate, professor emeritus from the University of West Alabama and former dean of the University of Mississippi-Tupelo campus, in celebration of Alabama's Bicentennial, has provided an updated version, edited and annotated, that enhances Pickett's initial volumes. Pate starts with a well-written introduction that introduces newcomers to Pickett himself, detailing his life and efforts of writing the work and discusses its publication and initial reviews. Pickett's narrative is then presented again with Pate including additional information. Having apparently devoted two decades of his life to this project, Pate checked original sources and more importantly added citations on more recent works that were not available when the book was originally published, making

this edition a complete treasure trove of sources relating to this early era in history.

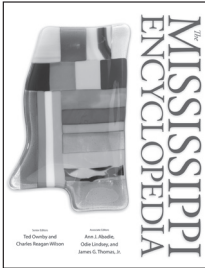
New South Books has presented this original two-volume material in one wide format edition that readers will find easy to use. Pickett's first volume traces DeSoto's journey across the southeast, followed by descriptions of the indigenous nations and their cultures and then details European colonialism. For example, and of particular interest to historians of Mississippi, is the chapter detailing the Natchez Indians and their uprising against the French. Pickett uses primary sources compiled from French reports to narrate the events, and Pate cites the works of more recent authors such as Jim Barnett and George Edward Milne to provide a more accurate and complete picture.

Volume Two continues with more colonial efforts by Europeans but focuses heavily on the Creek nation and the eventual Creek War of 1813-14. Pickett's accounts of iconic events such as the massacre at Fort Mims and the famous Canoe Fight on the Alabama River have been used by hundreds of scholars over the years. Pate's new citations correct inaccuracies and flesh out details. Pickett ends his last volume with Mississippi achieving statehood in 1817 and Alabama's short territorial period before it also became a state in 1819.

Although Pickett wrote his wife that he wanted this "disagreeable job off his hands"(vii), his work has been the first account historians read when researching this time period. Pickett's work did contain

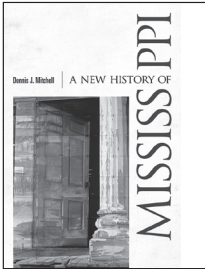
many inaccuracies, which Pate has meticulously tried to correct, and Pickett's language can be considered offensive due to the time in which it was written. These issues aside, Pate's solid work has only increased this book's value, making this new edition of Pickett as a must-have for historians today. All that is needed now is to convince Pate to edit other classic works of history such as J. F. H. Claiborne's *Mississippi as a Province, Territory, and State*.

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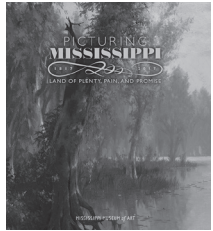
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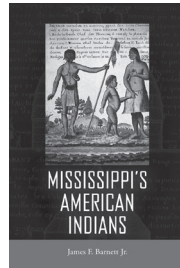
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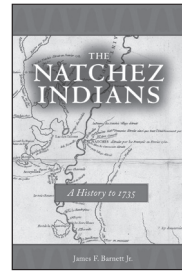
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Initial submissions should be made to editor Dennis J. Mitchell, [dmitchell@meridian.msstate.edu](mailto:dmitchell@meridian.msstate.edu) or P.O. Box 571, Jackson, MS 39205-0571. Preferred manuscript length is 25–40 pages (double-spaced), exclusive of footnotes. The *Journal* encourages the inclusion of illustrations—photographs, drawings, maps, tables—that enhance the essay.

*The Chicago Manual of Style* (latest edition) should be followed, with some exceptions (primarily dates: the *Journal* prefers “December 1, 1866,” to Chicago’s “1 December 1866”).

For more information contact *Journal of Mississippi History* editor Dennis J. Mitchell at [dmitchell@meridian.msstate.edu](mailto:dmitchell@meridian.msstate.edu) or 601-479-6293.