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Hazel Brannon Smith: an Examination of Her Editorials on Three Pivotal Civil Rights Events

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ABSTRACT

Hazel Brannon Smith was born in Alabama but moved to Mississippi in 1936 when she acquired the *Durant Times* in Durant, Mississippi. Seven years later she added the *Lexington Advertiser* to her growing collection of newspapers and it is at the *Advertiser* that Smith made her greatest journalist impact. This study did a small content analysis to exam Smith's opinion on three pivotal civil rights events: the Freedom Riders of 1961, James Meredith's integration of the University of Mississippi in 1962, and Medgar Evers' assassination in 1963. Results indicate that Smith was unwavering in her opinions on all three events. Considered a liberal during the time, Smith became a champion for civil rights, she won the 1964 Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing.

DEDICATION

This is dedicated to Kevin Edward Parrish, my loving and understanding fiancé, who did not mind too much when I disappeared to work on my thesis. I cannot wait to spend the rest of my life with you!

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I would not be where I am today without the love and support of my family and friends. My biggest acknowledge is that of my mom, who was always there to encourage me when I thought I might give up. I wanted to, many times.

To my family and friends, I love you. Thank you so much. I can never say enough how much you all mean to me.

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Now about that doctorate…

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CHAPTER ONE

I. Statement of the Problem

In the 1950s and 1960s, the South was in the middle of a cultural struggle. The segregated society that the South had always known was about to become undone. It was not a peaceful transition. But in the midst of the violence, there was also another form of protest using words: newspapers.

Newspapers were the vehicles for editors to take one side or the other in the argument. Were they for segregation or did they believe in the profound idea of desegregation, which meant a society that welcomed African-Americans as equals? For most people in the South, segregation was all they knew. They'd grown up in small towns in Mississippi or Alabama or Georgia, interacting with blacks on a limited basis – as housekeepers, field workers and occasionally as play mates – but never as equals.

The 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* changed that. The Supreme Court ruled that under the law, school facilities were to be desegregated. *Plesssy v. Ferguson* 1896, which allowed separate but equal schools to exist, was overruled. Other court rulings brought down bans on buses, in restrooms and throughout Southern society. Mississippi launched a massive school building campaign hoping to convince the courts that "separate but equal" would work in the Magnolia State.

The South did not go willingly. Instead, it found ways of circumventing the law so that African Americans were kept separate and unequal. Desegregation was to a joke to most

Southern men and women. A majority was against allowing blacks most civil rights, making it difficult, if not impossible to vote, serve on juries or have a civil service job. The Klu Klux Klan was revived to spread fear in the black population and Citizens' Councils were organized to influence business and community leaders. It would become a dangerous time to be a black man in the South, even more so than before. When would true change come about?

According to Gunnar Mrydal in *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*, in order to receive the rights they were due under law, African Americans would have to gain the attention of the national media. But that attention was hard to come by. It would not be until 1955, a year after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, that the South would attract the attention of media in a terrible way that left no going back: the murder of Emmett Till in Philadelphia, Miss. The murder, as journalist David Halberstam observed in *The Fifties* (1993), was "the first great media event of the Civil Rights movement."[1] The brutality of the crime "electrified" the large black communities in the nation's Northern industrial cities," Halberstam writes, and Northern journalists, sensitized to Southern racial issues by the *Brown* decision, jumped on the story.[2] Following Till's murder and trial, the campaign for civil rights became a movement that would be spread across the nation's newspapers for more than a decade.

A small group of white Southern editors began to use their newspapers to advocate for change, which was quite radical at the time. This group was headed by Harry Ashmore of the *Arkansas Gazette*, who formed the Southern School News. He and his colleagues faced a large challenge in the small towns of the South were racism ran high and change was slow to pass. He was joined by Ralph McGrill of the *Atlanta Constitution* in Atlanta; Hodding Carter, Jr. of the

[1] David R. Davies, *The Press and Race: Journalists Confront the Movement* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2001), 10.
[2] Ibid.

Delta Democrat Times in Greenville, Mississippi; Buford Boone of the *Tuscaloosa News* in Tuscaloosa, Alabama; Lenior Chambers of the *Virginian-Pilot* in Norfolk, Virginia; Bill Baggs of the *Miami News* in Miami; and Hazel Brannon Smith of the *Lexington Advertiser* in Lexington, Mississippi.[3] Of this group, Smith was the only woman.

Smith was born in Alabama City, Alabama, in 1914, a suburb of Gadsden, Alabama. The first child born to Dock Boad and Georgia Parthenia Brannon, Smith was a serious yet playful girl who became swept up in the dream of *Gone with the Wind* and having a Tara of her own one day.[4] At a young age, Smith assumed a large responsibility for her family when her mother fell ill following two miscarriages and the death of Smith's younger sister, Margaret Eleanora. The youngest child, Bonnie Parthenia, and Smith came to be more like mother and daughter than sisters, and Bonnie recalled Smith as fun.[5] "A lot of people are standoffish, but we Brannon girls never were. Hazel has a great sense of humor."[6] Smith did not want for anything while growing up. "The family saw that Hazel always got the best. She was the oldest and she was smart. She was very smart. And they just catered to her and she got just about everything she wanted."[7]

Though she never wanted for anything, other children in Mississippi, especially those who were African-American, would have wanted for much. Smith's parents made sure to instill in their children a respect for all religions and races.

> The passion for justice that Hazel was to display in later life had its foundation in the example set by her parents. One day when Hazel's brothers were playing outside with the neighborhood children, including a mulatto girl, Mrs. Brannon heard one of the visiting white children call the girl a "flop-eared hound." She immediately called her sons inside and told them to inform the neighborhood

[3] Ibid, 24.
[4] John A. Whalen, *Maverick Among the Magnolias: The Hazel Brannon Smith Story*, (Xlibis Corp., 2001), 19.
[5] Ibid, 20.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid, 21.

children that they would not be allowed to play in the Brannon yard in the future if they used such offensive language.[8]

Later in life, Smith recollected, "As a child I was taught that the only way we can show our love for God is to love people and do everything we can to help them. Respect and consideration for the rights of others were engrained in me for as long as I can remember."[9]

Despite encounters with African-Americans in the community and being instilled with respect for all religions and races from a young age, Smith still belonged to the traditional Southern way of life, and the segregationist theories that accompanied it. Even Smith's parents, though seemingly more liberal-minded than others in Alabama during that time, drew the conclusion that blacks were "different," and were to be treated accordingly."[10]

As Smith grew up and went to college and graduated with a journalism degree from the University of Alabama and took ownership of her first paper, the *Durant News* in Durant, Mississippi, a weekly with a circulation of with a nearly 600, she began to change.[11] And change she did. Hazel reported on the service club meetings, the police beat, agricultural news and even published a continued novel purchased in boilerplate form from the Western Newspaper Union.[12]

She expanded her domain, buying the *Lexington Advertiser* in 1943, a weekly newspaper. Oftentimes, her editorials focused on small-town news, that of graduations, of visitors to town who lodged with Lexington residents, and the like. But her editorials would soon take on another role, that of voicing Smith's opinion on racial issues and educational issues. In later years, it

[8] Ibid, 21.
[9] Mark Newman, "*Hazel Brannon Smith (1914-1994): Journalist Under Siege," Mississippi Women: Their Histories, Their Lives, edited by Martha H. Swain, Elizabeth Anne Payne and Marjorie Julian Spruill. (*Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 2003), pp. 220-34.
[10] John A. Whalen, *Maverick Among the Magnolias: The Hazel Brannon Smith Story,* (Xlibis Corp., 2001), 23.
[11] Ibid, 32.
[12] Ibid, 33.

would also focus on the threats Smith received from groups in the community, like the Holmes County Citizens' Council, which tried to intimidate Smith out of business and out of the state.

Following the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in the 1954 in *Brown v. Board of Education*¸ Smith believed African Americans should have the same protection under the law. This brought down upon her the wrath of the Citizens' Council and resulted in her being shunned by her friends, her Lexington newspaper torched, her Jackson offices shattered by dynamite thrown through a window, a cross burned in her yard, and efforts made to sully her reputation through vicious mailings and handouts.[13]

But Smith was not willing to give in and took to her editorial column to fight back. In 1964, she won the Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing for her "steadfast adherence to her editorial duty in the face of great pressure and opposition."[14]

II. Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to examine editorials written by Hazel Brannon Smith, the editor of the *Lexington Advertiser* in Lexington, Mississippi, from 1943 to 1983, to determine when Smith found her voice as an editor and against segregation. Her editorial column, which appeared on the front page of the weekly newspaper, "Through Hazel Eyes," was her soap box for many issues, including controversial subjects like race, education and lynchings. In 1964, Smith won a Pulitzer Prize for editorials on lynchings. She was the first woman to win the prize for editorials.

At the time, the South was in upheaval. But what was it that turned Smith into the fireball she became? The specific research questions are:

[13] Ibid, 13.
[14] NY Times archives, http://www.nytimes.com/1994/05/16/obituaries/hazel-brannon-smith-80-editor-who-crusaded-for-civil-rights.html.

RQI: What did Hazel Brannon Smith have to say about the following events in her editorial column, "Through Hazel Eyes," before or after they occurred? James Meredith's integration of the University of Mississippi in 1962, Medgar Evers' assassination in 1963 and the Freedom Riders of 1964?

RQT: If Smith did mention these events, was she positive or negative in her mention?

RQT: In leading up to the events (excluding Evers' assassination, as it is not possible to gauge her reaction on an event that could not be anticipated), did Smith's opinion differ from what it was following the events?

Though much interest has been given to Smith for her Pulitzer Prize and her uniqueness as a female editor in the South, there is another issue at hand: when did Smith begin to use her editorial column for more than reports of community meetings, celebrations and high school graduations? There had to have been a turning point. In 1954, Smith was in no way in favor of desegregation. For Smith, segregation was a way of life, one she had known since she was a little girl. "If it ain't broke, don't fix it," would have been an appropriate saying during this time period in the South. So what changed for Smith and when did her column begin to change from a feel-good update about the happenings of a small town and become the outlet for her political beliefs?

III. Methodology

The first step in this study is to determine which articles will be examined from the *Lexington Advertiser* in the four weeks preceding the events and the four weeks following them. Over those years, there were several pivotal events in the South, including the Freedom Riders of 1961 and their arrival in Jackson May 24, James Meredith's integration of the University of

Mississippi on September 30, 1962, and the assassination of Medgar Evers on June 12, 1963. Smith's articles in the week following these events will be examined in a content analysis.

A codebook will be made to categorize all articles four weeks preceding and four weeks following those pivotal events into year, subject, mention of specific events, which events, key topics, mention of specific people, which people, pro or con, specific language, AP Style, use of courtesy titles, etc. The codebook appears in Appendix X. When an incident conflicted with the *Advertiser's* publishing schedule the time period was adjusted to generated four articles prior to the event and four weeks after.

Information derived in the content analysis will result from examining microfilm of Smith's newspaper, the *Lexington Advertiser,* in the University of Mississippi J.D. Williams Library. The library has copies of the *Advertiser* from 1943 to 1971, which includes the time period this study encompasses.

Once the codebook has been finished, two coders, the author of this thesis and Mary F. Stanton, will code for all columns used in the content analysis. Following this, the results will be incorporated into the thesis.

IV. Theoretical Framework

This study is based in the agenda setting and gate-keeping theories. Media theorists have often focused on the effects of the media and its role in society. A specific area of interest is the media's role in a democracy and its role as watchmen for the people. But who sets the agenda that the media follows? How is the media shaped? Much research has been done since the 1960s, addressing the idea that there are a variety of forces that influence the media, thought of as a "hierarchy of influences."[15] The term gatekeeping or gatekeeper is used to describe the person, in

[15] Stephen D. Reese and Jane Ballinger, *The roots of a sociology of news: remembering Mr. gates and social control in the newsroom*, Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, 78 (Winter 1971), 641-658.

this case, the editor who decides which articles run in a newspaper and which articles do not. Editors decide what information reaches their readers through their newspaper. The same can be said for editors and their editorials.

In relation to Smith and the Civil Rights Era, it is natural to assume that editors of Southern newspapers took great caution in selecting news articles for their newspapers. Newspapers run by white editors who were segregationists and in favor of maintaining the status quo were not likely to run stories in their newspapers about violence against blacks or articles about small victories in the movement. They left that to the group of white Southern editors interested in changing the tired customs of the South. But what is most important to remember is that editors had great control over what content was published and could skew that information one way to align with the mindset of their readers.

Agenda setting is much like gate-keeping in that it relates to editors deciding what people should think about, what they should care about and most importantly, what they should read. It brings the public's attention to certain issues. Where gatekeeping can lead to readers ignoring certain issues, agenda setting can lead readers *to* discover certain issues and begin a conversation. Bernard C. Cohen, a mass communication theorist, said it best when he said the press "may not may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think *about."*[16]

During the Civil Rights Era, it was important for newspaper readers in the South to be exposed to certain information and at the same time be kept unaware of certain information. Newspaper editors had it in their power to dictate conversation. But Smith was different.

[16] Maxwell McCombs and Donald L. Shaw, *The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media*, Public Opinion Quarterly (1972) 36 (2): 176-187.

Smith was not like the average editor in the South during this time. She was not going to hide anything and that is what brought the Holmes County Citizens' Council's wrath down upon her.

V. Significance of the Study

Hazel Brannon Smith should be studied because she was special. Besides being a woman and a newspaper editor, a rarity during the time of the study, what was important about her? It was that Smith stood up for those who did not have as powerful a tool as a newspaper to use: African Americans. This study does not pretend that Smith was always a saint or that she knew from the time she was a young girl that there was something wrong with the system of injustice in Mississippi. But what she did, which is important, is realize the errors of the old ways and seek to change them. Smith called for change in her editorials and stood up against the White Citizen's Council that sought to destroy her. The Council could not touch Smith because she was a white woman but if she had not been, chances are she would have met an untimely end for her column, "Through Hazel Eyes," which opened the gates to new thoughts. Smith stood true to the ethics of journalism, even in the face of oppression. The value this study lends to future research is to understand just how different Smith was in her time period. Had Smith been born ten years later, she might have been a pioneer in the Women's Movement and faced much less criticism for her role in that. But she wasn't.

This study will contribute new knowledge about journalism and the power editors have, through words and columns, to bring about change. That is the essence of journalism: to keep those who hold power in check, be it the government or the White Citizens' Council. This is what Smith did and what she will be remembered for.

IV. Organization of the Study

This study is separated into four parts: three chapters and a final section. Chapter One encompasses the study's introduction, purpose, significance, methodology and theoretical framework.

Chapter Two is the review of literature, which is necessary to establish the background of the study. The literature review begins with an overview of the time period and the conditions in the South during that time, as well as an idea of what newspaper editors faced when they decided to take a stand. The review next introduces Smith and continues through her childhood, her college years and into her purchase of the *Lexington Advertiser* in 1943. It continues Smith through the remainder of the 1940s and through the 1950s and 1960s to 1964, when she was the first woman to win a Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing. Also included are Smith's financial hardships leading up to receiving the Pulitzer and following it. The three events central to this study are examined in closer detail as well.

Chapter Three includes a content analysis of Smith's columns and the three pivotal events during the Civil Rights Era: the Freedom Riders of 1961, the integration of the University of Mississippi by James Meredith in 1962, and the assassination of Medgar Evers in 1963. The content analysis examined Smith's editorials in the four weeks prior to the event and the four weeks following it to find mention of the event. This chapter contains an examination of specific editorials.

The final chapter in this study is a summary and analysis of what was discovered in the content analysis and includes answers to the three research questions posed earlier in Chapter One. This chapter also includes a section on recommendations for future research on Hazel Brannon Smith and her editorials.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Status quo upheaval

The two largest newspapers in Mississippi during the time of the study were the Jackson *Clarion-Ledger* and the *Daily News.* Both were strongly against desegregation and were located in the state's capital city of Jackson. Smaller newspapers, like the *Advertiser*, did not have statewide influence but impacted the communities where they were located greatly. As much as the newspaper affected the community, the community affected the newspaper.

In Mississippi, a state full of small cities, towns and significant rural areas, the newspaper thrives on subscriptions and advertising from local businesses. It is a very personal atmosphere in which to work, as the people who pay for those advertisements are most likely the same people staff members see on a daily basis around town, at church, on the golf course and in social settings. But a small group of editors was not threatened by the backlash they were sure to receive, and instead, called for change, risking their job, their newspapers financial security and their safety.[17]

The Civil War may have put an official end to slavery, but segregation was alive and well in the South both legally and by custom as a way to circumvent the laws. African Americans may no longer been pick cotton for a slave master but they were not completely free. They could not ride in the front of buses in most cities in the South, and if there were too many white people on the bus, they would be pushed to the back with no place to sit, or sometimes not allowed to

[17] Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff, *The Race Beat: The Press, The Civil Rights Struggle, and the Awakening of a Nation (*New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006*).*

get on at all. They could not sit at the same lunch counter as whites and expect to receive any service. They could not drink from the same water fountains as whites. Oftentimes, a sign was posted above one water fountain claiming, "Whites only."

They could not vote, serve on juries, or hold civil services jobs. Housing was restricted, and loans carried excess interest rates. Black schools operated under the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, where the Court upheld "separate but equal." Black schools were separate from white schools, but far from equal.

Returning from World War II, where blacks had helped to save democracy, a push for better treatment emerged. It began in 1955 when Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama, bus to a white person. She was arrested. The movement for civil rights spread to include a bus boycott and blacks holding sit-ins at counters in diners and restaurants. Blacks who participated were pelted with violent, harsh words and sometimes forcefully removed from their seats, garnering national attention to the plight of blacks in the South.

Then there was Emmett Till, a young black boy who may or may not have whistled at a white woman in Mississippi in a time when that kind of thing was not easily overlooked or forgiven. The time period following the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, which ruled "separate but equal" was unconstitutional and Till's death encompasses some of the most important media events of the Civil Rights Movement: the Freedom Rides to desegregate bus transportation in 1961; James Meredith's admission into the University of Mississippi in 1962; the assassination of Medgar Evers in 1963; and the events of the Freedom Summer in 1964.[18]

[18] David R. Davies, *The Press and Race: Journalists Confront the Movement* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2001), 10.

In his book *The American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and American Democracy,* Gunnar Myrdal wrote that the only way possible for African Americans to gain complete freedom would be to capture the attention of the national media.[19] Until that happened, only black newspapers in the South would cover the issues, and the white press would continue to overlook it. It is assumed that whites did not read black newspapers, as what they would have read in them would have greatly angered them. Thus, black newspapers flew under the radar. White newspapers did of course acknowledge African Americans sometimes, when they had committed a crime against a white person. Such stories like that would make headlines. But what about crimes against blacks? What about lynchings?

The event that changed the press coverage of the Civil Rights Movement was the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. The Southern press struggled with the region's difficult accommodation with the school desegregation ruling and with black Americans' demands for civil rights before and after.[20]

In the North, journalists did not have to be afraid of writing about the movement, especially when covering the not-so-pretty details of the treatment of blacks. Thus, in *An American Dilemma,* Myrdal came to see Northern newspapers as the best hope for force-feeding the rest of the nation a diet so loaded with stories about the cruelty of racism that it would have to rise up in protest.[21] Though the Northern press was, in Myrdal's opinion the best hope, he also believed that if moderate and liberal Southern editors continued to speak out against racism that this too would bring change.

In the South, a small group of white editors, Harry Ashmore of Arkansas at the forefront, stood against the traditionalists and the Klu Klux Klan. Ashmore founded *Southern School News,*

[19] Myrdal, Gunnar, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and American Democracy* (1944).
[20] Davies, 3.
[21] Myrdal, 5.

a monthly newspaper that provided information about school integration for school administrators, officials and interested citizens. The editors risked their livelihoods and their lives by resisting pressure from the KKK and the White Citizens' Councils. Other noted editors throughout the South were Ralph McGill of Atlanta, Bill Baggs of Miami, Buford Boone of Tuscaloosa and Lenior Chambers. In Mississippi, Hodding Carter, Jr., Ira Harkey and Bill Minor spoke up. Hazel Brannon Smith, however, was the only woman. This is notable because at the time few women led newspapers, much less spoke out against social norms.

Hazel Brannon Smith growing up

Hazel Brannon Smith was a beautiful and talented Southern white girl who was brought up in a sheltered segregated society. She had little contact with blacks and no perception of their oppression and their yearnings for freedom as she moved through her university years and well into her editorship of weekly newspapers in racist Mississippi, beginning in the mid-1930s.[22] That description does not do Smith justice, though. She would continue to mature and form her opinions about the treatment of blacks during her time at those weekly newspapers before finally taking ownership of the *Lexington Advertiser* in Lexington, Mississippi, on April 1, 1943.

This regard for other races would come, too, from the Brannon's black housekeeper, Lulu Tuner. Tuner was treated like a member of the family. "When the elder Brannons were occasionally absent, Lulu was given complete authority over the house," wrote John A. Whalen in *Maverick Among the Magnolia: The Hazel Brannon Smith Story.*[23]

Smith graduated from high school at the age of 16 and decided to defer her college education for a few more years. To earn some money, she landed a job at the

[22] John A. Whalen, *Maverick Among the Magnolias: The Hazel Brannon Smith Story* (Xlibis Corp., 2001), 13.
[23] Ibid, 22.

Etowah Observer, a weekly in Alabama City, where she wrote small news items for a dollar each before being moved to the front page and later to advertising.[24] Smith continued to work for the paper for two years before going to college to study journalism, her newfound passion. She was convinced that she had to have her own newspaper.[25]

Smith enrolled in the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa and graduated with a bachelor's degree in journalism on August 23, 1935. Following graduation, she immediately began to look around for a newspaper for sale, and she found one, the *Durant News* in Durant, Mississippi, a small town in Holmes County, about 60 miles from the state's capital in Jackson.

In August 1936, after raising enough money for the $3,000 down payment for the paper, Smith was the proud owner of the *Durant News* and was living in Mississippi for the first time. It is here that Smith's journalism career took off.

Smith and the *Lexington Advertiser*

Over the years Smith added more newspapers to her repertoire, including the *Lexington Advertiser* in Lexington, Mississippi, in 1943, which is the county seat of Holmes County. It was at the *Advertiser* where Smith made her biggest splash, through her editorial column, "Through Hazel Eyes." Not only were Smith's editorials inquisitive, they were also largely news-filled and not simply opinion filled. Her editorials would be a constant in the paper, displayed on the left side of the front page.

Smith's position on segregation matched that of most Southerners but her strict commitment to the law would lead to her classification as a liberal. Liberals were limited in number during this time in the South. Smith was defended by her friend and fellow editor,

[24] Ibid, 24.
[25] Ibid, 25.

Hodding Carter Jr., who claimed that Smith was never more than a "moderate, a church-going humanity-loving newspaperwoman who takes seriously her responsibilities toward her fellow man."[26]

In his 1982 dissertation "Without Urgency or Ardor: The South's Middle-of-the-Road Liberals and Civil Rights, 1945-1960," Anthony Lake Newberry claims that liberals shared certain core values and positions: "an aversion to violence and intimidation; respect for the sanctity of federal law and the constitutional right of free expression; a concern for America's image abroad; a desire to preserve the schools and encourage industrial growth."[27]

Smith grew to adulthood believing in many of the core values described by Newberry. In particular, she was committed to the rule of law, and freedom of thought and expression, education, and economic development.[28] Smith never intended to oppose Jim Crow laws; in fact, a few days after the Supreme Court ruled in 1954 that "segregated schools are not equal and cannot be made equal," she attacked the ruling of the high court in "Through Hazel Eyes."[29] She worried about the integration of the races leading to intermarriage and the mixing of blood. But her tune soon changed.

Though she never did outright call for integration or desegregation, Smith believed in following the letter of the law, which oftentimes put her on the side of blacks and those who *were* calling for integration of schools and the races. It was her distaste for intimidation and coercion and her concern for Mississippi's educational and economic progress that would transform her from a young girl from Alabama to a Pulitzer Prize winner.

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[26] Susan Weill, "*Hazel and 'The Hacksaw": Freedom Summer Coverage by the Women of the Mississippi Press,"* Journalism Studies, Vol. 2, Number 4, 2000, pp. 545-561.
[27] Mark Newman. "*Hazel Brannon Smith and Holmes County, Mississippi, 1936-1964: The Marking of a Pulitzer Surprise Winner,"* Journal of Mississippi History 54 (February 1992), pp. 59-87.
[28] Ibid, 61.
[29] Jan Whitt, *"Burning Crosses and Activist Journalism: Hazel Brannon Smith and the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement,"* University Press of America (Lanham, 2010), pp. 33.

But that transition would not be an easy one. Journalism historian Susan Weil writes about Mississippi at the time:

> The state was largely rural, the capital city of Jackson was the only metropolitan area, and the racial composition was unique to the country. In no other state did blacks constitute such a large percentage of the population as they did in Mississippi, where for more than a century they had, as the descendants of slaves, comprised a majority. In 1954, the lack of education, denial of involvement in the political process, and burden of poverty hung over them in the dark cloud of second class citizenship.[30]

Soon this tension would overflow leading to the many pivotal events of the Civil Rights Movement. Three of those events – the Freedom Riders of 1961, James Meredith's integration of the University of Mississippi and Medgar Evers' assassination – occurred in Mississippi and would leave the state forever altered. Smith would be altered too.

Freedom Riders of 1961

In 1961, during the first year of John F. Kennedy's presidency, more than four hundred Americans participated in a dangerous experiment designed to awaken the conscience of a complacent nation.[31] These "Freedom Rides" challenged the status quo in a surprisingly simple way: by boarding interstate buses and sitting wherever they pleased, be it in the back or in the front, and demanding unlimited access to bus terminal restaurants and waiting rooms, something long forbidden by law in the South.

The first Freedom Ride was in early May 1961 with thirteen riders. Soon, the Rides had evolved into a broad-based movement involving hundreds of activists representing a number of allied local, regional, and national civil rights organizations.[32]

To say the least, Freedom Rides were a new, different kind of activism for civil rights. They took the issue of segregation and "separate but equal" out of the courts and into the streets.

[30] Ibid, 17.
[31] Raymond Arsenault, *Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice*, (Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 2.
[32] Ibid.

The 1960 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Boynton v. Virginia,* which mandated the desegregation of interstate travel facilities, fueled the movement's flames and the Freedom Riders flouted state and local segregation statues, all but daring Southern officials to arrest them.[33]

In deliberately provoking Southern officials, the Freedom Riders risked a violent response from Southern officials. But they continued anyway, using nonviolent direct action.

> None of the obstacles placed in their path – not widespread censure, not political and financial pressure, not arrest and imprisonment, not even the threat of death – seemed to weaken their commitment to nonviolent struggle. On the contrary, the hardships and suffering imposed upon them appeared to stiffen their resolve, confounding their white supremacist antagonists and testing the patience of even those who sympathized with their cause. Time and time again, the Riders seemed on the verge of defeat, but in every instance they found a way to sustain and expand their challenge to Jim Crow segregation.[34]

A longer Freedom Ride soon became necessary. On May 4, 1961, the Freedom riders left Washington, D.C., to further test the enforcement of segregation by Southern officials on the interstates and highways. The issue centered on bus seats and terminal services, such as restrooms and cafes. Freedom Riders would ride from Washington to Birmingham, eventually making their way to New Orleans to celebrate the seventh anniversary of the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown*. But the journey was not without stops: the Riders would need to successfully navigate through: Anniston, Alabama; Birmingham, Alabama; Montgomery, Alabama; and Jackson, Mississippi. Could they do it? It would be a long, tough road full of danger. In Birmingham, the Riders were met by a mob and severely beaten.

On Sunday, May 14, 1961, the Riders split into two groups to travel through Alabama. The first group traveled to Anniston, Alabama. Known for its hard-edged race relations, Anniston had a relatively large black population (approximately 30 percent in 1961), a well-

[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid, 3.

established NAACP branch, and some of the most aggressive and violent Klansmen in Alabama.[35] The Riders were met by a mob of more than 200 people. The mob threw stones at the bus and slashed its tires. Managing to get away, the bus made it six miles before it came under another attack. The bus was firebombed. Riders on the bus passing through Birmingham were met with the same kind of resistance. Before the bus left Atlanta, Klansmen boarded it in addition to the seven Freedom Riders scattered throughout the bus. The Klansmen made the ride extremely tense for the Freedom Riders, trying to banish them "to the back of the bus where they belonged."[36]

> The Freedom Riders thought they were prepared for the worst. However, in actuality, they had no reliable way of gauging what they were up against, no way of appreciating the full implications of challenging Alabama's segregationist institutions, and no inkling of how far Birmingham's ultra-segregationists would go to protect the sanctity of Jim Crow. This was not just the Deep South – it was Birmingham, where close collaboration between the Ku Klux Klan and law enforcement officials was a fact of life. The special agents in the Birmingham field office, as well as their superiors in Washington, possessed detailed information on this collaboration and could have warned the Freedom Riders. But they chose to remain silent.[37]

A mob waited for the Riders in Birmingham and they were severely beaten. The Freedom Riders were determined to continue but the Greyhound bus company that supplied the group's buses no longer wished to be involved. For a moment, it looked as though the Freedom Ride was over.

But then a group of young students in Nashville decided to ride to Birmingham to continue the movement. The students had been involved in a Nashville sit-in protesting the city's segregated movie theaters. The lineup of the new Riders was set: the chosen included two whites – Jimmy Zwerg and Salynn McCollum – and eight blacks: John Lewis, William Barbee, Paul

[35] Ibid, 141.
[36] Ibid, 149.
[37] Ibid, 151.

Brooks, Charles Butler, Allen Cason, Bill Harbour, Catherine Burks, and Lucretia Collins.[38] Most were students at Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial State University, an all-black public college. These new Freedom Riders took up the movement and traveled to Birmingham, where they hoped to pick the movement back up using the same bus company as before. On May 17, 1961, Birmingham police arrested the Riders and placed them in protective custody. The Riders were driven back to Tennessee. Not daunted, the Freedom Riders secured other rides back to Birmingham, this time determined to succeed. Aided by the Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, who put pressure on the bus company, the Freedom Riders left Birmingham on May 20, 1961, and made their way to Montgomery, Alabama.

This time the Riders had protection. The Birmingham and Montgomery police would protect the Rides within city limits, and the state police would provide protection on the open highways.[39] Alabama's director of safety, Floyd Mann, provided more insurance for the Riders as he would ride on the bus with them. Little good it did. As the bus approached the Montgomery city limits, its police protection gradually disappeared. When the bus arrived at the terminal, it was noticeably quiet and absent of law enforcement, which the Riders expected. "In actuality, there were as many as two hundred protesters in the immediate area waiting to strike a blow for segregation. Lookouts had been posted in cars in the streets around the terminal since Friday evening, and some of central Alabama's most notorious Klansmen – including more than a dozen of those involved in the Birmingham riot – were on hand to lead the mob."[40] As the Riders exited the bus, the mob swarmed and beat the Riders, and even some officials. When word of the attack reached President John F. Kennedy, he sent federal marshals to Montgomery.

[38] Ibid, 185.
[39] Ibid, 205.
[40] Ibid, 212.

That same day, Martin Luther King, Jr. flew to Montgomery. King held a church service at the First Baptist Church of Montgomery in support of the Freedom Riders but the night did not end quietly. In the early morning hours, a mob descended on the church, trapping King and others inside. Alabama Governor John Patterson declared martial law and sent in state police and the National Guard. Following this, President Kennedy called for a "cooling off" period but the Freedom Riders would not have it. They were determined to continue to Mississippi despite the threat of violence that surely awaited them.

The Riders arrived in Jackson on May 24, 1961. The stop in Jackson was to be the last stop of the hellish ride before the buses reached New Orleans. The Riders left the Montgomery Trailways bus station a little before eight Wednesday morning. It was a 258-mile journey to Jackson.

As the Riders approached the Alabama-Mississippi border, they sang songs to keep up morale. A popular song was the ballad "The Banana Boat Song," sometimes known as "Day-O,": "We took a trip on the Greyhound bus, freedom's coming and it won't be long. To fight segregation where we must, freedom's coming and it won't be long. Freedom, give us freedom, freedom's coming and it won't be long," sang the Freedom Riders."[41]

When the buses reached the Alabama-Mississippi border, they expected an ambush. There was none . . . yet. When the first bus arrived at the Jackson Trailways terminal, all twelve Riders were placed under arrest. The Riders refused bail from the NAACP and would await trials the next day. A second group of Freedom Riders was also arrested. The second round of arrests followed the same pattern as the first, with the Jackson police swooping in and apprehending all

[41] Ibid, 265.

fifteen Riders within three minutes of their arrival.[42] The Riders stayed in jail the maximum before bail could be revoked.

Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) spokesperson Marvin Rich suggested that the Freedom Riders movement was poised to "end segregation by the end of the year."[43] Though Rich's statement was exaggerated, it did reflect the idea that there was growing support for the Riders and the Civil Rights Movement. The Freedom Riders were calling attention to the South in the way they had hoped.

The Freedom Riders risked their lives to draw attention to the unfair treatment of African Americans in the South. They sought to test the strength of segregation by flouting their right to board buses and sit where they pleased on buses riding on interstate roads. But as with most things in the South, acceptance did not come swiftly, nor did it come without a great price. The Freedom Riders stood up to those who found themselves in power and subsequently, abusing that power, all in the name of Jim Crow.

In the year following the Freedom Rides, another protest against segregation would be held, this time involving one man, James Meredith, who became another symbol of the Civil Rights Movement. The Freedom Riders event was covered in the state's newspapers but the information was not the same in each newspaper nor was the angle of the coverage. Hazel Brannon Smith did not believe the Freedom Riders needed to come to Mississippi but that if they did, they deserved the utmost protection.

[42] Ibid, 273.
[43] Ibid, 282.

James Meredith integrates Ole Miss

To say there was opposition to integrating the University of Mississippi in Oxford, Mississippi in 1962 would be an understatement. The state's political power, business leaders and newspapers treated his application as if Armageddon had occurred.

The University of Mississippi, known as "Ole Miss" was long entrenched in racial history and struggle. Students from Ole Miss had joined the Confederate Grays during the Civil War and some were buried in a cemetery behind the Tad C. Smith Coliseum, where today the university's basketball teams plays. But the Civil War was long ago . . . or was it? Those feeling still existed in Mississippi and Ole Miss was no exception.

Born in 1933 in Kosciusko, Mississippi, Meredith served in the Air Force from 1951 to 1959 and missed most of the rising tensions in the state while enlisted.

> By the time of Meredith's application to ole Miss, the long process of desegregating southern higher education had been underway for more than two decades. Beginning in the 1930s, it had progressed slowly. Although nearly all southern colleges remained segregated at the time of the *Brown* decision, a few colleges in twelve of the seventeen southern and border states had desegregated. The admission of blacks occurred initially in graduate and professional programs, and first in the border and peripheral southern states.[44]

Meredith was facing an uphill battle. As late as 1960, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi still maintained completely segregated public universities.[45]

Meredith first applied to Ole Miss on January 31, 1961. Following procedures, Meredith submitted a completed application, his health record, and an application for housing.[46] He was not the first black man to attempt enrollment at the University of Mississippi. In 1958, Clennon King tried to enroll but with no luck. And during World War II, Harry S. Murphy Jr.

[44] Charles W. Eagles, *The Price of Defiance*: *James Meredith and the Integration of Ole Miss*, (The University of North Carolina Press, 2009), pp. 2.
[45] Ibid, 3.
[46] Ibid, 220.

applied to the university's war-time military program. His race was not noted at the time, thus that is why Meredith is known as the first African-American to enroll at Ole Miss.

Meredith's letter to the registrar caused university officials to scramble because registration for the spring semester began on the following Monday.[47] The administration held a special meeting that Saturday. After the meeting, registrar Robert Ellis, telegraphed Meredith that Ole Miss had decided to "discontinue consideration of all applications for admission for registration . . . received after January 25, 1961" and reminded him that his "was received subsequent to that date."[48] Following the rejection letter, Meredith conferred with the NAACP, the U.S. Department of Justice and Medgar Evers. Meredith was going to apply again. What followed was an 18-month long battle between Meredith and the state of Mississippi.

The integration of Ole Miss drew much media attention, even internationally. More than 300 reporters were present. Reporters were sent from around the world to cover Meredith's enrollment in class and the subsequent riots that broke out over the campus that ultimately claimed the life of two men, Paul Leslie Guihard. Guihard, a 31-year-old British reporter for the French news agency, Agence France Presse, was murdered when a .38 caliber bullet pierced his heart.[49] The shot fired into his back was from a foot away.

On September 30, 1962, Meredith, assisted by the Justice Department, arrived on the Ole Miss campus and spent the night in a dormitory. What followed his arrival must have been a night of true terror, as rioting engulfed the campus.

In the riot's first hours, outsiders streamed in and swelled the mob to more than two thousand.[50] As the riot continued, more U.S. Marshals began to arrive to combat the agitators.

[47] Ibid, 222.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid, 360.
[50] Ibid, 359.

The marshals defended the Lyceum from the mob outside, whose wrath was not so much directed at Meredith but the federal marshals and the government for daring to let a black man register for classes at Ole Miss. Rioters scavenged bricks and boards from the science building construction site, and they stole chemicals from the chemistry labs. As nonstudents joined the mob, gunfire also erupted. With the street lights on the Circle shot out, the Lyceum's porch lights made the marshals standing beneath them easy targets.[51]

Today, the Lyceum still bears the marks of that night. A bullet that grazed one column of the majestic building is a reminder of that night when all hell broke loose.

> The situation at the university worsened, despite the highway patrol's success in blocking many people from the campus. Dozens went around the roadblocks, across the countryside, and into the melee. The growing crowds attacked journalists' vehicles and army trucks, and on the Circle they set several private automobiles on fire. At least a half-dozen vehicles owned by university faculty and staff suffered major damage.[52]

The day after the riot, Meredith entered the Lyceum for the first time and registered for classes. After completing the necessary forms, including ones for late registration and for the Veterans Administration, he paid his tuition and fees with $230 in cash.[53] Meredith proceeded to his first class. Students waited for him outside the Lyceum, shouting obscenities. It was not an easy first day for Meredith, but it was a step in the right direction; toward the change blacks in Mississippi and the Deep South were waiting for.

Meredith graduated in August 1963. After his experience, other African Americans graduated more easily and black enrollment at the university grew over the next decades.

The state's newspapers covered the riots at Ole Miss as did the university newspaper, *The Mississippian*. The paper's editor, Sidna Brower, was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize for her editorials in support of the university's integration. Many small-town papers in Mississippi

[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid, 366.
[53] Ibid, 371.

backed Gov. Ross Barnett but not Hodding Carter, Ira Harkey, Smith and others. Harkey's newspaper in Pascagoula called state leaders "false prophets who deluded the people for eight years into believing we could maintain school segregation" and blamed them for the "appalling climax of murder, mayhem, and destruction."[54]

Most newspapers outside of the South lambasted the lawlessness, criticized state officials and defended the Kennedy administration for its efforts.

Medgar Evers assassinated

On June 12, 1963, Medgar Evers pulled his car into the yard like he had done many times before. His whole family was still awake. Evers' wife, Myrlie, had allowed them to stay up to greet their father when he arrived at home. Evers had worked late into the night, but for Myrlie, that was nothing unusual.

The night was similar to other nights when Evers returned home. There was the familiar sound of the car's engine shutting off followed by the pause when Evers gathered his things to bring them inside. But that night, there was a different sound, a life-altering sound, that of a gun.

Medgar Wiley Evers, at the age of thirty-seven, had been shot in the back with a model 1917 .30-06 caliber Enfield high-powered rifle.[55] Myrlie knew right away what the sound was and what had happened. Another black man had been killed in Mississippi, and this time it was her husband.

Evers was born on July 2, 1925, in Decatur, Mississippi, to James and Jessie Evers. From birth, he assumed a family heritage of social resistance within the varied social and

[54] Ibid, 427.
[55] Michael Vinson Williams, *Medgar Evers, a Mississippi Martyr,* (The University of Arkansas Press, 2011), pp. 4.

political systems of white control, white-generated violence, and black economic exploitation.[56] Evers was the "star" of the Evers family and concentrated on his studies in high school. He then joined the military and served overseas during World War II. He saw action and returned to the United States with a renewed sense of the injustice blacks faced, having witnessed it in the Army.

Evers registered to vote in 1946 in Decatur and though it was no problem to register, it was a problem when it came time to actually vote. This was Evers' first brush with the Civil Rights Movement and it spurned him to action.

He attended Alcorn College, now Alcorn State University, where he met Myrlie Beasley. They were married her on Christmas Eve 1951. Evers received his bachelor's degree the next semester and they moved to Mound Bayou, Mississippi. He then became involved in the NAACP and set out to establish local chapters in the Mississippi Delta. While working as an insurance salesman to pay the bills, Evers was denied admission to the University of Mississippi Law School. This caught the attention of the national branch of the NAACP. In 1954, Evers was appointed as Mississippi's first field secretary for the NAACP.

Evers and Myrlie moved to Jackson and Evers began to establish himself as a champion for civil rights for blacks. His involvement in helping James Meredith integrate Ole Miss drew sharp criticism, from both blacks and whites. Evers began opposing the first faint rumblings of the Black Power Movement, which grew out of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s. The term "black power" became popular in 1966 when Stokely Carmichael, head of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), used it after James Meredith was shot during the March Against Fear.

[56] Ibid, 14.

Evers advocated the ways of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. There is much belief that blacks were always united during the Civil Rights Movement but that was not always the case. Some blacks the necessity of violence; they saw it as the only way to achieve change. But leaders like King and Evers did not advocate violence. Instead, the battles should be fought legally and through group action.

As his list of enemies grew, Evers found himself the target of death threats over the phone. Those threats became a reality in the early morning hours of June 12, 1963. Medgar Evers' death marked a pivotal moment in the Civil Rights Movement. The rest of the nation began to take notice; and the situation in the South was escalating.

> James Meredith's admission to the University of Mississippi; the murder of three civil rights workers; the murder of Medgar Evers; the murder of Martin Luther King Jr. by James Earl Ray on April 4, 1968; the murder of Robert Kennedy on June 5, 1968; and other events made it essential that the white-owned press address the issues central to their communities. In Smith's case, the determination to tell the story of the civil rights movement in a fair and balance manner would cost her a career she loved.[57]

And what a career it was.

Three stages of Smith's career

Three stages mark Smith's career in journalism. The first began when she purchased the *Durant News* and became a Mississippi resident. In this stage, Smith was still a staunch segregationist and did not question the status quo of the blacks in her community. She seldom came into contact with other whites on racial issues and her norms from childhood remained solid.

The second stage of Smith's career, from 1954-1961, is grounded in conflict. At this time, Smith was against federal intervention in the matter of school desegregation. Smith was not in favor of integrating the races socially, but if the law demanded that they be integrated in

[57] Whitt, 19.

education, then so be it. Equal schools, in Smith's opinion, would improve education, as they were "the answer to ignorance, poverty and disease."[58]

After quietly declining to join the recently formed Holmes County Citizens' Council in the summer of 1954 because she felt the Council intimidated African Americans by use of economic pressure and coercion, Smith was targeted by the Council. The Council attempted to make things tough for Smith financially. Under the pressure of a boycott organized by the Council against her newspaper, she began to understand not just the plight of blacks but also that of whites afraid to speak out against the Citizens' Council.[59]

But speak out Smith did. In 1958 when the Citizens' Council created a rival newspaper, the *Holmes County Herald,* to drive Smith out of business, she broke her public silence about the campaign against her.[60] Smith had finally had enough. In her previous editorials, she made mention of threats against her but never out-right named who or what was behind those threats. In November 1958, she finally did.

Enough was enough. In January 1956, Smith's husband Walter Smith was fired from his job as administrator at Holmes County Hospital because his "wife has become a controversial person."[61] The firing was the result of Smith's continued candid, critical comments in her editorial column. It was a plot to further financially ruin her.

Smith was awarded the Elijah Parish Lovejoy Award for courage in journalism in July 1960. Following her award, Smith was again targeted by the Citizens' Council for having won the award for editorials supporting integration. That was not true. In her acceptance speech,

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[58] Newman, Mark, *Hazel Brannon Smith (1914-1994): Journalist under Siege,"* Mississippi Women: Their Histories, Their Lives, edited by Martha H. Swain, Elizabeth Anne Payne and Marjorie Julian Spruill. (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 2003), pp. 220- 34.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Newman, 225.
[61] Ibid.

Smith claimed that she had never advocated for integration. Rather, Smith received the award for calling for the people to abide by the law. Later that year, a cross was burned on Smith's yard and the teenagers responsible were traced back to one of the Council members.

The gradual transition in Smith's political beliefs from 1954 to 1961 occurred as both and she and black Mississippians were victimized for their protests against the state's massive resistance to school desegregation.

Now Smith entered the third stage of her career, 1961 and beyond. She attacked the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission and publicly sympathized with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). While most Mississippi journalists denounced "outside agitators," Smith welcomed the 33 Freedom Riders who came to Holmes County to help register blacks to vote in 1961.[62]

"One of the most popular misconceptions in Mississippi is the idea that if everyone would just leave us alone we would work out all our problems and everything would be fine … The truth is we have been left pretty much alone for nearly one hundred years – and we have not faced up to our problems as we should," Smith wrote.[63]

Smith was also involved with the *Mississippi Free Press,* a publication that was the brainchild of Civil Rights leader Medgar Evers. It was the first bi-racial newspaper in Mississippi designed to meet the needs of the people who embraced the movement. Smith printed the publication and her involvement was exaggerated in the Jackson *Clarion-Ledger* and *Daily News.* The papers alleged that Smith met with several black men, including Medgar Evers. Smith denied this, simply saying that she was dropping off copies of the *Free Press.*

[62] Bernard L. Stein, "*This Female Crusading Scalawag,"* Media Studies Journal, Vol. 14, No. 2 (Spring/Summer 2000).
[63] Ibid.

It did not take long for whites to become aware of the *Mississippi Free Press.* The Mississippi Sovereignty Commission launched an investigation, which connected Smith to the *Free Press.* The Commission accused Smith of printing the first edition of the newspaper. State Senator T. M. Williams of Lexington described Hazel Brannon Smith as "shrewd and scheming," and implied that she was using her influence to control editorial policy."[64]

It is not that Smith changed but rather part of the white community in Holmes County had gone over to the side of the Citizens' Council, and she could no longer justify the Council's actions and her long-held beliefs. "I am firm believer in our Southern traditions and racial segregation, but not at the expense of justice and truth."[65]

Winning the Pulitzer Prize

An analysis of coverage by Mississippi daily newspapers during the Freedom Summer in 1964 concluded that most Mississippi daily press editors perceived Freedom Summer as a major disruption of Southern tradition, and the state's daily press was nearly unanimous in pronouncing that no Mississippians, black or white, were ready for the reality of a racially integrated society.[66]

But what about women like Smith, who owned newspapers and voiced their opinion in their paper's editorials?

Of the 130 newspapers published in Mississippi during Freedom Summer, 111 were weeklies, and twenty of those (18 percent) were published or edited by women. Smith was elected vice president of the Mississippi Press Women (MPW), under president Mary Cain, and was also a member of the predominantly male Mississippi Press Association (MPA).

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[64] Julian Williams, *"The Truth Shall Make You Free: The Mississippi Free Press, 1961-1963,"* Journalism History, Vol. 32 (2) (Summer 2006), pp. 106-113.
[65] Lexington *Advertiser,* December 1, 1955.
[66] Susan Weil, *Hazel and the "Hacksaw:" Freedom Summer Coverage by the Women of the Mississippi Press*, Journalism Studies, Vol. 2, Number 4, 2000, pp. 545-561.

The previous study also found that most male editors were unanimous in declaring that Mississippi was not ready for integration. But Smith was championing for blacks and civil rights in her newspaper in her editorials. Smith, already different from her male counterparts, continued to expand the divide between them.

She was honored with the Elijah Parish Lovejoy Award in 1960, not for advocating racial integration as the Citizen's Council tried to suggest, but for the courage to advocate abiding by the law.

The more white extremists attacked Smith, the federal government, and the civil rights movement, the more Smith abandoned her reservations about the need for federal and movement action in Mississippi.[67] By 1963, she began to resemble a liberal by national standards, not just Mississippi standards.

Smith won a Pulitzer Prize in 1964 for her "steadfast adherence to her editorial duty in the face of great pressure and opposition."[68] When Smith was given the 1964 Pulitzer, she described what she as her role as an editor:

> All we have done here is try to meet honestly the issues as they arose. We did not ask for, nor run from this fight with the White Citizens' Councils. But we have given it all we have, nearly 10 years of our lives, loss of financial security and a big mortgage. We would do the same thing over, if necessary . . . I could not call myself an editor if I had gone along with the Citizens' Councils – feeling about them the way I do. My interest has been to print the truth and protect and defend the freedom of all Mississippians. It will continue.[69]

Three of the editorials in her Pulitzer Prize portfolio were concerned with the incident involving a black man named Hartman Turnbow, who registered to vote on April 9, 1963. Turnbow was one of 14 men who were registered to vote that day. A month later, his house was

[67] Newman, 82.
[68] Stein.
[69] W. David Sloan, *Pulitzer Prize Editorials: America's Best Editorial Writing, 1917-1979* (Iowa State University Press, 1980).

firebombed. Turnbow was arrested by Holmes County Deputy Sheriff Andrew P. Smith and accused of firebombing his own home, something Smith took umbrage at.

> White and Negro citizens of Holmes County alike simply could not believe that something like this could happen in our county, that a man and his wife and 16-year-old daughter could be routed from sleep in the small hours of the morning and be forced to flee their home literally in terror, only be to shot at by intruders outside – then to have the head of the family jailed the same day for doing the dastardly deed by an officer sworn to uphold the law and protect all citizens.[70]

Smith was livid. She continued,

> This kind of conduct on the part of our highest elected peace officer has done serious injury to relations between the races in Holmes County – where we must be able to live in peace and harmony, or not live at all . . . But irreparable damage has been done, and let no one doubt it . . . This kind of situation would never have come about in Holmes County if we had honestly discharged our duties and obligations as citizens in the past; if we had demanded that all citizens be accorded equal treatment and protection under the law. This we have not done. But if we think the present situation is serious, as indeed, it is, we should take a long, hard look at the future. It can, and probably will, get infinitely worse – unless we have the necessary character and guts to do something about it – and change the things that need to be changed.[71]

In her third editorial, Smith concluded it with a warning: "This is a world of change. The old ways of doing things will not suffice in this day and age. We cannot stop the clock. We ignore these facts at our own peril."[72]

Smith's win was commended by the Memphis *Commercial Appeal* but not commented on by the two biggest papers in the state, the Jackson *Clarion-Ledger* and *Daily News.*[73] Following her award, Smith said that she had never intended to become a controversial figure but what made her so was her fight to defend "the freedom of all Mississippians to say and do what

[70] Ibid.; The *Lexington Advertiser*, May 14, 1963. Volume 126, Page 1.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Newman, 86.

they want to do without taking dictation from the White Citizens' Council, the Klu Klux Klan or any other extremist organization."[74]

1964 and beyond

Smith encountered many financial hardships as a result of her opposition to the Holmes County Citizens' Council. The Council set out to destroy Smith, financially-speaking, because they could not physically destroy her. "I'm sure that if she had been a man, that they would have lynched her."[75]

Carter once again defended Smith in his plea to those who might be willing to contribute to Smith's campaign. "After more than ten years of standing up to the members of the Citizens' Council and the Ku Klu Klan of her area, she is in desperate financial straits – just as the civil rights struggle in Mississippi appears to be nearing victory for the challengers of the status quo.[76]

Hodding Carter, Jr., editor of the *Delta Democrat Times* in Greenville, Mississippi, then wrote about the advertising boycott about against Smith in the *Editor & Publisher*, the firing of her husband from his job as administrator of the Holmes County Hospital and the weekly newspaper founded by members of the Council. It was Carter's belief that "if Mrs. Smith can be helped for another year she will survive. Her fight is the fight of all of us, and she deserves out aid."[77] An article in the Editorial Notebook of the *Columbia Journalism Review* reiterated Carter's plea and joined with him in seeking funds to support Smith. The *Review's* efforts yielded almost $2,700.[78] That amount today would be equal to almost $19,000. Despite the

[74] Ibid.; Memphis *Commercial-Appeal*, May 5, 1964.
[75] Newman, 72.
[76] Edward W. Barrett, *"Must 'a light go out in a shadowed state?,'"* Columbia Journalism Review, Summer 1965, Volume 4, Issue 2, pp. 14.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Stein.

Citizens' Council's efforts, Smith was not out of business just yet. But she was over $100,000 in debt.[79]

Further, just before Thanksgiving in 1965, the poor black farmers, teachers, preachers and businesspeople of Holmes County filled the auditorium at Saints Junior College in Lexington to overflowing for Editor's Appreciation Day, where the college president presented Smith with a handmade box decorated by teachers. Inside was an orchid and $2,855.22.[80] Smith was touched and claimed it was the most wonderful day of her life.

Following that day, the organizers of the meeting in the gym formed a committee to serve as a permanent opponent to the Citizens' Council's boycott on Smith. Two years later, the committee was still going strong. One of its central demands was to force the city, county and local businesses to advertise in her papers.

Smith had come full circle. She is still remembered by the black community in Holmes County. Her unflinching reporting of assaults on black residents was a recurring theme in interviews with participants in Holmes County's Civil Rights Movement and with African Americans who had worked for her.[81]

After 1964, Smith continued to support blacks and their aspirations for equality and urged whites to help them.

[79] Newman, 72.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Stein.

CHAPTER THREE

Content Analysis of three pivotal events

A content analysis was performed to examine Hazel Brannon Smith's editorial, "Through Hazel Eyes," in the *Lexington Advertiser* in Lexington, Mississippi. This content analysis examined editorials from three years (1961, 1962 and 1963), focusing on the editorials in the four weeks prior to and the four weeks following three pivotal events in the three years listed. Those events were the Freedom Riders of 1961 and their arrival in Jackson, Mississippi, on May 24; James Meredith's integration of the University of Mississippi on September 30, 1962; and finally, the assassination of Medgar Evers on June 12, 1963.

The method was chosen because it offers a quantifiable objective method of examining Smith's editorial work.

A codebook was prepared (see Appendix X, page 61) to answer the three research questions:

RQ1: Did Hazel Brannon Smith mention the events in her column?

RQ2: If Smith did mention the events, was the mention positive or negative?

RQ3: In leading up to the events, did Smith's opinion differ afterward from what it was prior to the event?

Two coders read through each of Smith's editorials that fell under the time period established in Chapter One of the study, four weeks preceding the event and four weeks following the event. A total of 27 editorials were examined. In some cases, the publication schedule of the *Advertiser* allowed for an editorial to be examined from the week of the event, in

addition to editorials in the weeks before and after. This was done to greater encompass Smith's opinion and her mention of the events.

The first column examined was published on Thursday, April 27, 1961. The *Advertiser* was published on the Thursday of every week. Of the three events included in this study, two events fell on a Wednesday and one on a Monday. Thus, the editorials included were published on a Thursday. The final column in the content analysis was published on Thursday, July 11, 1963.

As there were 27 columns examined, each coder completed a coding sheet for each editorial, 27 each, for a total of 54 coded sheets. The results indicate a specific event was coded 39 times, or 72 percent. Of those that mentioned an event, three, or 7.7 percent, mentioned the Freedom Riders, while 15, or 38.5 percent, mentioned James Meredith's integration of the University of Mississippi and the riots that followed. Medgar Evers' assassination was the sole event that was not mentioned in Smith's editorial. Other events mentioned included the Civil War, University of Alabama integration, the *Advertiser's* 125th anniversary and Lexington High School graduation.

If a specific event mentioned, coders were also asked to, on a scale of one to five, note if the mention was positive, somewhat positive, neutral, somewhat negative or negative. When a specific event was mentioned, it was most often coded, 51.2 percent of the time, as mentioned in a neutral way, defined in the codebook as 3, otherwise, the event was coded as mentioned in a somewhat negative way (21 percent), somewhat positive way or positive way (13 percent, both) and only negative 2.6 percent.

In regards to the specific events examined in this study, when the Freedom Riders were mentioned, it was either neutral (33 percent) or somewhat positive (66 percent). When

James Meredith and the integration of Ole Miss were mentioned, including the riots, the mentions were generally neutral at 53 percent. In other mentions, it was somewhat negative (20 percent) or negative (6.7 percent). As Medgar Evers' assassination was not mentioned in Smith's column, its mention could not be coded as positive, somewhat positive, neutral, somewhat negative or negative.

The next thing coded was if Smith's column mentioned specific people or groups. All 27 columns were coded as mentioning a specific person or group, or 100 percent. To break it down further, the top most mentioned people and groups were examined. They were the Citizens' Council (be it Mississippi or Holmes County) and Mississippi Governor Ross Barnett. The Citizens' Council and Ross Barnett were mentioned on 22 times, or 22 percent, and 14 times, or 14 percent, respectively. Those were the most mentioned people and groups.

In keeping with the parameters set out by this study, those editorials that mentioned the Freedom Riders, James Meredith or Medgar Evers were also singled out. Two codesheets listed James Meredith as a specific person mentioned, 2 percent, and four mentioned the Freedom Riders, 4 percent. No editorials mentioned Medgar Evers.

The next step was to calculate the mention of Meredith or the Freedom Riders on a scale of one to five, with one being negative and five being positive. In his mentions, Meredith was neutral (50 percent) or somewhat negative (50 percent). When Meredith is coded as a somewhat negative mention, it should be noted that his name appears as a specific person mentioned alongside Governor Ross Barnett. When Barnett was mentioned, it was most often in a somewhat negative way, at 36 percent. Other mentions: neutral (29 percent), negative (22 percent), somewhat positive and positive (7 percent, both).

The Citizens' Council was the most mentioned group in the content analysis. It seems only logical that that is the case because of the battle between the Council and Smith. The Council targeted Smith and she began to speak out against the Council in her editorials. The Council is mentioned 22 times, or 22 percent. Of those times, the Council is most often mentioned in a negative or somewhat negative way (32 percent). Other mentions: neutral (27 percent), somewhat positive and positive (5 percent, both). In the one positive mention, the coding is perhaps skewed because of the other people mentioned in addition to the Citizens' Council, like David Donald, Oliver Emmerich and the Mississippi Scholastic Press Association (MSPA).

Finally, when the Freedom Riders were mentioned, the majority, or 75 percent of the time, it was a positive mention. The other time (25 percent) was a somewhat negative coding, when the Freedom Riders were mentioned in the same column as Fidel Castro and Communism.

As no editorials mentioned Evers, it was not possible to code for the mention as positive or negative, or in between.

The next item examined in the content analysis was if language specific to the time period was used, like Negro. Coders were asked to mark 0 or 1, if specific language was used or not used. In the content analysis, specific language was coded 21 times, or 39 percent. It was not used 61 percent of the time. Words included were Negro, Negroes, Nazis, undesirables and hoodlums. Negro or Negroes were by far the most-used specific language in Smith's editorials. These two words were used 62 percent of the time, followed by the next closest word, Nazi, at 10 percent.

The last and final part of the codebook and content analysis was whether courtesy titles were used. Not all papers in the South, or all newspapers for that matter, used courtesy

titles in references to blacks. That said, this codebook asked the question as a general consensus on the *Lexington Advertiser's* policy. In the codebook, the question was asked in scale form, 0 for no, 1 for yes and 2 for sometimes. In the majority of editorials, or 61 percent, Smith used courtesy titles. Twenty-eight percent of the time she did not and 11 percent of the time, courtesy titles were used sometimes.

The third and final research question requires more attention than a codebook. Individual analysis of the editorials before (excluding Evers' assassination) and after the events will provide an answer to: In leading up to the events, did Smith's opinion differ from what it was following the events?

Smith's column was used in a variety of ways. Often times, it told of community news, like who won Garden of the Month or who graduated from Lexington High School. In fact, around graduation time, her column was dedicated entirely to the graduates. As the Civil Rights Movement began to heat up, so did the attacks on Smith's person and image. As the Holmes County Citizens' Council attack grew against Smith, she took to her column to call out those who were trying to run her out of town. As early as 1958, Smith began to allude to a private, personal attack against her by members of the town's Council. When "Through Hazel Eyes" did address the attack against her, Smith made it clear that she could handle the attack *and* that she was simply informing her readers should they read or heard anything to the contrary.

In the first column examined in 1961, on Thursday, April 27, Smith encourages Lexington residents to vote on Friday on the matter of issuing the county's bonds to construct a public welfare building and warehouse. "We do not propose to tell our readers how to vote. We never have and we never will. That is something for every individual to decide for himself. It is

one of the few privileges we have left . . . Personally we shall vote for the bond issue,"[82] Smith wrote. No mention was made of the Freedom Riders in this first column of the content analysis but the Citizens' Council was mentioned. Smith was suspicious of the Council and its meeting minutes. She also called into question the acts of the Sovereignty Commission, which she deemed still under the control of the Citizens' Council. Her opinion, as it was prior to 1961, was still extremely negative toward the Citizens' Council.

Smith was not one to shy away from potential trouble. She once found herself sued for libel by a county sheriff (to later have her conviction overturned by the Mississippi Supreme Court) and always on the "good" side of the law, where "shady" things were not swept under the rug. Smith was a professional at making enemies. Her favorite target and her biggest enemy was the Citizens' Council of Holmes County. In her next article on May 4, she wrote of American historian David Donald winning a Pulitzer Prize but things turned serious when she again addressed the Citizens' Council. But not one to dwell on the bad or the things that personally affected her, Smith's article concluded with congratulations to Oliver Emmerich, editor of the *State Times* and the McComb *Enterprise-Journal.*

The next "Through Hazel Eyes," published on May 11, 1961, focused on a new age – the Space Age. As the world moved along, Smith wrote, "We would like to see Mississippi move along also into a glorious future, taking advantage of all that modern science has to offer to develop our full potential as a state."[83] For Smith, the Space Age meant change, something she was strongly in favor of.

> Certainly it is time for our leaders – from the Governor on down – to realize that times have changed that we must, as a state and as a people, make some changes with it. The old hates and prejudices and "politics as usual" just won't suffice any more. The young men and women coming along today have no patience with the

[82] *Lexington Advertiser,* April 27, 1961, Volume 124, Page 1.
[83] *Lexington Advertiser,* May 11, 1961. Volume 124, Page 1.

> old guard that has dictated Mississippi affairs so long – which is for Mississippi a very good thing. We can't find our way in the space age using horse and buggy tactics and methods.[84]

The future was the main focus of that week's column.

In the May 18, 1961 issue, one week before the Freedom Riders would arrive in Jackson, Smith wrote about Mississippi Governor Ross Barnett and his meeting with three Negro leaders. The meeting was described as "very harmonious."[85] Though Barnett is typically mentioned in Smith's columns in a negative way, in this column, Smith commended Governor Barnett for the meeting. She wrote that it was a start in the right direction – because it is only where there is real understanding based upon mutual respect that we can hope to keep peaceful race relations in Mississippi.[86]

No mention of the Freedom Riders appeared in this column. But the next issue, published on May 25, 1961, the day after Freedom Riders arrived in Jackson, there was specific mention of them.

> In the face of a threatened visit from the "freedom riders" Attorney General Joe Patterson went on television late Tuesday to urge Mississippi citizens to permit their local and state officials to handle the situation – in the event freedom riders do continue their ride to New Orleans through Jackson, as announced previously. Gen. Patterson said that plans have been made by these officials to preserve the peace and all that is needed is the cooperation of its citizens. We believe that cooperation should and will be forthcoming. All sober-minded, intelligent people know that mob violence is not a solution to any problem and only adds additional and more serious problems. Irreparable damage is done to those participating, their community, state and nation. Mob action on our part turns the people of the nation and the world more solidly against us and inevitably more laws to contain us.[87]

As usual, Smith called for following the law and she condemned mob violence. "The Freedom Riders are a cross the South should not be called upon to bear – particularly at this time

[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid.
[87] *Lexington Advertiser,* May 25, 1961. Volume 124, Page 1.

of world tension – but they are here and have the firmly established federal law and the might of the U.S. government solidly on their side".[88]

Smith's belief in following the letter of the law did not waiver when it came to the Freedom Riders. The law is the law and though she did not necessarily agree with the Freedom Riders and what they hoped to accomplished, Smith believed they had the right, under the law, to be protected from mob violence.

In her column the following week after the Freedom Riders' arrival, Smith wrote of Freedom Riders' arrest and praised Jackson May Allen C. Thompson for abiding by the law. Though interstate facilities had been desegregated by a U.S. Supreme Court decision, those laws were not the same ones that existed in Jackson and at the bus terminal where the Freedom Riders arrived. As they made their way into the public restrooms, marked whites only, the Riders were arrested. Smith had no sympathy for them.

> Mayor Thompson made it plain the riders were arrested because they broke local (Jackson) laws based upon laws passed by the Mississippi Legislative – and said that officers of the law in Mississippi have no choice but to arrest people who violate our laws. The Mayor also made it plain that "we do not believe in mob violence" and one had the idea he was talking for all Mississippians, white and Negro.[89]

Smith continued,

> Mayor Thompson described the freedom riders as "trouble makers" and said if they wanted to test the segregation laws of Mississippi there is a way provided through the courts to do so – and indicated that incident-provoking action of the freedom riders should not be foisted upon any peaceable people. It is not likely that Mayor Thompson convinced any of the visiting newsman from out of state or his television audience throughout the country of the merit or morality of a legal, forced segregated society, such as we have in Mississippi and the South. But we are certain he convinced them the white people and leadership of the South wants segregation continued and will do everything possible to maintain it.[90]

[88] Ibid.
[89] *Lexington Advertiser,* June 1, 1961. Volume 124, Page 1.
[90] Ibid.

It is important to remember that at this time, Smith was still not yet a champion of African-American rights. She believed in following the letter of the law, so if the law said African-Americans were entitled to certain rights or deserved equal, in Smith's eyes, then that was that. But she was still a segregationist, which was reflected in her support of Mayor Thompson.

In the remaining editorials in the content analysis, Smith did not mention the Freedom Riders again. Instead, the columnists focused on Fidel Castro, Communists and other bond votes. There was not even the usual mention of the Citizens' Council. In the weeks following the Freedom Riders' entry into Jackson, Smith's eye was turned away from civil rights and the issue of desegregation.

Smith's opinion of the Freedom Riders did not change after they arrived in Mississippi. Protected by interstate law during their travels, once the Riders entered Jackson, they were then under the rule of local authority, which did not have desegregated restroom facilities. In Smith's eyes, the Riders were rightfully arrested according to the law.

The next event to be examined is that of James Meredith integrating the University of Mississippi on September 30, 1962. Meredith arrived on the Ole Miss campus that evening and enrolled in classes the following day, Monday, October 1, 1962.

The first column examined that pertained to Meredith's integration was published on Thursday, September 6, 1962. There was no mention of Meredith. Instead, the column focused on Negro voter registration. Smith, always in favor of following the law, wrote about the issue as it should be handled under law.

> But it seems to use that if we continue to fail to measure up to our responsibility under the law in this respect, that we are destined to face even greater problems in the near future. Those persons who have advocated a policy of no Negro voting whatever are now faced with what may be a problem of mass registration at the

> polls under compulsion of federal law – whereas if the right to registration had been open to persons irrespective of race, and the decision thereby left up to the individual Negro citizen, then there would be fewer persons inclined to exercise their "rights." It's the same old story of a man determined to have what someone else would deny him.[91]

In other words, Smith believed that Negroes would attempt to register to vote en masse because it was denied to them even though under law, it was not deniable. By Smith's own words, if blacks were given the right to register to vote as due to them, then they would not all clamor to exercise that rights. Blacks, like all people, wanted rights given to them. But whether they exercised those rights was a different matter. It was simply an issue of having certain rights to from the beginning.

Smith continued, calling out the white Citizens' Councils, "It seems tragic to use that the situation should have ever deteriorated to such a degree in Mississippi. But the responsible white leadership has been, and still is, virtually immobilized because of real fear of the white Citizens' Councils and what it believes the Councils can do."

As usual, the Citizens' Council was mentioned in a negative way in Smith's column.

James Meredith and the impending integration of the University of Mississippi were not mentioned in Smith's next column, published on September 13, 1962. That column focused on the Cuban conflict and President John F. Kennedy. But the topic of integration at one of the largest universities in the state would be the central topic of Smith's next column on September 20. Smith wrote about Governor Ross Barnett's attempt to defy a court order permitting Meredith to enroll in the university.

> Persons who love this state and are devoted to its welfare, are heartsick that Governor Ross Barnett has chosen the path of defiance and resistance of a court order that must and will ultimately be obeyed – if we are to continue to have system of state schools and colleges . . . The proposition which Governor Barnett seeks now to uphold, the dominance of our state policy, was settled long ago in a

[91] *Lexington Advertiser,* September 6, 1962. Volume 125, Page 1.

> way and later in the courts . . . The clear question which faces the thirteen Mississippi citizens who compose the Board of Trustees of Institutions of Higher Learning is this: "Shall we permit James Meredith, a Negro, to be enrolled at the University of Mississippi, as ordered by three courts? Or shall we defy the courts? Shall we obey the law, or defy it?"[92]

It is most easy to guess at what Smith's answer would be. But Smith recognizes in her column that the board faces a difficult position. If the board does not decide to allow Meredith, its members could be cited for contempt of court, but if they follow the law and admit Meredith, Governor Barnett said he would close the university, leaving all students, white and black, without a college to attend.

> Should the University be closed, then the Medical School would also be closed as it is part of the University; football season would end before it begins because the closed University could not field a football team. Nor would it end there. The injunctions issued by the courts in this mass suit were directed to the trustees and the University and to all the colleges of the state – which means if one college is closed it is just a question of time until the others are also closed.[93]

For Smith, there was more at stake than school segregation and the ways of old. She used harsh, stinging words, like suicide, to describe what the closing of the state colleges and universities would mean. "Personally we favor keeping all of our schools and colleges open – to close them would mean suicide for the state, educationally, morally, economically and every other way."

Smith continued,

> Nor do we favor the trustees of the college board going to jail in a move that could be nothing more than a delaying leisure. The sooner we come to realize this is a problem to be faced realistically and honestly, the better off we and our state will be. Let's get this thing settled and go on about the business of building a great state wherein there is room and opportunity for everyone. This could be Mississippi's shining hour.[94]

[92] *Lexington Advertiser,* September 20, 1962. Volume 125, Page 1.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.

Education was deeply significant and important to Smith. Couple that together with an issue that has already been decided by three courts but yet is defied, Smith had no choice but to take to her column. Though she lacked sympathy for the Freedom Riders, who bucked local law, she had great sympathy for Meredith and his situation. Meredith had gone through all the necessary channels to gain admittance and was being denied by the leader of a state, Governor Ross Barnett, who would rather see thirteen people arrested than to allow Meredith to enroll at the University of Mississippi. Meredith broke no laws.

All this before Meredith had even set foot on the Ole Miss campus. The column the following week did not mention Meredith specifically but focused on the University of Mississippi and the university's newspaper editor in chief, Sidna Brower. Smith's column was dedicated to Brower and commended her for speaking out against the *Daily News* in Jackson for its skewed coverage of civil rights. Brower called out the *Daily News* for its lack of depth in stories and its sometimes complete fabrication of events.

Smith, in acknowledging Brower, commented on the job that newspapers have to do. "Just printing the 'factual' information or news, without slanting or coloring it in any way is a hard job. The truth is not always easy to find, but it is always worth seeking. Most of us work hard at trying to get the facts and present them to our readers and then expect them to make up their own minds in their own way and in their own time. This is the American way."[95]

Adding a segregationist slant to the news, like was done in many newspapers in the South at the time, was not something Smith believed in. It is this that brought Smith under attack by the Citizens' Councils and others in the state. She was not afraid to tell the news, be it in favor of whites or blacks.

[95] *Lexington Advertiser,* September 27, 1962. Volume 125, Page 1.

For the remainder of the editorials examined in this content analysis in 1962, Smith focused on the white Citizens' Council. In her October 4, 1962 article, published the week of Meredith's enrollment at the University of Mississippi, Smith focused on the Citizens' Council.

> The Citizens' Council of Mississippi has betrayed the confidence of every person who ever joined it – and it poses today a real threat to the peace and security of our state. The Citizens' Council has changed greatly from its first "non-political" status and today is attempting to run the state government – if indeed it is not doing so. Several legislators have privately expressed during the past few days grave concern about the course of defiance taken by Governor Ross Barnett in the Meredith case. They say Governor Barnett is following the urging of W.J. (Bill) Simmons, administrator of the Citizens' Council. Simmons is also known to have written some of Barnett's speeches.[96]

Smith's editorial is explicitly targeted at the Citizens' Council and she left no stone unturned. The column includes the background of the Council, including its formation back in July 1954 in Indianola, Mississippi. Smith believes the Council to be in cahoots with the state government, which decidedly makes it difficult for the state to move forward when it comes to race relations, like the integration of Ole Miss.

The riots at Ole Miss following Meredith's enrollment are also mentioned. "Those young people (and others) who rioted on the University campus this week have been infected with the kind of defiance preached for so long by the Citizens' Council and their disciples, including some of the mass communication media."[97]

Smith was laying full blame for the riots on the Citizens' Council. Her gloves had come off and things began to heat up.

Her next article to mention the riots at Ole Miss was published on Thursday, October 18, 1962. Smith laid the blame for the defiance on Governor Barnett but also put some of the blame on the parents of the state's young people.

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[96] *Lexington Advertiser,* October 4, 1962. Volume 125, Page 1.
[97] Ibid.

> It is not surprising that this has come to pass. These students have been reared I homes throughout the state which for the past eight years have heard a steady drum beat for defiance of the U.S. Supreme Court and the Federal government. It is nothing but natural that children follow in the footsteps of their fathers and mothers – and if parents want their children to behave themselves and not get hurt, then they should act responsibly themselves . . . so while the responsibility for making the decision to defy the orders of the Federal Court must be borne alone by Governor Ross Barnett, since his was the power by virtue of his office, we know that all of us had a hand in it to some degree. And if misery loves company, there's plenty of it to go around.[98]

The next issue's column was again focused on the white Citizens' Council and briefly mentioned the riots at Ole Miss and editor Ira Harkey, who was targeted by the Council. "The latest episode is in Pascagoula where Editor Ira Harkey wrote an editorial appealing for law and order in the county in the wake of the Ole Miss desegregation riots."[99] The Council held a meeting to put Harkey's newspaper out of business, a boycott.

In the final column examined in 1962, published on November 1, Smith again mentions the riots at Ole Miss. Smith was not afraid to speak against the Citizens' Council but so many other people were. She was the voice they did not have.

> Those few students at Ole Miss who continue to demonstrate so vocally are doing irreparable harm to themselves, their University and the State of Mississippi. Theoretically, they are the cream of the crop among our state's youth and they are acting like young hoodlums. It is too much, however, to expect the other students at the University to stand up to these young punks in school when most of their own parents are afraid to take a stand at home. Where is this liberty and freedom we are supposed to have in the United States? Is it only for the "loud mouths" and those who follow the Citizens' Council line?[100]

As much as the Citizens' Council tried to defy federal government orders, Smith would seek to deprive the Council of its stronghold on Mississippi and its citizens.

The next event examined in this content analysis is that of Medgar Evers' assassination on June 12, 1963. Because the event was not expected, it is not possible to compare Smith's opinion

[98] *Lexington Advertiser,* October 18, 1962. Volume 125, Page 1.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid.

before the event to what it was after, as she did not write about Evers in her column before *or* after the assassination. At the time, Smith's columns were largely focused on the Citizens' Council and possible integration at other Southern universities like that at the University of Alabama.

The columns examined in the four weeks before and four weeks after Evers' death are from May 16, 1963 to July 11, 1963. In the first column, published May 16, Smith writes about James Plemon Coleman of Ackerman, Mississippi, and his announcement as an official candidate for the Democratic Party's nomination as governor. There is a brief mention near the end of Smith's column about the investigation into the riots at Ole Miss following James Meredith's integration of the university but no specific mention of Evers.

In her May 23 column, Smith wrote about the tense racial conflicts in Mississippi and the surmounting tension surrounding the possible integration of another Southern university, the University of Alabama.

> We shall be glad when all of these racial conflicts are resolved and we people of the Deep South can go on to more important things; when all of us achieve some small measure of understanding as to what it is all about, at least become more willing to recognize that Negroes are people, that they, too have hopes and aspirations and dreams, the same as us. The South could be, and one day will be, the Promised Land in these United States. We only hope to live to see it.[101]

It is in 1963 that Smith would write the editorials that she later won the Pulitzer Prize for in 1964. It was her unflinching support for blacks and her courage to stand against the Citizens' Council that led to her win.

In the column published the week before Evers was murdered, published June 6, 1963, Smith writes about the Civil War. The column published in the edition of the paper that followed Evers' assassination addressed Norman Mott, a member of the Citizens' Council. There is no

[101] *Lexington Advertiser*, May 23, 1963. Volume 126, Page 1.

mention of Evers. Smith believed in following the letter of the law and so perhaps, she thought that the act, as so overt an ignorance of what is right and wrong, would be handled with care and the party responsible brought to justice. Or it could simply be that there was already enough speculating about who had murdered Evers and Smith did not see a connection between her favorite target, the Citizens' Council and Evers' death.

Most likely, there are later editorials or news article devoted to Evers' murder as the state searched to find the responsible party. In the week following Evers' death, Smith focused again on the Citizens' Council and their attack on her.

> It is shocking to know that some people I once held in respect and friendship would inspire or give support to an anonymous smear sheet based on deceit and lies. It is appalling to realize they have become so petty and warped in mind and heart they would allow themselves to be used in a malicious and vicious undertaking when the world we all live in is literally sitting on a time bomb.[102]

Smith continued,

> It's the same old story of a desperate attempt to hurt me and my newspapers, thereby hoping to get help or gain favor for their own lagging sheet. And it is part of a continuing conspiracy to rob the people of Holmes County of the only newspaper which prints the truth without fear or favor of any person or group, with special privilege for none – a newspaper truly dedicated to promoting the peace, harmony and prosperity of all Holmes County people, based on truth, honor and justice.[103]

Those are fighting words. Smith was not giving up without a fight. Though she did not mention Evers in her editorials in the month before and month after his assassination, Smith was by no means separated from the civil rights issue. She was writing the editorials that she later won for the Pulitzer for. Smith risked her life, her livelihood and her profession all in the name of standing up in the wake of oppression.

[102] *Lexington Advertiser*, June 20, 1963. Volume 126, Page 1.
[103] Ibid.

Smith's opinion never wavered on events like the Freedom Riders of 1961, James Meredith's integration of the University of Mississippi in 1962 and Medgar Evers' death in 1963, though Medgar Evers' death cannot be accurately analyzed because he was not mentioned in Smith's columns before or after his death. But the content analysis and close analysis of individual editorials has answered all three research questions proposed by this study.

Discussion

The content analysis has answered one of this study's three research questions. In the analysis, it is clear that Smith did mention two of the events, the Freedom Riders of 1961 and James Meredith's integration of the University of Mississippi in 1962. But Smith did not mention the assassination of Medgar Evers' in June 1963.

Smith was a big believer in following the letter of the law. It is possible that she did not mention Evers' assassination because it was such an overt ignorance of the law and she believed the man responsible would be punished without the help of her editorial. There was a clear right and wrong.

Evers' death was splashed across newspapers across the nation and a critical eye turned toward the South and Mississippi. The state's newspapers, like the *Clarion-Ledger* in Jackson were hard-pressed to find a way to spin Evers' death. Did a fellow African-American man kill "one of his own?" Not likely.

But the other two events, the Freedom Riders and James Meredith integrating Ole Miss, could be spun and twisted from two angles: one, it was time for change and two, the status quo was disrupted. As a newspaper woman, Smith felt her job was to tell the story as it truly happened without a segregationist slant. And that is just what she did. Others tried to attack

Meredith and the University of Mississippi for giving in to desegregation and the South for letting the Freedom Riders pass through their cities without turning them around.

In respect to the second research question, it is now possible to see if Smith's mentions of the events were positive or negative, or sometimes neutral. If the mention was positive or negative was determined by Smith's writing, her word choice and overall tone of the column. In some instances, it was quite clear what her feelings were about certain events and people.

When a specific event was mentioned, it was most often coded, 51.2 percent of the time, as neutral. In regards to the specific events examined by the content analysis, when the Freedom Riders were mentioned, it was somewhat positive (66 percent) or a neutral (33 percent), but overwhelmingly positive. Though she had little sympathy for the Freedom Riders, Smith supported their right to protest. But once they reached Jackson, the law was the law.

When James Meredith and the integration of the University of Mississippi were mentioned, including the riots, the mention was generally neutral at 53 percent. In other mentions, it was either somewhat negative (20 percent) or negative (6.7 percent). As Meredith's assassination was not mentioned in Smith's columns, it could not be coded as being positive or negative when mentioned.

The content analysis also examined the mention of specific people and if that was positive or negative, on a scale of one to five, with one being negative and five being positive. Though this is does not pertain to a specific event, the mention of a specific person or group, including the Freedom Riders and James Meredith, lends itself to a more balanced understanding of Smith's opinion.

Meredith was mentioned in a neutral way half the time and a somewhat negative way half the time. In closer inspection of the column, often times Meredith was mentioned alongside the Citizens' Council or Mississippi Governor Ross Barnett, for whom Smith had strong feelings of dislike. When Barnett was mentioned, it was most often in a somewhat negative way, at 36 percent. The Citizens' Council is the most mentioned group in the content analysis and is most often mentioned in a negative or somewhat negative way (32 percent). Therefore, it is most likely that the tone of the column does not reflect Smith's feelings for Meredith but rather, for the governor and the Council.

When the Freedom Riders are mentioned in Smith's column, the majority, or 75 percent of the time, it was a positive mention. The other time (25 percent) was a somewhat negative coding when the Freedom Riders were mentioned in the same column as Fidel Castro and Communism.

As for Evers, as he was not mentioned in Smith's column as an event, his assassination, or as a specific person, his mentions could not be coded as negative or positive.

In looking at events only, the answer to the second research question, if Smith did mention these events, it was positive or neutral. In her mentions of the Freedom Riders, Smith was generally somewhat positive. In her mentions of Meredith, her mentions remained neutral. Neither event was mentioned, in the majority, in a negative way. Thus, the conclusion is that Smith was most often neutral or positive in mentioning the Freedom Riders and James Meredith's integration of Ole Miss. No data is yielded for Medgar Evers' assassination.

As for question three, it too has been examined by the content analysis but also required a more extensive examination of individual columns.

Smith's hard fast opinion that the law is the law never wavered when it came to the Freedom Riders. Though she did not want the Freedom Riders to come to Mississippi, Smith respected that under the law, they had the right to ride integrated buses and to use integrated bus station facilities on the interstate, and that they should also be protected from mob violence. But once the Riders broke the Jackson laws, which were not the same as interstate laws, by using whites-only restrooms, Smith had no sympathy for them and commended their arrests.

Smith's opinion of the Freedom Riders did not change after they arrived in Mississippi.

In her columns leading up to James Meredith's enrollment at the University of Mississippi, Smith focused more on Governor Ross Barnett's attempt to circumvent a court order ordering his admission and less on Meredith. Her focus was also on the bigger picture and what the closing of the University of Mississippi, as threatened by Barnett, would mean for the future of the university, the future of other colleges and universities in the state and most importantly, the future of the young adults attending those institutions. Smith, a big believer in following the letter of the law, also believed that education was the answer to a lot of the state's problems. Barnett's defiance of a court order brought Smith's wrath down upon him, and in her column, she used harsh words like "suicide" to describe what the closing of the state colleges and universities would mean.

Though she had little sympathy for the arrested Freedom Riders, Smith had great sympathy for Meredith because he had gone through all the proper channels to gain admittance to the university and was being denied by the leader of the state. Governor Barnett would have rather seen the 13 members of the board arrested and go to jail than allow Meredith to enroll. Meredith broke no laws.

Smith's opinion of Meredith did not change once he arrived at the University of Mississippi and successfully enrolled the next day. Rather, Smith took umbrage with the students and adults and those who came from other parts of the state to protest Meredith's enrollment. Her columns also targeted the White Citizens' Council and Governor Ross Barnett.

The next event and final event examined in the content analysis is that of Medgar Evers' assassination on June 12, 1963. Because that event was not expected, it was not possible to compare Smith's opinion before the event to what it was after the event. Smith did not write about Evers in her column before or after his assassination during the time period in this study. At the time of his death, Smith's columns focused on the Citizens' Council and the possible integration of other Southern universities like the University of Alabama.

That there is no mention of Evers before his death does not seem all that unusual. Noting was amiss leading up his death so there is no reason that Smith would have talked about Evers. Smith was more focused on white leadership, whereas Evers was a leader for African Americans. Medgar Evers was shot and killed in his driveway on a Wednesday and the *Lexington Advertiser* was published the next day, on June 13. Evers was shot in the early morning hours of Thursday morning and it can be assumed that the paper had gone to press by that time. Though there is no mention of his death in Smith's editorial, it most likely was covered by the newspaper as a news story.

This study's three research questions have been answered. Of the three events, the Freedom Riders of 1961, James Meredith's integration of the University of Mississippi in 1962 and Medgar Evers' assassination in 1963, two of three events were mentioned in Smith's editorial column, "Through Hazel Eyes." When those events were mentioned in her columns, they were mentioned in either a somewhat positive way or a neutral way. Finally, Smith's

opinion did not waver after the two events mentioned in her columns from what it was prior to them. Evers' assassination could not be counted because there was no mention of Evers before his murder and the assassination was unexpected. Following his murder, Evers was not mentioned.

The results go hand-in-hand with Smith and the type of person she was and the type of newspaperwoman she was. Though Smith was not always a champion of African-American rights and to her own admittance was a segregationist, she transformed over time into a champion for civil rights because she saw the being broken. That Smith would mention two pivotal events in the Civil Rights Movement in somewhat positive and neutral ways and not negative, like other newspapers in Mississippi and the South at the time, set her apart from her fellow editors. That is always what drew the attention of the Holmes County Citizens' Council. The Council began to attack her and continued to attack her during her career. Yet despite that, Smith stood true to her beliefs and did not back down.

Smith earned the title of civil rights champion by sticking to her guns and never giving up. Her opinion of the two events in this study (Freedom Riders of 1961 and James Meredith's integration of Ole Miss in 1962) did not change after from what they were preceding the events. Smith was not wishy-washy. Some might say that her overall opinion changed from the time she was the young woman who took ownership of the *Advertiser* in 1943 and the one who won the 1964 Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing. That is not necessarily true. Hazel Brannon Smith did not change. The people *around* her changed. As more events transpired, Smith began to acknowledge the lawlessness that was taking place in the South. Smith was a champion, first, for following the law, and second, for African-American rights.

What drove Smith to become a champion for civil rights were the lawlessness state officials and groups like the Citizens' Council and the Ku Klux Klan exhibited when trying to maintain the ways of the "Old South." That was too much for Smith and she had to speak out.

That Smith's opinions of the events did not change from before to after should also be noted. Some people, likely the Citizens' Council, would have expected Smith to crumble under the pressure and to give in, admitting defeat by changing sides on the issues. But Smith did not and it was her "steadfast adherence to her editorial duty in the face of great pressure and opposition" that won her the 1964 Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusion and Summary

Born in Gadsden, Alabama, in 1914, Smith grew up privileged, never wanting for anything. She dreamed of having her own Tara one day, like in *Gone with the Wind.* From a young age, Smith's parents instilled in her a respect for all religions and races. Her interaction with the family's black housekeeper, Lulu Tuner, also solidified that respect.

Smith graduated from high school at 16 years old and delayed her college education for a few years. Her first job was at the *Etowah Observer* in Alabama City, Alabama. She wrote small news items for a dollar. In 1935, Smith graduated with a journalism degree from the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa. Wanting to purchase a newspaper, Smith immediately began to search for one for sale. She found one. The *Durant News* in Durant, Mississippi, a small town in Holmes County, was up for grabs. Smith bought the paper in August 1936 and thus truly began her career in journalism.

The next paper Smith added to her empire was the *Lexington Advertiser* in Lexington, Mississippi, in 1943. It is the *Advertiser* that Smith makes her biggest splash, later winning the 1964 Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing for her editorial column in the *Advertiser*, "Through Hazel Eyes."

At the time when Smith took ownership of the *Advertiser*, change was coming to the South. It would be still be 10 years until the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* but change was already a'comin'. Smith took hold of her best weapon, her editorial column, to call attention to what was happening in Lexington and the South.

There were many pivotal events in the Civil Rights Movement, including the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown* n 1954 and again in 1955, the Freedom Riders of 1961, James Meredith's integration of the University of Mississippi in 1962, Medgar Evers' assassination in 1963, the Freedom Summer of 1964 and Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination in 1968, to name a few.

This study chose to pick three events and to examine Smith's editorials regarding those three events: the Freedom Riders of 1961, James Meredith's integration of Ole Miss in 1962 and Medgar Evers' assassination in 1963.

At the beginning of this study, three research questions were posed: Did Hazel Brannon Smith mention the following events in her editorial column, "Through Hazel Eyes," before or after they occurred? James Meredith's integration of the University of Mississippi in 1962, Medgar Evers' assassination in 1963 and the Freedom Riders of 1964?

Research question two: If Smith did mention these events, was she positive or negative in her mention?

Research question three: In leading up to the events (excluding Evers' assassination), did Smith's opinion differ from what it was following the events?

All three questions have been answered. Smith mentioned two of the three events (Freedom Riders and James Meredith integrating Ole Miss) but not the third. Medgar Evers' assassination could not have been expected. In the months leading up to his murder, Evers was not mentioned in Smith's columns nor was Evers mentioned in the months following his death. For that event, no data could be analyzed.

When a specific event was mentioned, in general, it was most often mentioned in a neutral way (51.2 percent). When the Freedom Riders were mentioned, it was in a somewhat

positive way (66 percent) or a neutral way (33 percent). When James Meredith and the integration of Ole Miss were mentioned, including the riots, the mentions were generally neutral at 53 percent. As Medgar Evers' assassination was not mentioned in Smith's column, its mentioned could not be coded as positive, negative or neutral. For two of the three events, Smith's mention was somewhat positive or neutral.

For the third research question, more examination was required than a codebook could answer. Did Smith's opinion change following the events from what it was prior to them? The answer is no. Smith's opinions of the Freedom Riders and of James Meredith's integration did not change. She stuck to her beliefs, even under pressure from outside people and groups to fold.

Future research could expand on this study and examine more events in the Civil Rights Movement and compare them to Smith's editorials of the time. A larger content analysis could be conducted that looks at more events and over a longer period of time. The editorials Smith won the Pulitzer Prize for in 1964 are of special interest as well. One such editorial was included in this study but it would certainly be possible to include all editorials considered for her win in another study. Another possibility, which would greatly encompass the true scope of Smith's changes over time, would be to examine Smith's editorials from the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown* up to when Smith won the Pulitzer Prize. Examining every editorial column during that time, approximately a 10-year period, is time consuming but would yield fascinating results, no doubt. But more doable would be to pick an event during every year of that time period, 1954-1964, and examine Smith's editorials in the month prior to them and the month following them. That timeline could also be increased but at the very least, four weeks prior and for weeks following should be examined.

Research like this contributes to the overall body of knowledge that exists about Hazel Brannon Smith, her editorials and in the bigger picture, the Civil Rights Movement. People most often are intrigued by the singular (or multiple) people in history who chose to stand up for what they believed in. Hazel Brannon Smith was one such person and any efforts made to better understand her are worth researching.

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Appendix

HAZEL BRANNON SMITH PIVOTAL EVENTS CONTENT ANALYSIS CODESHEET

_____1. Your Initials

_____ 2. Date

_____ 3. Year

_____ 4. Are any specific events mentioned in the column? (0-no, 1-yes)

5. If any specific events are listed, list them:

_____

_____

_____

_____ 6. Was the event mentioned in a negative or positive way? (1-negative, 2-somewhat negative, 3-neutral, 4-somewhat positive, 5-positive)

_____ 7. Are any specific people or groups (Holmes County Citizens' Council, etc.) mentioned in the column? (0-no, 1-yes)

8. If any specific people or groups are listed, list them:

_____

_____

_____

_____ 9. Are the people or groups mentioned in a negative or positive way? (1-negative, 2-somewhat negative, 3-neutral, 4-somewhat positive, 5-positive)

_____ 10. Was there any language used that is specific to the time period (i.e, Negro, racist language)? (0-no, 1-yes)

11. If any specific language was used, list it:

_____

_____

_____

_____ 12. Were courtesy titles used? (0-no, 1-yes, 2-sometimes)

“Through Hazel Eyes” published May 11, 1961. Referenced on pages 41 and 42.

Through Hazel Eyes

By Hazel Brannon Smith

The world is now living in a new age — the Space Age.

There are many people who feel they are being left behind, so swiftly does the world move these days.

Certainly a feeling of inadequacy fills the average person who has not yet acclimated himself to living in the atomic age. And some are still harking back to horse and buggy days.

But the world is moving along — and America with it — with or without us individually or collectively.

We would like to see Mississippi move along also into a glorious future, taking advantage of all that modern science has to offer to develop our full potential as a state.

And especially we would like to see our human resources grow and be developed to the fullest extent possible — because people are the most important thing we have in Mississippi.

You can't have a state (or a community) without people — and too many of our people are leaving Mississippi. Almost without exception the people leaving are those who are the best trained and qualified to make a contribution to the general welfare of the state and its people.

If is time we realize this is a new day and age in which we live and we must adapt ourselves to it, one way or another, or be hopelessly lost.

We cannot stand still. We are either moving forward into the future, or we are slipping backward. This applies to a community as well as a state.

Certainly it is time for our leaders — from the Governor on down — to realize that times have changed and that we must, as a state and as a people, make some change with it.

The old hates and prejudices and "politics as usual" just won't suffice any more. The young men and women coming along today have no patience with the old guard that has dictated Mississippi affairs so long — which is for Mississippi a very good thing.

We can't find our way in the space age using horse and buggy known flight into outer space.

The world was watching this flight — which was made in the best American tradition, open and above board in full view of hundreds of people and millions on television.

Three hundred newsmen from countries throughout the world gathered at Cape Canaveral and saw this historic feat with their own eyes.

The significance of the public exhibition of America's progress in space exploration has not been lost on the watching world and the Soviets know it.

The story that should never have happened was also brought into public view this week — work stoppages and strikes, at Cape Canaveral that delayed the first manned rocket shot.

In the face of so many shots of the Cape that did not go as planned, the ones which were admitted failures due to malfunctioning of one kind or another, the work stoppages are hard to take by the average American citizen.

We have long felt that no person working for the government or on a vital project for the nation's defense should be allowed to engage in a strike that would cause a slowdown or stoppage of work. That opinion has been strengthened by what took place at the Cape. We believe the right to stop work on defense projects should be waived by any patriotic American worker. The right to resign permanently from a job, of course, gives the laborer his freedom without infringing upon the rights of other citizens or his country.

Americans are not used to coming in second in anything — and we don't want to get used to it.

But one of the marks of a great nation or a great people is confidence based upon security — that comes when you know your way is superior and will eventually prevail — even if temporarily you may take a second chair instead of the first.

A big man does not have to strut and make loud speeches to impress the world with his accomplishments. He does not flaunt his wealth and look

The I

Volume 124

MRS. ERIC NORQUIST, years, presents a rosewood ga at Allison's Wells. Mrs. Jinan club.

Garden Club

New Officers Installed At Luncheon Held Tuesday At Allison's

The Lexington Garden Club adopted a community-wide tree-planting and maintenance program this week designed to fill a local gap in beautification planning and development under the state community merit program.

In Lexington the Chamber of Commerce and the City sponsor the merit program and the beautification committee of the Lexington Chamber of Commerce is now making plans to bring the community up to standards prescribed in the merit program. The Garden Club project approved Tuesday will play an important part in the overall work of the committee.

The final meeting of the Garden Club was a luncheon held Tuesday at Allison's Wells.

we can't find our way in the space age using horse and buggy tactics and methods.

Our sagging morale as a nation and a people received a tremendous boost when America put a man in space.

Astronaut Alan B. Shepard, Jr. has a firm place in American history and the nation is proud of him and the other young men who volunteered for the hazardous pioneering assignment.

The fact that Russia got there "firstest with the mostest" does not dim one bit the lustre of the American achievement — and Shepard himself is the first one to give full credit to all of the people who made it possible for him to make the world's first accomplishments. He does not flaunt his wealth and look down his nose on people who do not have as much. More often, he is the nouveau riche guy in the neighborhood with a deep-seated inferiority complex who brags to cover up what he is, or to make up for many years spent on the wrong side of the railroad tracks.

The same thing applies to nations.

YARD-OF-THE-MONTH

Mrs. C. M. McDaniel's lovely yard has been declared the winner of the Yard-of-the-Month plaque presented monthly by the Lexington Garden Club. Everyone is invited to drive by and view this attractive home at 227 ine Street in Lexington.

Tuesday at Allison's Wells.

Mrs. Eric Norquist, retiring president, served as mistress of ceremonies and Mrs. R. M. Gwin gave the invocation.

Mrs. Parham H. Williams presented Mrs. Norquist and the new president, Mrs. J. B. East, and the luncheon committee chairman. Mrs. Harden Ervin, with beautiful corsages.

Gift Presented

Mrs. E. Cohen presented a beautiful white container to Mrs. Norquist on behalf of the club in recognition of her outstanding service for two years as president. Mrs. Cohen mentioned the appreciation of club members for the Garden-of-the-Month plaque which she inno-

"Through Hazel Eyes" published May 25, 1961. Referenced on page 42.

Through Hazel Eyes

By Hazel Brannon Smith

This week we honor the graduates of Lexington High School who will receive their diplomas Friday evening in the first commencement exercise to be held in the new W. B. Kenna auditorium.

The Rev. Frederick C. Fowler, pastor of the Lexington Presbyterian Church, delivered the inspirational baccalaureate sermon on Sunday in the traditional community service held at the First Baptist Church.

"God has created you and put you here on earth for a task," Mr. Fowler told the seniors and the large assemblage.

Using as his text "What Is That in Thine Hand?" the young minister urged the seniors to surrender their lives to God. He said the only permanent things we have are those we have given to God and get back from Him; that God calls each of us today to holy living, Christian testimony and service and to work in His vineyard.

He pointed to many great characters in the Bible and world history who earned their places because they surrendered what they had to God.

Each of us has in our hands our own life which we can use as we see fit, he said, and what we do with it depends upon the individual.

"God has created you for a purpose and only you can do the task He has selected for you.

"It is not 'what can I do?' but 'is what I have dedicated to God?' that counts," he said. "It may be only a song, a word, a smile, a peculiar way to reach a man. But the task given to each one, no other can do."

In the face of a threatened visit from the "freedom riders" Attorney General Joe Patterson went on television late Tuesday to urge Mississippi citizens to permit their local and state officials to handle the situation — in the event freedom riders do continue their ride to New Orleans through Jackson, as announced previously.

Gen. Patterson said that plans have been made by these officials to preserve the peace and all that is needed is the cooperation of its citizens.

We believe that cooperation should and will be forthcoming.

All sober-minded, intelligent people know that mob violence is not a solution to any problem and only adds additional and more serious problems. Irreparable damage is done to those participating, their community, state and nation. Mob action on our part turns the people of the nation and the world more solidly against us and inevitably more laws to contain us.

Public sentiment in the white community of the south is overwhelmingly against the extremists on both sides who have brought us to the present situation which will be resolved finally only by men and women of good will.

The freedom riders are a cross the South should not be called upon to bear — particularly at this time of world tension — but they are here and have the firmly established federal law and the might of the U. S. government solidly on their side.

If and when they come to Mississippi (and we had hoped they would not) they should be treated just like hundreds of other people of both races in interstate commerce who travel our state daily in peace and without fear — and sent on their way.

There is something utterly humiliating about the prospect of trading tractors for human lives with Fidel Castro.

Although American sympathies are humane and in complete accord with those who oppose the Cuba Communist dictator, it is nothing short of blackmail that he should be

(Continued on Page Eight)

Through Hazel Eyes

(Continued from Page One)

able to get anything from the American people or government.

Four Mississippi Congressmen have been denied postal patronage as a result of their support of the Independent Electors in the November election.

They are U. S. Reps. William Colmer, Jamie Whitten, Arthur Winstead and John Bell Williams.

Congressmen Frank Smith and Thomas Abernathy will continue to hold patronage rights inasmuch as they supported the Democratic ticket.

According to press releases the procedure to be followed in the districts of the four congressmen affected will be appointment of the person making the highest grade after taking competitive examinations.

The four state men are the only congressmen in the national body to be thus deprived.

This is no surprise, of course. Since patronage is dispensed by the party to the faithful it is understandable that a man who does not support his party's candidates cannot expect to share in its favors.

Your U. S. Savings Bonds are Shares in America. Series E Bonds grow in value each six months. Series H bring you an interest check twice a year.

"Through Hazel Eyes" published June 1, 1961 referenced on page 43.

Through Hazel Eyes

By Hazel Brannon Smith

Jackson's Mayor Allen C. Thompson handled himself very well on the Dave Garroway show Tuesday morning and all Mississippi was watching as Bill Ryan and Mr. Garroway questioned Mayor Thompson about the Jackson and Mississippi viewpoint on the "freedom riders."

Mayor Thompson made it plain the riders were arrested because they broke local (Jackson) laws based upon laws passed by the Mississippi Legislature—and said that officers of the law in Mississippi have no choice but to arrest people who violate our laws.

The Mayor also made it plain that "we do not believe in mob violence" and one had the idea he was talking for all Mississippians, white and Negro.

When one of the NBC newsmen questioned Mr. Thompson about the course Jackson would take when local and state law come in conflict with federal law, the answer was not as clear cut. Mr. Thompson just said: "We don't believe it will ever happen." The television audience got the impression Mayor Thompson fervently hopes that conflict will never come to pass.

The Mayor pointed hopefully to the fact that not one application for transfer to white schools has been filed by a Negro pupil as an indication that Negroes are perfectly satisfied with segregation in the "separate but equal" facilities.

Mayor Thompson described freedom riders as "trouble makers" and said if they wanted to test the segregation laws of Mississippi there is a way provided through the courts to do so—and indicated that incident-provoking action of the freedom riders should not be foisted upon any peaceable people.

It is not likely that Mayor Thompson convinced any of the visiting newsmen from out of state or his television audience throughout the country of the merit or morality of a legal, forced segregated society, such as we have in Mississippi and the South.

But we are certain he convinced them the white people and leadership of the South wants segregation continued and will do everything possible to maintain it.

The genial mayor also did a fine public relations job for Jackson and the entire state with the pictures of school and community improvements flashed to his nationwide television audience.

Not only that but Mr. Thompson took visiting newsmen on a conducted tour of the Capital City and showed them the splendid progress that has been made here.

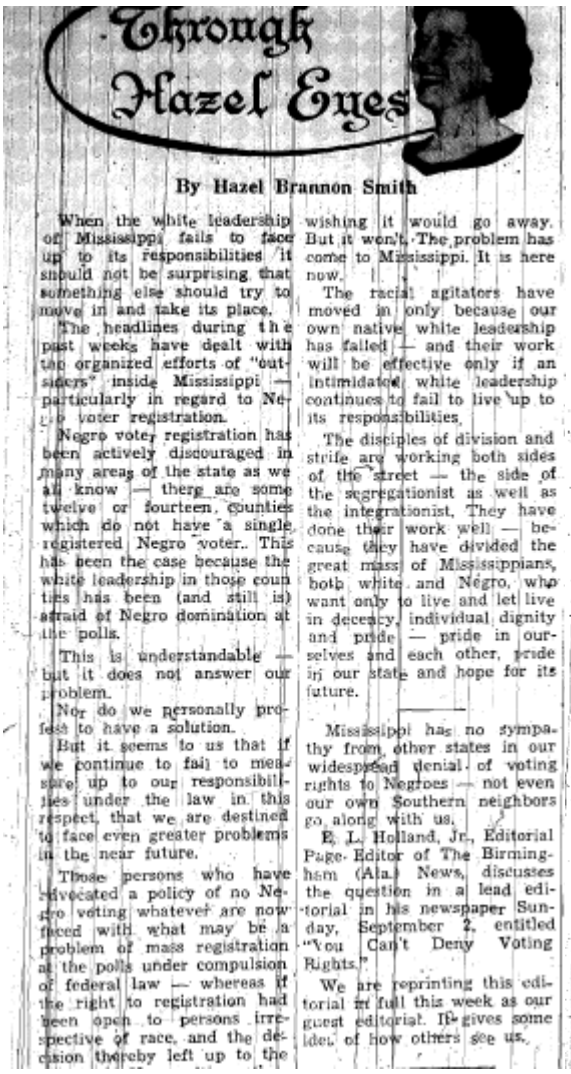
There's not a better booster of his city anywhere in America than Allen Thompson—and he deserves all of the plaudits he will undoubtedly get from thousands of friends in Jackson and elsewhere in the state.

If the mayor of every city in the state could be as "sold" on his own community as Allen Thompson is on Jackson, what a great state we would have!

LADIES DECORATE GRAVES

Last Tuesday, May 30 the ladies of the American Legion Auxiliary decorated the graves of soldiers.

"Through Hazel Eyes" published on September 6, 1962. Referenced on page 44.



Through Hazel Eyes

By Hazel Brannon Smith

When the white leadership of Mississippi fails to face up to its responsibilities it should not be surprising that something else should try to move in and take its place.

The headlines during the past weeks have dealt with the organized efforts of "outsiders" inside Mississippi — particularly in regard to Negro voter registration.

Negro voter registration has been actively discouraged in many areas of the state as we all know — there are some twelve or fourteen counties which do not have a single registered Negro voter. This has been the case because the white leadership in those counties has been (and still is) afraid of Negro domination at the polls.

This is understandable — but it does not answer our problem.

Nor do we personally profess to have a solution.

But it seems to us that if we continue to fail to measure up to our responsibilities under the law in this respect, that we are destined to face even greater problems in the near future.

Those persons who have advocated a policy of no Negro voting whatever are now faced with what may be a problem of mass registration at the polls under compulsion of federal law — whereas if the right to registration had been open to persons irrespective of race, and the decision thereby left up to the wishing it would go away. But it won't. The problem has come to Mississippi. It is here now.

The racial agitators have moved in only because our own native white leadership has failed — and their work will be effective only if an intimidated white leadership continues to fail to live up to its responsibilities.

The disciples of division and strife are working both sides of the street — the side of the segregationist as well as the integrationist. They have done their work well — because they have divided the great mass of Mississippians, both white and Negro, who want only to live and let live in decency, individual dignity and pride — pride in ourselves and each other, pride in our state and hope for its future.

Mississippi has no sympathy from other states in our widespread denial of voting rights to Negroes — not even our own Southern neighbors go along with us.

E. L. Holland, Jr., Editorial Page Editor of The Birmingham (Ala.) News, discusses the question in a lead editorial in his newspaper Sunday, September 2, entitled "You Can't Deny Voting Rights."

We are reprinting this editorial in full this week as our guest editorial. It gives some idea of how others see us.

there would be fewer persons inclined to exercise their "rights."

It's the same old story of a man determined to have what someone else would deny him.

It seems tragic to us that the situation should have ever deteriorated to such a degree in Mississippi.

But the responsible white leadership has been, and still is, virtually, immobilized because of real fear of the white Citizens Councils and what it believes the Councils can do.

And that fact largely accounts for the lack of intelligent, responsible leadership from the Governor, the Legislature, the press and the clergy.

All of us have been afraid to face up to what we know to be facts and say them out loud where anyone could hear — instead we have been burying our heads in the sand like ostriches. We have been largely ignoring the truth and

Library Closings Noted By Board; Open Saturdays

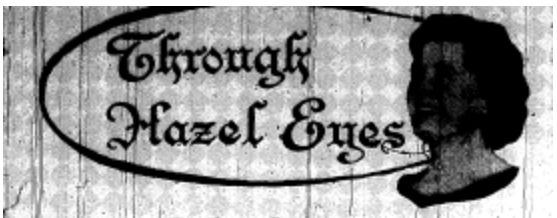
The Holmes County Library Board announces, that effective September 8, 1962, all full time, branches of the Holmes County Library System will be closed one day a week governed by the closing of the business establishments of their respective town. All libraries will be open on Saturday.

Mrs. J. K. Barwick, Sec'y.,
Holmes County Library
Board.

School In London

Mr. and Mrs. Melville E. Blake and five children sailed on the SS United States August 25th and are now in London where he will attend the world famed London School of Economics. Mr. Blake is the son of Mrs. M. E. Blake and the late Mr. Blake of Lexington.

"Through Hazel Eyes" published on September 20, 1961. Referenced on pages 45 and 46.



By Hazel Brannon Smith

The Civil War is being fought all over again and Mississippi is the battleground. The time is now, this week.

The atmosphere we breathe today is almost identical to that read and studied about in history books and newspapers of that unhappy time when brother was arrayed against brother in a Lost Cause that set our beloved Southland and its people back more than one hundred years.

Actually we are only now beginning to fully recover from the ravages of that war which left us broke and starving.

Surely we should know better by now.

But today Mississippi is apparently taking off down a dead-end road in an irresponsible action that could close every state-owned college and university in our state and set us back another hundred years.

Persons who love this state and are devoted to its welfare, and that includes this writer, are heartsick that Governor Ross Barnett has chosen the path of defiance and resistance of a court order that must and will ultimately be obeyed — if we are to continue to have a system of state schools and colleges.

The power structure of the state, headed titularly at least by Governor Barnett, is making an allout effort to whip the people into a frenzy of support for a policy which has already been discredited and thrown out by the Supreme Court of the United States, the policy of interposition.

The proposition which Governor Barnett seeks now to uphold, the dominance of our state policy now in conflict with federal policy, was settled long ago in a war and as it is a part of the University; football season would end before it begins because the closed University could not field a football team.

Nor would it end here.

The injunctions issued by the courts in this mass suit were directed to the trustees and the University and to all the colleges of the state — which means if one college is closed it is just a question of time until the others are also closed.

This means that 20,000 or more college students in this state could be without a college to attend. It would affect students at Mississippi State University at Starkville, Mississippi State College for Women at Columbus; University of Southern Mississippi at Hattiesburg; Delta State College at Cleveland. It would also affect junior colleges of the state.

So there's a great deal more to this matter than going on an emotional binge with the Governor.

Mr. Barnett in his speech dramatically "suggested" that any defiance of federal court orders be charged to him and he would serve the jail sentence — but the cold truth is that the Governor is not a party to the suit, and it is the members of the Board of Trustees of Institutions of Higher Learning who would go to jail, not Governor Barnett.

Nor would their being jailed halt the admittance of Meredith to Ole Miss.

The fallacy of the "go, to jail" idea may well be demonstrated within the next few days in the Magnolia State.

The foregoing should give at least some idea of the magnitude of the questions to be decided by the state college board — and these questions tied long ago in a war and later in the courts.

Yet the Governors' friends and backers foolishly say "stand up and be counted!"

Stand up and be counted for what?

The clear question which faces the thirteen Mississippi citizens who compose the Board of Trustees of Institutions of Higher Learning is this:

"Shall we permit James Meredith, a Negro, to be enrolled at the University of Mississippi, as ordered by three courts? Or shall we defy the courts? Shall we obey the law, or defy it?"

This board is in an impossible position.

It has been ordered by three courts to admit Meredith — and if it does not then its members will be cited for contempt and undoubtedly fined and sentenced to jail. They would possibly languish in jail until they purged themselves of contempt by following the court order.

If the trustees follow the orders of the three courts and order Meredith admitted to the University, then Governor Barnett says he will close the University by state law to keep it from being integrated — the Legislature has clearly given him this power although the constitutionality of the law is in doubt.

Should the University be closed, then the Medical School would also be closed, board — and these questions should be faced up to by every citizen of the state.

Personally we favor keeping all of our schools and colleges open — to close them would mean suicide for the state, educationally, morally, economically and every other way.

Nor do we favor the trustees of the college board going to jail in a move that could be nothing more than a delaying gesture.

The sooner we come to realize this is a problem to be faced realistically and honestly, the better off we and our state will be.

Let's get this thing settled and go on about the business of building a great state wherein there is room and opportunity for everyone.

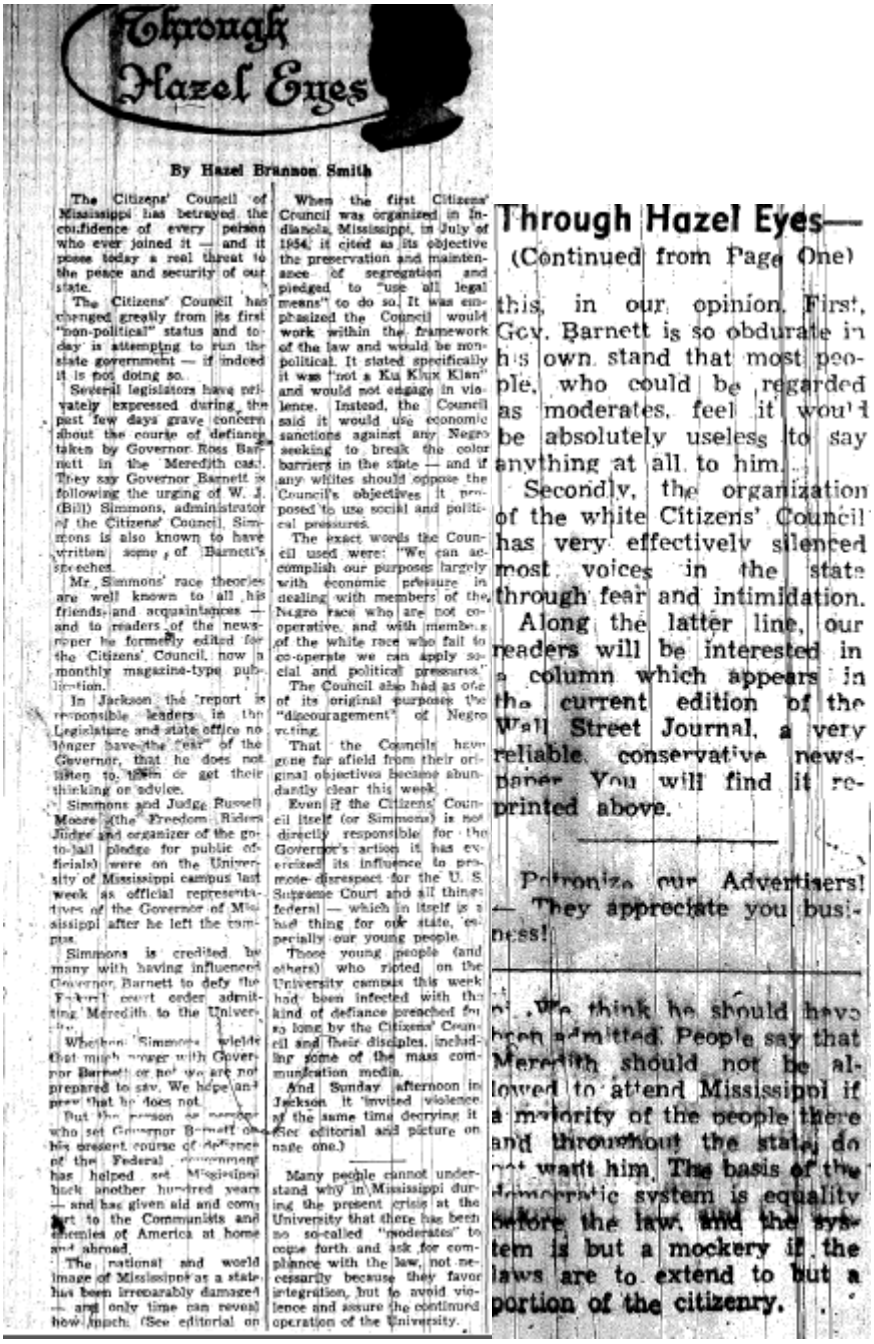
This could be Mississippi's shining hour.

Roxanne Sinclair Died Sunday Noon

Roxanne Sinclair, infant daughter of Dr. and Mrs. C. R. Sinclair, died at noon Sunday, September 16th at the Holmes County Community Hospital. She is survived by a twin brother, and four sisters, Wanda, Karon, Kathy and Rebecca.

Graveside services were held at 10 a. m. Monday at Odd Fellows Cemetery. The Rev. Crawford Ray officiated with Southern Funeral Home in charge of arrangements.

"Through Hazel Eyes" published on October 4, 1962. Referenced on pages 47 and 48.



Through Hazel Eyes

By Hazel Brannon Smith

The Citizens' Council of Mississippi has betrayed the confidence of every person who ever joined it — and it poses today a real threat to the peace and security of our state.

The Citizens' Council has changed greatly from its first "non-political" status and today is attempting to run the state government — if indeed it is not doing so.

Several legislators have privately expressed during the past few days grave concern about the course of defiance taken by Governor Ross Barnett in the Meredith case. They say Governor Barnett is following the urging of W. J. (Bill) Simmons, administrator of the Citizens' Council. Simmons is also known to have written some of Barnett's speeches.

Mr. Simmons' race theories are well known to all his friends and acquaintances — and to readers of the newspaper he formerly edited for the Citizens' Council, now a monthly magazine-type publication.

In Jackson the report is responsible leaders in the Legislature and state office no longer have the "ear" of the Governor, that he does not listen to them or get their thinking or advice.

Simmons and Judge Russell Moore (the "Freedom Riders Judge and organizer of the go-to-jail pledge for public officials) were on the University of Mississippi campus last week as official representatives of the Governor of Mississippi after he left the campus.

Simmons is credited by many with having influenced Governor Barnett to defy the Federal court order admitting Meredith to the University.

Whether Simmons wields that much power with Governor Barnett or not we are not prepared to say. We hope and pray that he does not.

But the person or persons who set Governor Barnett on his present course of defiance of the Federal government has helped set Mississippi back another hundred years — and has given aid and comfort to the Communists and enemies of America at home and abroad.

The national and world image of Mississippi as a state has been irreparably damaged — and only time can reveal how much. (See editorial on page one.)

When the first Citizens' Council was organized in Indianola, Mississippi, in July of 1954, it cited as its objective the preservation and maintenance of segregation and pledged to "use all legal means" to do so. It was emphasized the Council would work within the framework of the law and would be non-political. It stated specifically it was "not a Ku Klux Klan" and would not engage in violence. Instead, the Council said it would use economic sanctions against any Negro seeking to break the color barriers in the state — and if any whites should oppose the Council's objectives it proposed to use social and political pressures.

The exact words the Council used were: "We can accomplish our purposes largely with economic pressure in dealing with members of the Negro race who are not cooperative, and with members of the white race who fail to co-operate we can apply social and political pressures."

The Council also had as one of its original purposes the "discouragement" of Negro voting.

That the Councils have gone far afield from their original objectives became abundantly clear this week.

Even if the Citizens' Council itself (or Simmons) is not directly responsible for the Governor's action it has exercized its influence to promote disrespect for the U. S. Supreme Court and all things federal — which in itself is a bad thing for our state, especially our young people.

Those young people (and others) who rioted on the University campus this week had been infected with the kind of defiance preached for so long by the Citizens' Council and their disciples, including some of the mass communication media.

And Sunday afternoon in Jackson it invited violence at the same time decrying it. (See editorial and picture on page one.)

Many people cannot understand why in Mississippi during the present crisis at the University that there has been no so-called "moderates" to come forth and ask for compliance with the law, not necessarily because they favor integration, but to avoid violence and assure the continued operation of the University.

Through Hazel Eyes—

(Continued from Page One)

this, in our opinion. First, Gov. Barnett is so obdurate in his own stand that most people, who could be regarded as moderates, feel it would be absolutely useless to say anything at all to him.

Secondly, the organization of the white Citizens' Council has very effectively silenced most voices in the state through fear and intimidation.

Along the latter line, our readers will be interested in a column which appears in the current edition of the Wall Street Journal, a very reliable conservative newspaper. You will find it reprinted above.

Patronize our Advertisers! — They appreciate your business!

...We think he should have been admitted. People say that Meredith should not be allowed to attend Mississippi if a majority of the people there and throughout the state do not want him. The basis of the democratic system is equality before the law, and the system is but a mockery if the laws are to extend to but a portion of the citizenry.

“Through Hazel Eyes” published on October 18, 1962. Referenced on pages 48 and 49.

Through Hazel Eyes

By Hazel Brannon Smith

A great deal has been written on who and what is to blame for the riot at Ole Miss and the conduct since of its students.

It is not surprising that that has come to pass.

These students have been reared in homes throughout the state which for the past eight years have heard a steady drum beat for defiance of the U. S. Supreme Court and the Federal government.

It is nothing but natural that children follow in the footsteps of their fathers and mothers — and if parents want their children to behave themselves and not get hurt, then they should act responsibly themselves.

The newspapers these young people have read in many instances have backed up the stand of defiance of the courts of our land — and in their churches they have not received the religious instruction that would enable them to solve their problems and teach them not to hate.

Lawyers, judges and respected men of the profession have not spoken out and told the young people (and their elders) what the law is and where their course was bound to take them. Neither did their law-makers.

So while the responsibility for making the decision to defy the orders of the Federal Court must be borne alone by Governor Ross Barnett, since his was the power by virtue of his office, we know that all of us had a hand in it to some degree.

And if misery loves company, there's plenty of it to go around.

We invite the attention of our readers to an editorial (Oct. 10) from The Methodist Advocate, the official organ of Mississippi Methodists which goes into about 25,000 white Methodist homes in the state.

Titled "Who Is To Blame?", there is enough food for thought in it to last our readers for a week.

And if this isn't enough, then we invite your attention to our own editorial on "The Responsibility of a Free Press."

Of interest also to a large segment of our readers will be excerpts of editorials taken from the press at home and abroad on the Ole Miss desegregation crisis all on page two.

Readers of this newspaper won't have to be told the "pressure group" referred to in The Methodist Advocate is the Citizens' Council of Mississippi.

"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

Edmund Burke

This quotation is as true today as it was nearly two hundred years ago when Burke said it.

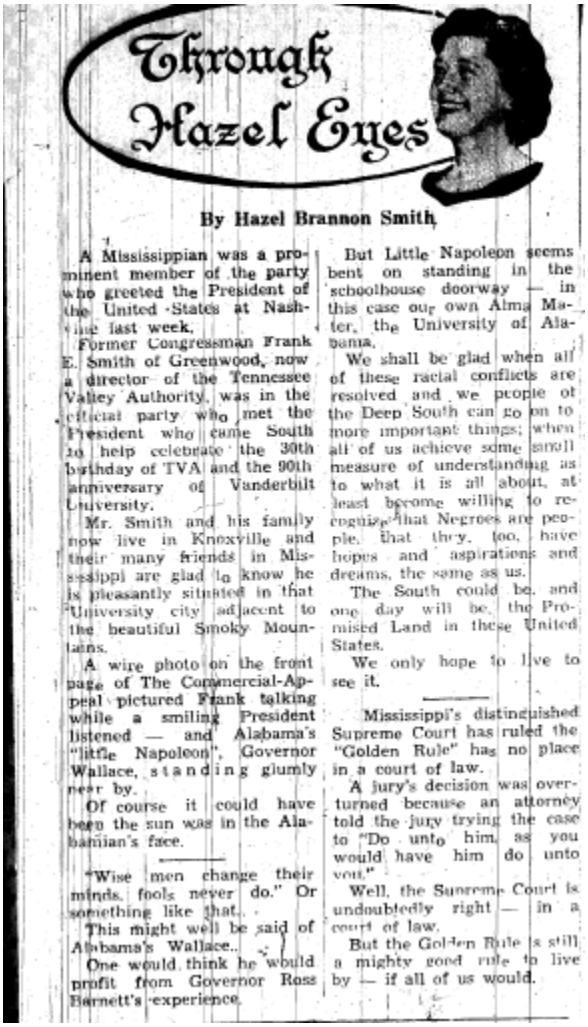
If the state of Mississippi is to survive as a state of free people, if we are to continue to have freedom of speech, press and assembly, if we are to have freedom of conscience and religion, we had better start doing and speaking out now. This means you, dear reader.

It may be too late already.

Mississippi today is being ruled by a dictatorship of the professional leaders of the Citizens' Council in Jackson working through Governor Barnett — and anyone who gets in their way way they try to destroy.

Only the people can stop it and we are confident they eventually will.

"Through Hazel Eyes" published on May 23, 1963. Referenced on page 50.



Through Hazel Eyes

By Hazel Brannon Smith

A Mississippian was a prominent member of the party who greeted the President of the United States at Nashville last week.

Former Congressman Frank E. Smith of Greenwood, now a director of the Tennessee Valley Authority, was in the official party who met the President who came South to help celebrate the 30th birthday of TVA and the 90th anniversary of Vanderbilt University.

Mr. Smith and his family now live in Knoxville and their many friends in Mississippi are glad to know he is pleasantly situated in that University city adjacent to the beautiful Smoky Mountains.

A wire photo on the front page of The Commercial-Appeal pictured Frank talking while a smiling President listened — and Alabama's "little Napoleon", Governor Wallace, standing glumly near by.

Of course it could have been the sun was in the Alabamian's face.

"Wise men change their minds, fools never do." Or something like that.

This might well be said of Alabama's Wallace.

One would think he would profit from Governor Ross Barnett's experience.

But Little Napoleon seems bent on standing in the schoolhouse doorway — in this case our own Alma Mater, the University of Alabama.

We shall be glad when all of these racial conflicts are resolved and we people of the Deep South can go on to more important things; when all of us achieve some small measure of understanding as to what it is all about, at least become willing to recognize that Negroes are people, that they, too, have hopes and aspirations and dreams, the same as us.

The South could be, and one day will be, the Promised Land in these United States.

We only hope to live to see it.

Mississippi's distinguished Supreme Court has ruled the "Golden Rule" has no place in a court of law.

A jury's decision was overturned because an attorney told the jury trying the case to "Do unto him as you would have him do unto you."

Well, the Supreme Court is undoubtedly right — in a court of law.

But the Golden Rule is still a mighty good rule to live by — if all of us would.

"Through Hazel Eyes" published on June 20, 1963. Referenced on page 51.

Through Hazel Eyes

By Hazel Brannon Smith

Personally, I am getting a little tired, just to put it mildly, of being the number one "whipping boy" for certain individuals and their organized hate group.

Many of my friends are tired of it too.

And mad enough to do something about it.

It is shocking to know that some people I once held in respect and friendship would inspire or give support to an anonymous smear sheet based on deceit and lies. It is appalling to realize they have become so petty and warped in mind and heart they would allow themselves to be used in a malicious and vicious undertaking when the world we all live in is literally sitting on a time bomb.

While their action is irresponsible and indefensible from any decent or human standpoint, their purpose is very clear, not only to me but to every fair-minded person.

It's the same old story of a desperate attempt to hurt me and my newspapers, thereby hoping to get help or gain favor for their own lagging sheet.

And it is a part of a continuing conspiracy to rob the people of Holmes County of the only newspaper which prints the truth without fear or favor of any person or group, with special privilege for none — a newspaper truly dedicated to promoting the peace, harmony and prosperity of all Holmes County people, based on truth, honor and justice.

That some few people of Holmes County do not want the truth printed and will go to great lengths to kill it, I am now forced reluctantly to admit.

I should like to remind one and all: this is a newspaper and I am a newspaper woman — and I go, and shall continue to go, anywhere I choose to get the background, knowledge and facts I need to serve you as reporter, editor and publisher, to try to keep the readers of my newspapers informed.

There should be no need of my saying this but I shall, anyway: my enemies, who are circulating the current smear sheet (and which is this, the third, fourth, fifth?) against me well know, even as my friends, that I am not leading the integration movement in Mississippi, nor conniving with anyone who is. This is a fact completely contrary to the impression gained from the false and libelous sheet being distributed by local members of the Citizens' Council, (who just happen to be backers of the Holmes County Herald) and mailed out by the Citizens' Council headquarters office at 315 Howard Street, Greenwood, Mississippi.

Why was I singled out for this special attack by the Citizens' Council from among some forty newsmen and newswomen who have covered mass demonstrations and meetings in Jackson? Men and women of newspaper, television and radio, not only from Jackson and Mississippi, but throughout the United States and even abroad?

Why did the Citizens' Council not picture the editor of the Meridian Star, or a representative from the Jackson Daily News or Clarion-Ledger, the New York Times or Herald Tribune, a London, England newspaperwoman, to whom I happened to be talking; or Newsweek magazine, or perhaps NBC or CBS national TV men, or one of the staff members of the two Jackson television stations?

They were all there at the same time — all on the front rows in the church and standing along the wall. I was fortunate in crowding into a seat. Smitty stood for the entire meeting, along

(Continued on Page Eight)

Through Hazel Eyes

(Continued from Page O

with Jimmy Skewes, edi of the Meridian Star, I mig add.

But now I trust the pictu is clear to our readers a friends.

If you don't think you a personally affected by th dear reader, I suggest y read my editorial on pa two: "This Newspaper Pr tects Your Freedom."

One final word: I wou have preferred to ignore th latest attack on me, as have so many others, but t many friends have ask that I set the record straigh

And that I have done.

Bryant Horne, popula Jackson city official, is pi tured in the July issue o Flower Grower, now on sal

Mr. Horne, past presider of the Men's Garden Club o America, recently presente a commendation to Presiden and Mrs. John F. Kennedy for inspiring the beautifu new Rose Garden at th White House. The award wa accepted for the first family by Irvin M. Williams, Na tional Park Service horticul turist in charge of the gar den.

Currently Mr. Horne i chairman of the Advisory Board of the Men's Garden Clubs.

It is interesting to know that in the August edition of this magazine there will be an article on the new rose garden at the White House which has been completely redesigned and replanted.

Ceremonies of various kinds are held in the garden and visitors from many foreign countries are greeted here.

At the time the award was made, April 19, spring bulbs and plants and dwarf crab apple trees were blooming in profusion and the scene was described as "spectacularly beautiful."

Four candidates for Post No. 5 of Hinds County in the Mississippi Legislature appeared on WLBT last week in a public affairs program that turned out to be little more than a vendetta against the Kennedy administration.

The one candidate for the post who did not appear on the program, Mrs. Virginia Potts (whom we do not happen to know), apparently showed good judgment in having another engagement.

Among the questions asked the candidates was did they favor the Liberty Amendment; Federal aid to education; prescribed testing of school children on "citizenship" factors; the situation in Cuba (how they would alter it); the difference between Rockefeller and Kennedy; their position on the Unpledged Electors which is more important, domestic or foreign relations; would they favor re-evaluation of the welfare rules on what constitutes a "needy person"; how they would evaluate the situation at Tougaloo.

What authority these persons could assume on the foregoing matters if elected to the Mississippi Legislature, remains obscure, at least to us.

Perhaps they could have a say-so in the field to change or maintain the present arrangement on liquor; taken integration; making the Board of Institutions for higher Learning a constitutional board; less Federal money coming into the state (all favored cutting it down); integration of schools or close them (on which most said they would take a mandate from the people.) All of these were also asked.

The candidates who did appear were Mrs. Charles M. Hills, wife of the Clarion-Ledger columnist; Ben Johnson, Billy McKinley and Henry Thomas.

VITA

Education and Credentials

Bachelor of Arts, Journalism, The University of Mississippi, University, MS, August 2012.