

2016

Introduction

Dennis J. Mitchell

Mississippi State University, Meridian

Follow this and additional works at: <https://aquila.usm.edu/jmh>

Recommended Citation

Mitchell, Dennis J. (2016) "Introduction," *Journal of Mississippi History*. Vol. 78: No. 3, Article 2.
Available at: <https://aquila.usm.edu/jmh/vol78/iss3/2>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by The Aquila Digital Community. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Journal of Mississippi History* by an authorized editor of The Aquila Digital Community. For more information, please contact aquilastaff@usm.edu.

Introduction

by Dennis J. Mitchell

In an effort to publish more issues of *The Journal of Mississippi History*, which had fallen behind schedule, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) and the Mississippi Historical Society agreed to publish three vintage issues. The first focused on the early history of the state. This second vintage issue contains reprints of articles about the Civil War. The third vintage issue will focus on Reconstruction. In selecting articles for the vintage issues, we used *Journal* articles published before the 1970s.

A large percentage of *The Journal of Mississippi History's* articles dealt with the Civil War during the *Journal's* early years of publication, but those in this vintage issue cover lesser known aspects of the war. Herbert Howard Lang's account of J.F.H. Claiborne's life on the Gulf Coast during the war communicates the complexity of life on the home front. Claiborne, the renowned historian of early Mississippi history and one of the leaders of the short-lived antebellum Mississippi Historical Society, chose to remain loyal to the Union despite losing a son fighting for the Confederacy. Claiborne's complicated life and career will broaden and deepen readers' understanding of the war on the home front. Lang's article came from his study of Gulf Coast historians in his dissertation. Lang went on to spend his career in New Mexico where he became a student of mining history.

In the second article, Willie D. Halsell describes the relationship between Jefferson Davis and L.Q.C. Lamar. While the article does not concentrate solely on the war years, it demonstrates how the war continued to dominate the politics of Reconstruction and beyond. Halsell served as head of special collections at Mississippi State University's Mitchell Memorial Library during a long career that saw her encourage an army of young scholars to examine Mississippi history with fresh eyes.

Margaret DesChamps Moore's survey of Mississippi's churches on the eve of the war reminds readers that secession and the Civil War quieted the majority of the state's clergy, who probably opposed secession before having their sentiments overwhelmed. Moore earned the first Emory University doctorate in history and taught at the University of Mississippi alongside her husband, John Hebron Moore, prior to his final career move to Florida State University.

The final article is the work of Andrew Benjamin Brown, which he later incorporated into his *History of Tippah County, Mississippi: The First Century* published by the Tippah County Historical and Genealogical Society. Using the life of Sol Street, Brown captures the turmoil in north Mississippi after Union forces invaded Mississippi. Sergeant Street purchased a substitute when he heard of the invasion and left his unit in Virginia in order to return home to defend his neighborhood as captain of a guerrilla band. Street's story and death illustrates many Mississippians' Civil War experiences in all their complexity.

Student volunteers from Millsaps College (Emma McRaney, Angel Williams, Connor Dunne, Gwyneth McDonough, Braxton Thomas, and Madison Brennan) transcribed these vintage articles. Two volunteers – Julia Marks Young, the retired director of the MDAH Archives and Records Services Division, and Amanda Kaminer, an adjunct professor in the Department of History and Political Science at Mississippi College – painstakingly proofread each article for accuracy. MDAH director emeritus Elbert Hilliard also did a final reading of the articles, noting minor changes that were needed to accommodate various provisions of *The Chicago Manual of Style*. In some instances, commas have been inserted as needed to separate independent clauses, and brackets have been used to indicate editorial changes. In a few instances, additional information has been included in incomplete footnote citations.

One difficulty of reprinting older articles is that some of the language used in the articles is not only outdated, but sometimes offensive. While the Mississippi Historical Society would never

publish a new article using such language, we have reprinted these articles verbatim to reflect scholarship as it was presented at the time. Each article is a product of its time and place, but is included because it contains historical information that is still relevant.

I hope you enjoy reading about Mississippi's Civil War history in these articles that were first published more than half a century ago.

