Annotated page sent by James Clayton to World Desk, Washington Post, 22 September 1962

James Clayton

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/15

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.
TO: Parker, time inc., new york, wux atlanta, atlanta wants re-run

for nation(suggested)(and advisory) -copy to education

the trouble in store

The campus at Ole Miss is like a tomb today.

Students have taken off en mass for the opening game of the football season with Memphis State at Memphis. Next week Justice Department officials will carry their contempt citations against the State College Board (this is synonomous the the Trustees mentioned in some wire stories) to the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans, in their attempt to force them to accept James H. Meredith as their first negro student. D.O.J. will also file with Trustees Case.

The civil contempt citations they are seeking against the Dean, Registrar and chancellor of the University.

Reached in Washington late last night (Friday) D.O.J. spokesman expressed confidence that they would be succesful this time, explained that the reversal in Meridian at the hands of Judge Sidney C. Mize was not unexpected. It was they said, merely a means of exhausting all the legal ins and outs. However, Barnett is still riding free and easy, and as long as he is not in jail, he will continue to do everything in his power to keep his vow to the citizens of Mississippi that while he is in office no negro will ever attend Ole Miss.
And, there are enough people in the state who will support him that he may be able to get away with it, unless of course, the Government sends in Federal Marshals, or troops, or locks him up.

But, the D.O.J. seems to feel that that would only worsen what is rapidly becoming the worst State-Federal conflict since the end of the Civil War. Even at the peak of the Little Rock crisis Governor Faubus never defied Federal Court orders. Barnett's audacity and in 1960's New Orleans school crisis Governor Jimmy Davis stayed largely in the background. There is little doubt that Justice is trying to cut the ground out from under Barnett by not citing him for contempt. They are trying to stir public sentiment against Barnett by putting the screws on the popular University Chancellor J.D. Williams and force Meredith's integration without directly dealing with the governor. However, the feeling here is that Justice is underestimating Barnett and do not realize how fantically determined he is to martyr himself for his cause if necessary. If he goes to jail, his political future in Mississippi would be assured for life.
What is really at stake in Mississippi is not just whether one Negro can attend Ole Miss, or whether the University will or will not desegregate, but the entire future of school desegregation in the south.

If Barnett is allowed to keep Meredith out of class much of the progress of the last eight years will go down the drain, and the Leander Perez's and Marvin Griffin's in the south will be able to say "I told you so, if you just fight hard enough you can win."

But even if the U.S. Government manages to get Meredith registered, the real problem may be in keeping him there. The consensus of opinion among the most knowledgeable observers here is that this will be damn tough to do. Noone can visualize him staying here without an escort of armed U.S. Marshals. People in Oxford no longer bet on whether he will register or not, they now ask each other "how long do think he'll live once he gets here?"

It is a confused and ugly situation, and seems likely to get worse before it gets better. Just what will happen next week is anybody's guess, but Meredith is sure to try to re-register early next week(Monday or Tuesday probably). The legislature is still whoppin and giving full support to King Ross, who has climbed way
out on a limb and has no intention of retreating. Some think that he will even go so far as to close the University or use his State patrol to bodily prevent Meredith from getting on campus. In short, both sides have used up the easy solutions, and the longer Ross resists the messier it will get. We think next week's developments will warrant another story when Meredith makes his second attempt to break the color barrier. And the hearing in New Orleans will also bear watching. The State Board lawyer will be former Governor Coleman, who has a reputation for eloquence and quotable speaker.

With the department determined to register Meredith, and determined to see that Ross does not get away with his defiance of court orders, the conflict coupled with Meredith's appearance on campus would be dramatic and worth telling.

[Signature]