9-20-1962

Annotated article by Dudley Morris to Birmingham, time, inc, 20 September 1962

Dudley Morris

Follow this and additional works at: https://egrove.olemiss.edu/west_union_med

Part of the Journalism Studies Commons, and the United States History Commons

Recommended Citation
https://egrove.olemiss.edu/west_union_med/5

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Western Union Telegram Collection at eGrove. It has been accepted for inclusion in Telegrams to Media Outlets by an authorized administrator of eGrove. For more information, please contact egrove@olemiss.edu.
The darker earth.

A cool wind blew out of the black Mississippi night, across the flat bottomed Delta land and up over the high country around Oxford. The temperature rested at a temperate 75. The night was silent and in the darker southern skies a few stars found their way through the light haze that hung over the earth.

In Oxford, lies one of the greatest of America's novelists, William Faulkner, planted in the land that spilled through his books and successive volumes. His grave stands beneath six oaks; his house now empty most of the time, buried in a deep cope of cedars. But Faulkner's "rich deep black alluvial soil" is not the Oxford of today. The streets swarmed with crew cut freshman; all seemingly dressed in shorts, and wearing identical blue and maroon beanies. They were everywhere. On the steps of the Oxford courthouse peering at the bent, leathery prototypes of the Snopes and Sartorises. In the drug stores. In the restaurants. And on campus they were in lines; registering for books, for classes, signing up for football tickets.
There were girls too, thousands of them. All with knee or above the knee dresses. All dressed in crisp, clean cottons. All clean, all scrubbed, all powdered, all lipsticked. And the talk was of frats, sororities, pinnings, and the University of Mississippi football team. It was just like a hundred other colleges opening after a lazy summer. Almost.

Among the crew cuts and crinolines large burly men walked in two's and threes. They sat in their cars with the windows rolled up and nodded to each other as everyone passed. And last week a cross was burned on campus, a man hung in effigy. There were also photographers and reporters. The University of Mississippi was waiting for James Howard Meredith to try to become the first black man to integrate its blooded long tradition of segregation.

On the day of the arrival of Meredith Oxford was tense but quiet. And, far clamor than the capitol at Jackson. The citizens were not overjoyed at seeing the death of Southern tradition, but almost everyone in town, from the mayor to taxi drivers have decided that they would a lot sooner have the University stay open with merited than have it closed and
Ono cab driver reasoned that "I don't particularly mind seeing Meredith go to the University, he's a smart nigger. But you got to realize that the niggers we got in Mississippi just ain't like those you got elsewhere. They ain't ready for integration. If you go and let Meredith in, you just going to be letting in the rest of 'em."

Mississippians have sort of an odd respect for Meredith. They realize how much nerve it will take for him to stride up into the Lyceum brick and the white column administration building, and present himself with the other transfer students. But somehow, they question his motives.

"He's just after a lot of publicity," said one Oxford Oxonian. "If you ask me, he must be getting paid off handsomely for this." Said another.

"Did he think there would be violence?" "Well, I don't know, but we got some boys around here that would just love to come in and shoot him." "Yea, we got some boys around here all right."

But with the resentment Mississippians here know what the shutting of the University will mean. "If they close that University," said Aubrey Seay, owner of the Mansion Restaurant in town, "my investments here won't be worth five cents on the dollar." And to help preserve investments,
Richard Elliot, mayor, has drafted an extra 30 men onto the force to help out if needed. The principal of the local high school, also did his bit to preserve law and order: he urged his students to stay out of trouble and behave themselves. and threatened disciplinary action for those who did not.

On campus, crowds of eager students lounged on the steps of the administration building and under the shady pin oaks on the lawn. The question on everybody's lips was "you hear when he's coming?" Some wore freshman beanies, some were older. And mixed in with them were scores of television, radio, and newspaper men. The question on all their lips was, "you hear when he's coming?"

In the emergency press room set up just inside the door small knots of reporters discussed what Barnett would do next (meanwhile, Ross was at the funeral of his sister who died yesterday). "Can the Federal government arrest a governor?" "Will he appoint himself registrar?" "What will happen if Meredith does get to register?" A reporter noted, "I really wanted any answers, they were just waiting for Meredith, the Department of Justice, the Marshals, and whatever else might happen.

But, regards, Dudley Morris Colonial Hotel, Oxford, Miss.

Theona development...