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The Journal of Mississippi History

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COVER IMAGE—Bob Moses in Jackson, circa 1962. Courtesy of Wisconsin Historical Society, Joanne Grant, Bob Moses, Weekly Guardian Associates (Firm): Guardian records, 1934-1993 (bulk 1948-1992), Image ID: 72663. Viewed online at <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM72663>.

ERRATUM

In Douglas Lewis's article, "The Design and Dating of the Thomas Batchelor House at Beech Grove Plantation in Amite County" (Volume LXXXII, No. 3 and No. 4, Spring/Summer 2020), Figure 1 on page 144 should have included a credit line "© Don Norris" to be appended to the caption of the image. The editors apologize for this oversight.

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Introduction

This special edition had its origins in a conversation with Katie Blount, director of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) and editor-in-chief of this journal, about Bob Moses's presentation in the Medgar Wiley Evers Lecture Series on June 2, 2014. She was so impressed with Moses's outline of Mississippi's history that she felt that it should be published in the *Journal of Mississippi History*. We later conceived the idea of using it as the lead article in a special issue in which scholars would review the status of the state's historiography. Moses challenged Mississippians to adopt an inclusive view of the state's past relying on his experience as a major agent of change during the Civil Rights Movement. His lecture illustrates the necessity of rethinking and rewriting our history. I have edited the original for this special edition, and Moses approved the version published here. Moses was welcomed by then MDAH director H. T. Holmes and introduced by civil rights veteran Leslie-Burl McLemore.

Originally, we intended to publish articles covering the entire historiography of Mississippi, but illness and other impediments among the authors left us with the three contained in this special edition. Tim Smith surveys the changed landscape of Civil War scholarship. Nicholas Lemann has allowed us to publish a lecture that he gave at the Old Capitol on February 7, 2017, which challenges Mississippians to rethink the treatment of Reconstruction. Again, this lecture was one that Blount felt should appear in the *Journal of Mississippi History* because it invites Mississippians to reassess the state's past. Finally, George Lewis covers the third most tumultuous period in the state's history from the end of the Second World War to 1970. We have been fortunate in the articles available for this special issue because they deal with the most controversial periods of our history.

Dennis J. Mitchell

Editor

Journal of Mississippi History

Medgar Wiley Evers Lecture on June 2, 2014

by Bob Moses

Thank you. So Les [Leslie-Burl McLemore] has made me change my talk. There is one person that we should all acknowledge here. There was one Black doctor in southwest Mississippi. And when I was attacked in Liberty, Dr. [James] Anderson sewed me up. And Doc got involved with the movement, and so they drafted him and sent him out to the army. Dr. Anderson. [applause] So one of the things about the movement in Mississippi was, I think of it in one way as a guerilla struggle that we were involved in and you know, for a guerilla struggle, you need a base. You need a local population that you disappear into and from which you do whatever your operations are. Doc was part of that base. And he still is, so when I come to Mississippi, I call up Selena, his wife, at the last minute and say, "I'm coming in." So it's my home.

During the sixties—it was the only time in my life really—where I could get in a car anytime day or night and hit the road and knock on a door. Someone was gonna let me in, give me a bed to sleep in, feed me, and watch my back. They were gonna sit up at night with the shotguns across their knees and make sure that we were protected. So that was the nature of the movement as I experienced it. You have to think about it as a guerilla struggle, where there was a local population, and Les has talked about some of the members of it. And certainly that local population was built on the work of the NAACP. Those were the insurgents that formed the base of the guerilla. The particular ones that were my fathers and uncles in that struggle were Amzie Moore, C. C. Bryant down in McComb, E. W. Steptoe out in Amite County. So that was the nature of the struggle.

What I would like us to do is think about the nature of the country we live in, and how that struggle relates to the country that we live in. I've been trying to have a picture—a story—in my mind about our country that helps me explain what's going on. What went on, but also what's going on as we sit here. It begins in 1787 with the Constitutional Convention. And I think of it as a story that's

BOB MOSES came to Mississippi in 1961 to organize voter registration efforts for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). He was the architect of the 1964 Freedom Summer Project and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. He delivered the Medgar Wiley Evers Lecture in Jackson on June 2, 2014.

divided into units of time that are three quarters of a century long. And we are celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of Freedom Summer, so last time I checked, fifty was still two-thirds of seventy-five.

And so we are two-thirds of our way into what I think of as a third constitutional unit of time. And what we need to ask ourselves is, how have we evolved? We're a young country, but how have we evolved around our fundamental constitutional stance? So for the first unit of time, from 1787 roughly down to the war of the constitutional people, we had two very different and very antagonistic constitutional concepts of constitutional personhood.

The first, we find in the preamble—the “We the People” statement—which says that the constitutional people, the “we the people,” ordained and established the constitution. They own it. But in Article 4, Section 2, Paragraph 3, we find a very different idea about constitution and people, that's the idea of constitutional property. Now it's a peculiar idea in that article there. It's the idea that we think a lot and talk a lot about states' rights, but what's in that article is not so much about the rights of states versus the federal government that is to be, but the rights of individuals to own property.

And it says that they have the right, if their property wants to own itself, to ask the federal government—really to demand—the federal government to go fetch it and bring it back to its own. Across state lines, did not matter what the jurisdiction of the state was, what was important was the right to own property, including property that might want to own itself. So we go that way, and Thomas Jefferson had a metaphor about that problem. What he said in a letter around 1821 or '23, was that “We have the wolf by the ear, and you can't hold on to it, but neither can we let it go.” So the constitutional people had their constitutional property by the ear, and they were desperately trying to hold on to it and desperately afraid of letting it go.

So we went that way for about three quarters of a century, and then the constitutional people had this huge falling out among themselves. And they slaughtered one another, 618,000—perhaps a million—casualties. And we came out of that with the understanding that we should no longer have constitutional property. The Thirteenth Amendment, that the idea of constitutional property was not an idea that the country could move forward with, and even Mississippi agreed belatedly—1990s—that the Thirteenth Amendment was real, and that we should not have constitutional property.

What we could not quite get ourselves to agree to was that the former constitutional property and their descendants should become constitutional people. The Fourteenth and the Fifteenth Amendments, and so today even today, the country is still grappling with the question of well, who are the constitutional people and what does it really mean to be a constitutional person? What happened after the war of the constitutional people over their constitutional property was we had a period known as Reconstruction. Mississippi had decided not to acknowledge the Fourteenth Amendment, and so President Grant sent Adelbert Ames, who had been a general in the Union Army, down to oversee a military administration for the State of Mississippi and other parts of the Deep South.

Then in 1870, we passed the Fifteenth Amendment, which gave constitutional people the right to vote. And I think it was 1873, but somewhere right in there the constitutional people of Mississippi put Adelbert Ames in as governor. Now it happened at that time that the majority of the eligible male voters—constitutional people male voters—were Black. And they voted in Adelbert Ames to be governor. Now there's a great deal of controversy about that period of American history and Mississippi history. It's being looked at through different lenses today. I'm not going to talk about that.

What I want to talk about, though, is how it changed. And one of the things about Mississippi is that Mississippi has throughout this long history set itself up as the place that knows best what the country should do. And it did so in 1875. Now what happened in Mississippi in 1875 began in Colfax, Louisiana, the year before when under this new voting law, Republicans and Democrats—Republicans in those days are Black, Democrats in those days are White. Stuff has changed. But they both had elected administrations, so there was a face off, and it ended up with violence. And the Democrats obliterated the Republicans. They got them together in one place and annihilated them.

And then they took that movement into Mississippi, first in Vicksburg. I think it was in the spring of 1875 and then all across the state, so that in the fall of 1875—and you can read about this in the Boutwell Report. Senator [George] Boutwell of Massachusetts, couple of thousand pages of the report about the reign of terror and violence of the Democrats murdering the Republicans and taking office in 1875. The idea being that Republicans shouldn't vote, and the Democrats should take over. Now, again, those Republicans are

Black, and the Democrats are White. But we should think of them as Democrats and Republicans. We should think of them as constitutional people who are trying to figure out, what does it mean to be a constitutional nation? What is the role of violence in such an enterprise?

The Percys were a family that was central to the evolution of how things happened in the South, and William Alexander Percy became in my story the respectable face of Democratic terror. And he arranged to be elected for just one term and took over the writing of the articles of impeachment against Adelbert Ames. And he was concerned with one policy issue—the money that had been allocated for the education of the freed slaves—that it should be used to build the railroad infrastructure that was needed to revive the economic arrangements in the Delta. And so sharecropping became the economic instrument after this Reconstruction.

Now remember 1876 is the year that the country couldn't decide through the actual legislative process—the voting process—who the president should be. And [President Ulysses] Grant later told your senator from Mississippi when he was asked, "Well, why didn't you send troops?" He said, "Well, I guess I was thinking more like the head of the Republican Party rather than the president of the United States." What had happened was that [Rutherford] Hayes was up for election for governor of Ohio in 1875, and the Republicans from Ohio sent a delegation to Grant because Ohio hadn't ratified the Fifteenth Amendment. And they said if you send troops to Mississippi, then Hayes will not be elected governor.

So Grant didn't send the troops. Hayes was elected governor. And then eventually in the big election of Hayes and Tilden, the compromise was made. Hayes should be president. The Republicans should get the presidency, and the Democrats should get the South. Well, that arrangement—the Democrats owning the South—lasted for another three-quarters of a century.

There was a young kid born the very summer that Freedom Summer took place, Douglas Blackmon, born in Leland, Mississippi, near Deer Creek where the Percys established their first plantation. Blackmon reached the first grade in 1970. That was the year Mississippi was forced to open—not just Mississippi but across the South—to open its schools. He says that his parents weren't of the wealth class, of the White wealth class, but they weren't poor. And he says that they had a sense that they should do what was right and that the integration of the public schools was the law. There is this issue in the South of the majesty, majesty of the law, right?

And so they sent Douglas to the Black school. That was 1970. When he hit the middle school, for some reason and he isn't sure what the reason was, he entered a contest and decided to write about Strike City. Well, Strike City happened in 1965 right after Freedom Summer, and workers on the plantation near Leland struck for more money—left—and set up a little town called Strike City. So this young, White middle schooler is thinking he's writing about ancient history. And when his mother and his teacher asked him to present his prize-winning essay to the Rotary Club, he finds out something different. Because one of the night riders who was shooting in Strike City back in the 1960s came after him and was furious.

So Doug went on to college, became a writer for the *Wall Street Journal*, spent time in Eastern Europe looking at the Iron Curtain, all of that, and asked himself a really fundamental question that I don't think anyone else asked. He said, "What would we find if we took a look at American corporations during the period when the country was industrializing in the same way as we have taken a look at German corporations around the Holocaust?" And so he wrote his first article about that. It appeared on the front page of the *Wall Street Journal*, and his life changed because he got hundreds and hundreds of letters from all over the country from people whose relatives had been incarcerated under vagabond laws.

So Francis Biddle was attorney general of the United States under the Roosevelt administration, and on December 12, 1941, he issued a circular to every state attorney general. And he advised them—this circular 3951, I think—he advised them that henceforth, the FBI should not prosecute peonage as vagrancy, but they should prosecute those cases as involuntary servitude and slavery. And what Blackmon had unearthed was documents all across the South, tens of thousands of documents, documenting how in the period after Reconstruction, right down to World War II, young Black men had been conscripted into involuntary servitude and slavery to build the industrial might of the country.

So that was what was going on in our second three-quarters of a century. Talking about the period from 1875, when Mississippi overthrows the Republican administration, and Democrats ruled the South, right down to World War II. Now why was Roosevelt concerned? Why did he ask his attorney general to look into this matter? Well, five days earlier Pearl Harbor happened, December 7, 1941. And Roosevelt knew now that he needed Black men, and he was afraid that the Japanese would propagandize Black soldiers and ask them, "Why are you over here? Why aren't you fighting

back where you live?" So, that's what Amzie Moore had told me.

When the sit-ins broke out, I was teaching school, Horace Mann School in New York, and the sit-ins grabbed me. I knew that I had to see what was happening. And so I went down to my Uncle Bill, my father's older brother, who was teaching at Hampton Institute in Hampton, Virginia. And the students at Hampton were sitting in at *Newport News*. I walked over with them, walked on the picket line while they sat in. And that evening Wyatt Tee Walker came down from Petersburg to give the mass meeting. Wyatt eventually became the executive director of SCLC [Southern Christian Leadership Conference]. And he announced that SCLC was going to set up an office in Harlem.

So I went to the organizing meeting for that office, and Bayard Rustin, who later organized the March on Washington, ran the meeting. Bayard organized the big fundraising event at the 369th Armory. My father was a janitor there. And Harry Belafonte and Sydney Poitier headlined the event. When it was over, I asked Bayard if I could come work for King. I thought he was still in Alabama, but Bayard sent me to Ella [Baker], who was the executive director of King's organization in Atlanta. And Jane Stembridge was a young, White volunteer who was running the SNCC [Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee] desk in Ella's office.

That spring Ella had organized the meeting at Shaw for the leaders of the sit-in movement. And that summer, the first group of leaders came through Atlanta and made plans to hold their first South-wide organizing event in the fall of 1960. And Jane had a problem because she didn't have names from the Deep South—Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. And so she asked Ella if she would work to give her contacts, and then she asked me if I would go scout for SNCC.

And so I took off on the Greyhound bus, hit Birmingham. Fred Shuttlesworth was there. Hit Clarksdale, Aaron Henry was there. And hit Cleveland, Mississippi, Amzie Moore. And it was Amzie who said what we should do. He says there's no sense coming in here to do public accommodations. What you need to do is the right to vote. And so we were part of the second big lurch forward. I think of our country as a country that lurches around this fundamental issue of who the constitutional people are, and what are their really constitutional obligations, as well as their constitutional privileges.

So I think of that Civil Rights Movement that I became part of—that opened up with the sit-ins for me—as the second big lurch forward. And if I ask myself, "Well, what did we accomplish?" The

period from 1875 down to World War II has come down to history as Jim Crow. Douglas Blackmon has a book. It's called *Slavery by Another Name*, the issue of rounding up young, Black men on charges of vagrancy and actually putting them into a form of slavery. So I think of Jim Crow as slavery by another name. And I think of that as the period from 1875 right down to the Civil Rights Movement.

And so we lurched forward. We got Jim Crow out of three distinct areas of the national life. We got it out of public accommodations. We got it out of the right to vote. And we got it out of the national Democratic Party. Fannie Lou Hamer. So I met Fannie Lou Hamer on August 31, 1962. Amzie had organized a school bus to bring people from Ruleville down to Indianola. And on the bus were mostly women, mostly older, but there was one woman who sat at the front and faced the back and began singing as the bus started. And it's like she knew every song that had ever been sung in any Black church. And she sang away fear. And that was Fannie Lou Hamer.

So when we organized the Freedom Democratic Party, which was the singular event of Freedom Summer in terms of actually unlocking the key to Mississippi, we had no idea that the key to Mississippi lay in the national Democratic Party. But if we had known our history better, if we had known what happened in 1875. If we had known about William Alexander Percy. And if we had understood the lock on the South that came through control of a mechanism of the Democratic Party, then perhaps we would have understood that, yes, that was where the key was. But when Fannie Lou Hamer appeared before the convention, and the thing about Mrs. Hamer was that she was incapable of being inauthentic, so that when she spoke, she spoke from the whole history of not just herself, but of the state which she loved so much. And so, her testimony was inescapable, and it forced the country to take a look at the Democratic Party. Freedom Summer forced the country to take a look at itself.

But so, we got Jim Crow out of those three areas: public accommodations, the right to vote, the National Democratic Party structure, but we didn't get it out of education. So the young people here and across the country who are from ten to forty years old—thirty years from now, you will be from forty to seventy years old. And you will be running this country. So one thing you need to think about now is, what kind of country do you want to run? And who will be the constitutional people in your country?

What we can say about our country is that in spite of itself, all across

these centuries, it has managed to expand the reach of its preamble. Not in the sense of what it says, but in the sense of what it does. The preamble establishes a class of people, the constitutional people, the people who ordain and establish the Constitution. Now you can think, "Well, that only happened once." And it was those people in 1787 at the Constitutional Convention who did that, and it's done. But you don't have to think that. You can think otherwise. You can think, I am a part of this "We the People," and I take on personal responsibility for constitutional personhood.

Now there's a lot of talk about personal responsibility in this country, but we need to talk about who takes on the personal responsibility for the constitutional personhood of people in this country, because that's how I think about the movement.

So when we began, White male property owners were the constitutional people in this country, and over the centuries we've managed to expand the reach. White male, freed slaves, women, different categories of adults. Your job—the young people, ten to forty years old—you got to think, do young people deserve constitutional status? Do young people deserve constitutional status for purposes of their education?

I would like for you to do one thing with me. Let's try to say the preamble together. Those who know it can say it with me as I say it, and then those can repeat it after us. Okay, and as you say it, think about what it does. It establishes a class of constitutional people, and there's nothing stopping us as a country from continuing to think that our constitutional job is to keep working what the preamble allows us to do. No one can stop us from doing that.

"We the People of the United States in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice..." Okay so let's do it this way. I will say it. Anyone wants to say it with me, but then allow everyone else to say it after. All right. "We the people of the United States [audience repeats], in order to form a more perfect Union [audience], establish justice [audience], insure domestic tranquility [audience], provide for the common defense [audience], promote the general welfare [audience], and secure the blessings of liberty [audience] to ourselves and our posterity [audience], do ordain and establish [audience], this Constitution [audience] for the United States of America [audience]." It didn't say, "We the president," there was none. It didn't say, "We the Congress" or "We the Supreme Court." They hadn't been established. And note it did not say, "We the citizens of the several states." It could have, and if it had, we would be a very different nation. It simply said, "We the People." Thank you. [applause]

Change Over Time: Mississippi's Civil War Historiography

by Timothy B. Smith

There are few larger names in Civil War history than Vicksburg. Often conjoined with Gettysburg because of timing and a competitor for “most important” status among serious Civil War historians and buffs, the Mississippi town’s significance to the war is unquestioned. There, a Confederate army ceased to exist. The Mississippi River flowed again “unvexed to the sea,” as Abraham Lincoln described it. And Ulysses S. Grant secured his place among legendary American generals, and in all of history as well.¹

That Vicksburg sat in Mississippi created for that state an obvious importance, but Vicksburg is certainly not the state’s only important locale from the Civil War. Many other battles took place within Mississippi’s borders, serious affairs such as a siege and then a battle at Corinth as well as the precursors to the fighting at Vicksburg itself, including Port Gibson and Champion Hill. Smaller affairs such as Iuka, Tupelo, and Raymond were also significant. The Meridian Campaign, while less bloody and more strategic in nature, was a practice field for William T. Sherman’s later total war “March to the Sea.” Other actions in the Magnolia State have become particularly famous in popular history, such as Brices Cross Roads because of Nathan Bedford Forrest’s fame and Grierson’s Raid because of the 1959 John Wayne movie, *The Horse Soldiers*.²

Mississippi’s Civil War experience was not just on the battlefield, however. The state was second to secede, paving the way for others to follow South Carolina. That the Mississippi River bordered the state for

¹ Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 2005), 533; Edwin C. Bearss and J. Parker Hills, *Receding Tide: Vicksburg and Gettysburg, The Campaigns That Changed the Civil War* (Washington DC: National Geographic, 2010).

² Michael B. Ballard, *The Civil War in Mississippi: Major Campaigns and Battles* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2011).

TIMOTHY B. SMITH teaches history at the University of Tennessee at Martin and is the author of a host of books covering Mississippi’s part in the Civil War including Mississippi in the Civil War: The Home Front and most recently The Siege of Vicksburg: Climax of the Campaign to Open the Mississippi River, May 23-July 4, 1863.

hundreds of miles brought economic importance, and the state's hundreds of thousands of slaves, who actually outnumbered the state's Whites in the 1860 census, had numerous social implications. Yet perhaps the largest contribution Mississippi made to the Civil War off the battlefield was that it sent the Confederacy its president, Jefferson Davis.³

Mississippi's role in the Civil War was extremely important because of geography, military events, personnel, and home front issues. While other states such as Virginia, Tennessee, or Missouri may have seen more fighting because of their locations on the border between the North and South, Mississippi played a vital role in the events from 1861 to 1865. It is consequently no wonder that a large literature has developed regarding the state's role in the Civil War. Yet, the way historians and writers have studied that period has changed dramatically over time.

Veteran Accounts

As would be expected of a state so much in the middle of Civil War events, writing on, about, and in relation to Mississippi's role in the war has been voluminous, and it began even during the war itself. The participants, whether Mississippians or not, wrote millions of words about the state and its role in the war, including many non-published primary sources that historians regularly use to this day. Many of these are fortunately preserved in archival repositories across the nation but most specifically in the state's major archives, including the special collections departments at the three largest universities in Hattiesburg, Oxford, and Starkville. The smaller colleges and universities across the state also contain a wealth of material, as do many local libraries and historical societies. Obviously, the most important repository of such material is in the Mississippi Department of Archives and History in Jackson.⁴

Historians studying the Civil War in Mississippi can find ample sources about the military action. Soldiers were frequent correspondents as well as diary and journal keepers throughout the conflict. A dizzying array of manuscripts from both soldiers who were from Mississippi and fighting elsewhere as well as Mississippians

³ Timothy B. Smith, *Mississippi in the Civil War: The Home Front* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2010); William C. Davis, *Jefferson Davis: The Man and His Hour, A Biography* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991).

⁴ For the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, visit their website: <http://www.mdah.ms.gov/>.

fighting within the state have survived, although the archives contain only a fraction of what was actually produced during the war. Likewise, soldiers from other states fighting in Mississippi left a similar treasure trove of information about actions within the state.⁵

The military accounts, as important as they are, represent only one part of the valuable information about the conflict. In order to understand more than the military events alone, it is necessary to understand the context. Civilian letters and diaries provide that unblemished view from the time, offering historians of social, economic, or political topics a rich glimpse into the affairs of the state and its people during these trying years. At the same time, surviving newspapers also provide a vital look into the thinking of the time as seen through the prism of the editors. While less useful on military subjects, newspapers do show the mindsets in Mississippi in the 1860s.⁶

While most existing contemporary literary production remains in manuscript form, a few of these sources have been published and offer easier access to an amazing amount of material. Throughout the years, publishers and journals have printed books or articles containing soldiers' and civilians' contemporary letters and diaries. However, the most important outlet for Civil War military related documents is the late nineteenth century publication of the war's reports, records, and correspondence in 128 volumes titled *War of the Rebellion: The Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* and the 31 volume *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*. Collected, organized, and published by the United States government, these series contain a staggering amount of records quickly available to researchers, although as would be expected, the coverage of Union reports and correspondence is more thorough than that of the Confederate, mainly because of destruction and the fact that toward the end of the war Confederates cared less about keeping records than sustaining their fledgling nation. Importantly, too, not all documents were located and published, and Broadfoot Publishing Company has more recently printed a one hundred volume *Supplement to the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*. All these sets combined

⁵ For manuscripts at MDAH, see <http://opac2.mdah.state.ms.us/phpmanus/search.php?referer=http://zed.mdah.state.ms.us>.

⁶ For newspapers at MDAH, see <http://opac2.mdah.state.ms.us/msnews1.php?referer=http://zed.mdah.state.ms.us>.

offer an important view of the war in general, including Mississippi's role.⁷

After the war, participants continued to write about their exploits and further produced numerous volumes and articles filled with anecdotes and stories of events in Mississippi. Foremost among these post-war memoirs and reminiscences were those of the major luminaries such as *The Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant* published in 1885 or Jefferson Davis's 1881 explanation of defeat, *The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government*. Regimental histories by the score began to appear even during the war but became a flood in the decades afterward, as did articles and essays that the public consumed in journals and publications such as *Century Magazine* (later *Battle and Leaders*), *National Tribune*, *Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States*, *Southern Historical Society Papers*, *Southern Bivouac*, and *Confederate Veteran*. Many of these publications were tied to veterans' organizations, whether national in scope or simply publication of local community-based groups. Auxiliary organizations such as the United Daughters of the Confederacy also put out their own publications.⁸

Mississippians themselves also produced plenty of these post-war memoirs and published them in varying levels. Many were never published, but took their place as primary, if somewhat less contemporary, sources for study now housed in archives. Among the more famous post-war memoirs that were published are books such as Jefferson Davis's tomes as well as autobiographies by Mississippi Confederate generals Samuel G. French and Reuben Davis. A few civilian accounts also emerged, such as John H. Aughey's *The Iron Furnace: Or, Slavery and Secession*, Thomas W. Caskey's *Caskey's Last Book: Containing an Autobiography Sketch of His Ministerial*

⁷ *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 vols. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1880-1901); *The Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*, 31 vols. (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1894-1922); *Supplement to the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 100 vols. (Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1994).

⁸ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant*, 2 vols. (New York: Charles L. Webster & Co., 1892); Jefferson Davis, *The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government*, 2 vols. (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1881); Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, eds., *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, Being For the Most Part Contributions By Union and Confederate Officers: Based upon "The Century" War Series*, 4 vols. (New York, 1884-1887). For a modern, edited version of Grant's memoirs, see John F. Marszalek, David F. Nolen, and Louie P. Gallo, eds., *The Personal memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant: The Complete Annotated Edition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017).

Life, With Essays and Sermons, and Mary Ann Loughborough's *My Cave Life in Vicksburg: With Letters of Trial and Travel*.⁹

In a more memory-related effort, veterans also placed numerous monuments on courthouse lawns, public spaces, and battlefields throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and Mississippians were no different. Almost every county courthouse in the state has a Confederate monument, and other Mississippians participated in the establishment of the various national military parks such as those at Gettysburg or Shiloh. The monuments placed in them, though not as numerous as those by the Federal veterans, were nevertheless awe-inspiring, such as the Mississippi monument in the Vicksburg National Military Park, dedicated in 1909.¹⁰

As a result of all this literary and in some cases memorial effort, Mississippians and others produced a wide array of written accounts of their participation in the fighting in Mississippi and elsewhere. Yet, as contemporary diaries and letters or even later reminiscences and memoirs are by definition limited in scope and argument, these veterans were merely the first wave of the war's historiographical treatment. There was little if anything academic about these publications, not surprisingly, as professional academic historians did not even exist at the time. If there were any arguments such as the legality of secession or where the war was won or lost, these were part of the general movement that coincided with the contemporary rise of the Lost Cause myth. Southerners, Mississippians included, tried their best to explain away defeat in the war by focusing on overwhelming odds, the death of major leaders such as Stonewall Jackson or Albert Sidney Johnston, and

⁹ Samuel G. French, *Two Wars: An Autobiography of General Samuel G. French: Mexican War: War Between the States, A Diary: Reconstruction Period, His Experience: Incidents, Reminiscences, etc.* (Nashville: Confederate Veteran, 1901); Reuben Davis, *Recollections of Mississippi and Mississippians* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1890); John H. Aughey, *The Iron Furnace: Or, Slavery and Secession* (Philadelphia: William S. & Alfred Martien, 1863); Thomas W. Caskey, *Caskey's Last Book: Containing an Autobiography Sketch of His Ministerial Life, With Essays and Sermons* (Nashville: Messenger Publishing Co., 1896); Mary Ann Loughborough, *My Cave Life in Vicksburg: With Letters of Trial and Travel* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1864).

¹⁰ Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Timothy B. Smith, *The Golden Age of Battlefield Preservation: The Decade of the 1890s and the Establishment of America's First Five Military Parks* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2008); Michael W. Panhorst, *The Memorial Art and Architecture of Vicksburg National Military Park* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 2015).

even the effect of men such as James Longstreet who turned Republican after the war. Certainly, the monuments and not a few of the post-war reminiscences tried to explain why such hearty men as Mississippians were part of the only defeat Americans had ever experienced.¹¹

Early Academics

If the 1890s was a watershed time in Civil War memory when the White North and South began to reconcile through veterans reunions, military parks, and the patriotism of imperialism and the Spanish American War, it was also a major time of change for the study of history. It was during this decade that the first academically trained historians began to appear in America and produce more nuanced and thesis-driven studies. Among these early academic historians, the Civil War was no longer part of current events but in the realm of history, even if that history was partisan and still having an important impact on American life.¹²

More modern narrative histories of the Civil War and its campaigns began to appear during this time. Attempts at national level narrative histories of Mississippi campaigns also developed and for many years became the standard volumes on these events; the Scribner's series of books published in the 1880s covered many Mississippi Civil War topics such as Manning F. Force's *From Fort Henry to Corinth* and more importantly Francis V. Greene's *The Mississippi*, which covered the Vicksburg Campaign. Other larger works on the war itself fittingly covered events in Mississippi in great detail. A couple of Mississippians also tried to provide an overarching story, some with better success than others. John C. Rietti's *Military Annals of Mississippi: Military Organizations Which Entered the Service of the Confederate States of America from the State of Mississippi* was much less successful on this account than the Mississippi volume in the *Confederate Military History* series, Charles E. Hooker's *Mississippi*.¹³

Certainly, the rise of academic history affected Mississippi's Civil

¹¹ Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, The Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

¹² Smith, *The Golden Age of Battlefield Preservation*.

¹³ John C. Rietti, *Military Annals of Mississippi: Military Organizations Which Entered the Service of the Confederate States of America from the State of Mississippi* (1895); Charles E. Hooker, *Mississippi* (Atlanta: Confederate Publishing Company, 1899); Manning F. Force, *From Fort Henry to Corinth* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1881); Francis V. Greene, *The Mississippi* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1882).

War historiography. Academics with training as historians as well as others more involved in public history put their mark on the history of the state as well as on the Civil War, the two often combining in studies produced for readers who could not seem to get enough about what they and their fathers had done so many years ago. The newer academic movement in the 1890s and early twentieth century saw such new works specifically aimed at Mississippi's role in the war and its aftermath, books such as James W. Garner's 1901 *Reconstruction in Mississippi* making a major splash in the academic as well as popular communities.¹⁴

The rise of professional historians also had an impact in the more popular realm as well. The turn of the century saw the birth of many state archives, and Mississippi followed suit with the establishment of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History in 1902. Perhaps as important as the establishment of such a bureaucratic department was the appointment of the first bureaucrat to head the office, Dunbar Rowland. There was likely no more influential and important historian in Mississippi's history than Rowland, who literally built what today is the cornerstone of Mississippi's historical study.¹⁵

Yet, Rowland operated at a time when the older veterans' school of thought, which had not fully exited the stage as yet, still influenced this growing professionalism. Rowland himself was a son of a Confederate veteran, and he depended heavily in terms of Confederate military study on an actual veteran, James L. Power. Together, the two developed Mississippi's Civil War history into an extremely relevant part of the state's history, both by the collection and preservation of the state's war records (which thankfully are still available in the archives today) and the publication of historical works based on that collected information. Rowland himself produced a large number of books on Mississippi history, perhaps most famously the multivolume *History of Mississippi: Heart of the South*, as well as numerous biographical and encyclopedic volumes. Not

¹⁴ James Wilford Garner, *Reconstruction in Mississippi* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1902).

¹⁵ Ted Ownby and Charles Reagan Wilson, *The Mississippi Encyclopedia* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2017), 835-836, 1101. For more on Rowland, see Patricia Galloway, "Archives, Power, and History: Dunbar Rowland and the Beginning of the State Archives of Mississippi (1902-1936)," *The American Archivist* 69, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 2006): 79-116.

surprisingly, each was thoroughly influenced by the Lost Cause myth.¹⁶

Rowland's most lasting contribution to the state's Civil War historiography, however, was his inclusion in the state's 1908 statistical register of a major piece of work that has come to be known as "Military History of Mississippi." Although contained in a larger volume, the multi-hundred page report on the state's military history obviously contained small sections on the War of 1812 and Mexican-American War as well as the Spanish-American War, but the bulk of the text dealt with Mississippi's role in the Civil War. In a regiment by regiment and unit by unit synopsis of activities in the war, Rowland's chief body of military work quickly became the major source for information on regimental activities, and it has fortunately been reprinted at least twice since 1908 as a stand alone book.¹⁷

The emergence of a more professional realm of Civil War studies around this time also affected Mississippi in the development of a functioning state historical society and the publication of articles, known as the *Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society*. The war was obviously a major part of the state's history and thus it garnered a large portion of the coverage. Publications of diaries, letters, and reminiscences such as William Pitt Chambers's account of his service in the 46th Mississippi were major contributions of primary sources, while others flocked to write seminal local histories of important events. Unfortunately, the Mississippi Historical Society, originally founded in 1858 but reorganized in the 1890s, endured periods of dormancy throughout the decades. However, it has remained a strong organization in recent years, mainly due to the oversight of another of Mississippi's

¹⁶ Finding Aid for James L. Power and Family Papers, MDAH; Dunbar Rowland, *History of Mississippi: The Heart of the South*, 4 vols. (S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1925); Dunbar Rowland, *Mississippi; Comprising Sketches of Counties, Towns, Events, Institutions and Persons, Arranged in Cyclopedic Form*, 4 vols. (Atlanta: Southern Historical Printing Association, 1907).

¹⁷ Dunbar Rowland, *The Official and Statistical Register of the State of Mississippi, 1908* (Jackson: Secretary of State, 1908); Dunbar Rowland, *Military History of Mississippi, 1803-1898: Taken from the Official and Statistical Register of the State of Mississippi, 1908* (Spartanburg, SC: The Reprint Company, 1978); Dunbar Rowland and H. Grady Howell, Jr., *Military History of Mississippi: 1803-1898, Including a Listing of All Known Mississippi Confederate Military Units* (Madison, MS: Chickasaw Bayou Press, 2003).

most dedicated archives department directors, Elbert Hilliard.¹⁸

The rise of professional historians working on Civil War history continued to grow from its infancy in the 1890s and early 1900s to a full fledged genre by the 1930s and 1940s. Major historians such as Douglas Southall Freeman and journalists like Bruce Catton produced some of the most seminal works on the war such as the multivolume *Lee's Lieutenants* and *The Army of the Potomac*. Other scholars such as Bell Wiley, Ezra Warner, E. B. Long, and Allan Nevins wrote some of the most enduring and famous studies of the war. The rise of the university press movement aided such academic work, with many books dealing with Mississippi history appearing as a result, such as a John C. Pemberton biography and Jefferson Davis studies. Commercial presses also turned out new books on the war in Mississippi and its participants, with the state's own university press being established later, in 1970.¹⁹

More influential in terms of the academic study of Mississippi history, including its Civil War events, was the major development of a scholarly journal devoted to the state's history. The *Journal of Mississippi History* began publication in 1939 during a time when the Mississippi Historical Society was in flux. The *Journal*, however, has continually published articles and essays on the state's history, including the Civil War, by some of the foremost Civil War historians. Although publishing a large number of edited diaries and letters from the Civil War early on, the peer reviewed *Journal* has over time become much more academic in nature and today publishes a wonderful assortment of historical articles, including many on all aspects of the state's Civil War history.²⁰

The early academic school thus took the study of the state's Civil War participation to a new level, wherein professional historians began to produce specialized, sometimes peer reviewed books and articles that were up to academic standards accepted throughout the nation and

¹⁸ Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, 14 vols. (Oxford: Mississippi Historical Society, 1898-1914); William P. Chambers, "My Journal," in *Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Centenary Series*, 5 vols. (Jackson: Mississippi Historical Society, 1925), 5: 221-386.

¹⁹ Douglas Southall Freeman, *Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command*, 3 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942-1944); Bruce Catton, *The Army of the Potomac* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1951-1953); John C. Pemberton, *Pemberton: Defender of Vicksburg* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1942). For the University Press of Mississippi, see their website: <http://www.upress.state.ms.us/>.

²⁰ Ownby and Charles Reagan Wilson, *The Mississippi Encyclopedia*, 840. For the *Journal*, see their website: <http://www.mississippihistory.org/journal-mississippi-history>.

the world. Yet even in this academic milieu, the study of Mississippi's Civil War history was still very much tied to the old veterans' school of thought. A large number of letters, diaries, and reminiscences as well as partisan coverage of the war was still embedded with Lost Cause mentality, accepted segregation, and White supremacy. That would begin to change, as would Mississippi itself, with the coming of major social, economic, and political upheavals of the 1950s and 1960s.²¹

The New Left

The 1950s and 1960s were certainly a time of change in America, including everything from the counter culture and civil rights movement to the politics of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. This phenomenon did not even include the Cold War crises that could have ended the world. Such a time of change took place in the historical profession as well, with the rise of the "New Left" movement wherein historians changed their focus from the top-down, great men view of history to bottom-up, social examinations. Such a development affected the study of Mississippi's Civil War history. At the same time, however, a concurrent (and larger) thread of the same old great men history continued on a parallel path, creating a dual examination of the state's rich Civil War period throughout much of the latter half of the nineteenth century.²²

In terms of the continuation of the earlier professional historians' great men examinations, many battle studies and biographies of luminaries continued to appear in books and articles throughout the decades prior to the 1990s, including major works on Vicksburg by Edwin C. Bearss. His centennial era publications such as *Rebel Victory at Vicksburg* and *Decision in Mississippi* were deeply rooted in military aspects with little of the social, political, or economic realms included. Later works such as his *Forrest at Brice's Cross Roads* and especially his seminal three-volume *The Vicksburg Campaign* continued the pattern. Although Bearss explored little outside the military events in his major works in both book form and numerous articles in numerous journals, he nevertheless became the major face of Mississippi Civil War writing for decades. His wife Margie Riddle Bearss also became involved, authoring

²¹ David Farber, *The Age of Great Dreams: America in the 1960s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1994).

²² Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 417-468.

Sherman's Forgotten Campaign: The Meridian Expedition in 1987.²³

Other historians continued the great-man approach, most often through biographies. This era saw life examinations appear on numerous important Civil War Mississippians such as Robert W. Dubay's book on Governor John J. Pettus, James B. Murphy's writing about L. Q. C. Lamar, and Lillian A. Pereyra's study of James L. Alcorn. Military biographies of officers heavily involved in Mississippi also emerged, such as Michael B. Ballard's work on John C. Pemberton. Others produced regimental histories, such as those by Grady Howell.²⁴

While the standard manner of history continued to unfold, there was also an effort by historians to expand into more social, political, and economic realms. The process had actually begun as early as the 1930s and 1940s with major works on the common soldier by Bell I. Wiley and others, shifting some emphasis to a common man examination. The publication of the seminal *The Sable Arm: Negro Troops in the Union Army, 1861-1865* in 1956 by Dudley Taylor Cornish also paved the way for studies about Black soldiers in the Civil War. Yet, civilians, soldiers in the ranks, women, African Americans, and Native Americans rarely received much if any coverage in the standard works and even in many of the military-focused publications of this era.²⁵

If there were a burst of socially-influenced studies that emerged,

²³ Edwin C. Bearss, *Rebel Victory at Vicksburg* (Vicksburg: Vicksburg Centennial Commission, 1963); Edwin C. Bearss, *Decision in Mississippi: Mississippi's Important Role in the War Between the States* (Jackson: Mississippi Commission on the War Between the States, 1962); Edwin C. Bearss, *The Vicksburg Campaign*, 3 vols. (Dayton: Morningside, 1985); Edwin C. Bearss, *Forrest at Brice's Cross Roads and in North Mississippi in 1864* (Dayton: Morningside, 1979); Margie Riddle Bearss, *Sherman's Forgotten Campaign: The Meridian Expedition* (Baltimore: Gateway Press, 1987).

²⁴ Robert W. Dubay, *John Jones Pettus, Mississippi Fire-eater: His Life and Times, 1813-1867* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1975); James B. Murphy, *L. Q. C. Lamar: Pragmatic Patriot* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973); Lillian A. Pereyra, *James Lusk Alcorn: Persistent Whig* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1966); Michael B. Ballard, *Pemberton: The General Who Lost Vicksburg* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1991); H. Grady Howell, *Going to Meet the Yankees: A History of the "Bloody Sixth" Mississippi Infantry, C.S.A.* (Jackson: Chickasaw Bayou Press, 1981); H. Grady Howell, *To Live and Die in Dixie: A History of the Third Regiment Mississippi Volunteer Infantry, C.S.A.* (Jackson: Chickasaw Bayou Press, 1991).

²⁵ Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldier of the Confederacy* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, Co., 1943); Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, Co., 1952); Dudley Taylor Cornish, *The Sable Arm: Negro Troops in the Union Army, 1861-1865* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1956).

much of it centered around secession and the home front. While Percy L. Rainwater's *Mississippi: Storm Center of Secession* had been a precursor as far back as the late 1930s, other works appeared later such as William L. Barney's *The Secessionist Impulse: Alabama and Mississippi in 1860*. Civilian life in Mississippi also gained more attention, mainly through the efforts of Mississippi State University professor John K. Bettersworth. His *Confederate Mississippi: The People and Policies of a Cotton State in Wartime* set the stage a little earlier than the actual rise of the "New Left," appearing in 1943, and his subsequent works such as *Mississippi in the Confederacy: As They Saw It* (1961) and with James W. Silver their *Mississippi in the Confederacy: As Seen in Retrospect* (1961) brought a much more comprehensive examination of the state's wartime chaos.²⁶

Although there was a major emphasis emerging on civilians and even economics in this "New Left" effort, there were still many gaps left to be filled. Mainly because this field developed so close to the major social revolutions of the 1960s, it took a little time for the public social movements of the decade to enter academia, and even longer for them to take root in the popular mind of Americans. The continued dominance of military history as one of the major fields of history and the resulting work in that area was also an issue. In Mississippi specifically, a white-dominated populace reacting against the civil rights movement was similarly not very interested in new left-leaning academic studies. As a result, although some study of African Americans began to emerge in the 1970s and 1980s, it did not filter down into Mississippi's Civil War historiography for several more decades. The same was true of women's roles and activities in the war; the gains that began to be made in gender equality in the 1970s and 1980s only began to find expression in Mississippi Civil War historiography decades later. Still, the 1960s era was an important turning point in the state's Civil War study, broadening and expanding the knowledge of the wartime struggles of all

²⁶ Percy L. Rainwater, *Mississippi: Storm Center of Secession, 1856-1861* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1938); William Barney, *Secessionist Impulse: Alabama and Mississippi in 1860* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004); John K. Bettersworth, *Confederate Mississippi: The People and Policies of a Cotton State in Wartime* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1943); John K. Bettersworth and James W. Silver, *Mississippi in the Confederacy*, 2 vols. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1961).

Mississippians, not, as in the past, just the influential men who oversaw it.²⁷

New Military History

By the 1990s when the Civil War saw an upsurge in popularity mainly due to memory and media aspects (anniversaries, Ken Burns's *The Civil War*, the movie *Gettysburg*) rather than historiographical publishing, a new manner of exploring history began to take hold among Civil War historians as well. No longer were the studies simply military in nature with a few social studies thrown in at various times; now, in a school of thought dubbed the "New Military History," historians began to incorporate into their military studies such aspects as economic, political, and social effects, most significantly the inclusion of civilian and common soldier views of the fighting. In addition, numerous studies detached from tactical military analysis began to appear with regularity. While this took place across the board in Civil War history, it also had a profound effect on Mississippi Civil War historiography.²⁸

Military studies now began to be tinged heavily with contextual politics and economics, but more so with the common soldier's views as well as those of the civilians affected by the military operations. In fact, a renewed emphasis on publishing common soldiers' letters and diaries developed, examples being Robert G. Evans's *The 16th Mississippi Infantry: Civil War Letters and Reminiscences* and Michael B. Ballard and Thomas D. Cockrell's *A Mississippi Rebel in the Army of Northern Virginia: The Civil War Memoirs of Private David Holt*. Prime examples of more socialized military studies include Michael B. Ballard's *Vicksburg: The Campaign That Opened the Mississippi*, Buck T. Foster's *Sherman's Mississippi Campaign*, and Timothy B. Smith's *Corinth 1862: Siege, Battle, Occupation*. Pure military studies also began to give way to specific aspects of military operations, such as the geographical explanation of Vicksburg in Warren E. Grabau's *Ninety-Eight Days: A Geographer's View of the Vicksburg Campaign* and the engineering-focused *Engineering Victory: The*

²⁷ Timothy B. Smith, "Altogether Fitting and Proper": *Civil War Battlefield Preservation in History, Memory, and Policy, 1861-2015* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2017), 217-218.

²⁸ Ken Burns, *The Civil War* (Arlington, VA: PBS, 1990); Maris A. Vinovskis, "Have Social Historians Lost the Civil War? Some Preliminary Demographic Speculations," *The Journal of American History* 76, no. 1 (June 1989): 34-58.

Union Siege of Vicksburg by Justin Solonick. The war's memory also became a topic among historians with books and articles dedicated to examination of the establishment of Vicksburg National Military Park.²⁹

Yet much of Mississippi's Civil War historiography since the 1990s has focused on non-battlefield aspects. A large portion of that Mississippi-focused study has come through the medium of the *Journal of Mississippi History*, which rarely if ever publishes pure military studies any longer, and when it does the articles are deemed valuable because of the common soldier-level aspects. Notable exceptions include two recent editions of the *Journal* that focused on the war in Mississippi, edited by Michael B. Ballard, and Ulysses S. Grant in Mississippi, edited by John F. Marszalek. Even in these, however, much social history emerged instead of pure battle history.³⁰

Rather, numerous articles have appeared in the pages of the journal on all aspects of social topics from Native Americans in the war to women on the home front to Unionism. By far, however, the major area of examination in recent issues of the *Journal* has been focused on the state's slave population and the effect the war had on them as well as the effect they had on the war. A survey of recent titles such as Ben E. Bailey's "Music in Slave Era Mississippi," Nik Ribianszky's "She Appeared to be Mistress of Her Own Actions, Free From the Control of Anyone': Property-Holding Free Women of Color in Natchez, Mississippi, 1779-1865," and David Slay's "Abraham Lincoln and the United States Colored Troops of Mississippi" illustrate well the broadening horizons of the *Journal* in recent years. The *Journal* has likewise published numerous

²⁹ Robert G. Evans, ed., *The 16th Mississippi Infantry: Civil War Letters and Reminiscences* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2002); Michael B. Ballard and Thomas D. Cockrell, eds., *A Mississippi Rebel in the Army of Northern Virginia: The Civil War Memoirs of Private David Holt* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001); Michael B. Ballard, *Vicksburg: The Campaign that Opened the Mississippi* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Buck T. Foster's *Sherman's Mississippi Campaign* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006); Timothy B. Smith, *Corinth 1862: Siege, Battle, Occupation* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2012); Warren E. Grabau, *Ninety-Eight Days: A Geographer's View of the Vicksburg Campaign* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2000); Justin S. Solonick, *Engineering Victory: The Union Siege of Vicksburg* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2015); Terrence J. Winschel, *Triumph and Defeat: The Vicksburg Campaign* (Mason City, IA: Savas Publishing Company, 1999); Terrence J. Winschel, *Triumph and Defeat: The Vicksburg Campaign, Vol. 2*. (New York: Savas Beatie, 2006).

³⁰ Michael B. Ballard, ed., "Special Civil War Issue," 75, no. 4 (Winter 2013). John F. Marszalek, ed., "Special Grant In Mississippi Issue," 80, nos. 1 and 2 (Spring/Summer 2018).

other social articles such as Giselle Roberts's "Our Cause': Southern Women and Confederate Nationalism in Mississippi and Louisiana," James Taylor Carson's "Greenwood LeFlore: Southern Creole, Choctaw Chief," Rebecca M. Dresser's "Kate and John Minor: Confederate Unionists of Natchez," and Leslie Smithers's "Profit and Corruption in Civil War Natchez: A Case History of Union Occupation Government." Occasionally, national journals and magazines have published Mississippi Civil War social topics as well, as in the case of Michael Shannon Mallard's "I Had No Comfort to Give the People': Opposition to the Confederacy in Civil War Mississippi" in *North and South Magazine*.

That said, there have also been quite a few books that have examined the war's social effects. The home front volume in the Mississippi Historical Society's "Mississippi Heritage Series" by Timothy B. Smith, *Mississippi in the Civil War: The Home Front* (as opposed to the military volume by Michael B. Ballard, *The Civil War in Mississippi: Major Campaigns and Battles*), seeks to put much more emphasis on long-neglected topics such as women in the state, African Americans, as well as the common poor Whites enduring the conflict. Similarly, Jaret Ruminski's *The Limits of Loyalty: Ordinary People in Civil War Mississippi* also examines the state's home front, while Bradley R. Clampitt's *Occupied Vicksburg* offers a home front examination amid an occupied city. Timothy B. Smith's *The Mississippi Secession Convention: Delegates and Deliberations in Politics and War, 1861-1865* firmly places the slavery issue at the forefront of secession and war while Christopher J. Olsen's *Political Culture and Secession in Mississippi: Masculinity, Honor, and the Antiparty Tradition, 1830-1860* delves into the reasons for secession as well in a more gender-related study. Victoria Bynum's *The Free State of Jones: Mississippi's Longest Civil War*, also made into a film, examines the common people of the state amid that rebellious phenomenon in south central Mississippi, and Shelby Harriel's *Behind the Rifle: Women Soldiers in Civil War Mississippi* has focused much attention on women soldiers from and in the state.

It is clear that a new trend in Mississippi Civil War publication has developed, in both books and articles, the field becoming much more comprehensive with the inclusion of more than just military operations. Readers for the first time since the war are getting a much more complete view of the war in Mississippi.

Conclusion

Obviously, much has changed in America since the Civil War, and none so much as in Mississippi where in 1861 slaves worked the state's plantations and women were relegated to second-class status. Today, women and African Americans hold some of the highest offices in the state (and certainly in Mississippi's historical activities) and can be found amid almost every political, economic, and social action in Mississippi. So it has been with the state's Civil War historiography, and the deeper memory of the war as well. The emergence of the Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library at Mississippi State University, the Two Mississippi Museums in Jackson, and the panels devoted to Civil War history in Mississippi at the annual Mississippi Book Festival all attest to the change that has taken place. But specifically in terms of the historiography of the written word, what began as a narrow but deep production of books and articles focused primarily on military actions and the "great men" conducting them has gradually grown wider and more comprehensive through the century and a half since the war, giving readers, researchers, and historians a much broader view of the rich role the state of Mississippi played in the Civil War.

Lecture on The History of the History of Reconstruction on February 7, 2017

by Nicholas Lemann

Thank you. I am especially happy to be here because I so much admire what Mississippi is doing this year to commemorate its history. I am also grateful to have a chance to repay some of my debt to the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, without whose help I would not have been able to write about Reconstruction in Mississippi.

I'm going to talk about two things today: Reconstruction, and the history of Reconstruction. I know they may sound like the same thing, but they are not. Reconstruction first. The United States amended its Constitution three times because of the Civil War. The 13th Amendment, in 1865, abolished slavery. The 14th, in 1868, granted civil rights to former slaves. The 15th, in 1870, gave former slaves the right to vote. Think about these amendments for a minute. Their passage tells you that, strange as it may seem today, the Union entered the Civil War without a real plan for what would happen to four million African American slaves if it won the war. And simply abolishing slavery is not a plan. What kinds of rights would the former slaves, who outnumbered their former owners, have? How would those rights be enforced? If civil rights and voting rights had followed emancipation naturally and automatically, there would have been no need for the 14th and 15th Amendments. Another question worth thinking about is: Why was it necessary to have a civil rights movement in the middle decades of the 20th century if the rights that the movement was fighting for had been enshrined in the Constitution back in 1870? The story of Reconstruction is the answer to that question.

Here is a quick version of what happened here during Reconstruction. Immediately after the Civil War, Mississippi, along with the other Confederate states, was under military occupation by the U.S. Army. The general in charge of the state was Adelbert Ames, a highly decorated Union veteran from the state of Maine, who was barely into

NICHOLAS LEMANN is the Joseph Pulitzer II and Edith Pulitzer Moore Professor of Journalism and Dean Emeritus of the Faculty of Journalism at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. He is the author of *Redemption: The Last Battle of the Civil War*. Lemann delivered a lecture at the Old Capitol Museum on February 7, 2017.

his thirties. After Mississippi accepted—not happily—the postwar Constitutional amendments and was readmitted to the United States, Ames was elected first U.S. senator, and then governor. At the time, the Democratic Party was politically conservative and almost all White, and the Republican Party was liberal and, in Mississippi, almost all Black. Ames's holding office depended entirely on the votes of Black Mississippians, who had become highly active and organized politically within just a few years of getting their rights.

But their participation in politics was by no means assured. All over the South, militia groups, mainly made up of Confederate veterans, appeared. The main group in Mississippi was called the White Line. For some reason, everybody today knows the name of one of these groups, the Ku Klux Klan, but the many others, all over the South, have largely been forgotten. Also, when we think of the Klan, we think of an organization of general-purpose violent racists who were devoted to terrorizing, and sometimes killing, Black people. This impression is somewhat misleading, because the militia groups were using their terror tactics in service of an explicitly political aim: to prevent Black people from voting, so as to restore the Democratic Party to power and then to take away the citizenship rights of Black Mississippians. And although the militias were covert, extra-legal terrorist organizations, they maintained a discreet line of communication to the respectable White political and business power structure.

Most of the militia activity followed a pattern: in a town with Black elected officials, or vigorous Black political activity, the Whites would hear a rumor of an incipient "Negro uprising." A White militia would appear, march off to engage in battle, and march back to report that it had won a heroic victory, which always involved politically active Black Mississippians being murdered by Whites, not only during the battle itself but also for several days afterward. In my research on this, it was impossible to find evidence that there was ever actually going to be an uprising—unless you define a political rally as an uprising—but the result of the supposed defeat of the uprising was that in whatever town it was, Black Mississippians lost political power, or could not vote, or were afraid to organize. Just to give you a sense of the scale of this violence, a careful accounting by the U.S. Army reported that in Louisiana alone, during the ten years following the end of the Civil War, more than 2,000 Black people were murdered by Whites, and more than 2,000 wounded. Contrast this with the

estimate that about 3,500 Black people were lynched in the entire South during the nine decades following the end of Reconstruction.

Only one thing could truly guarantee that the 14th and 15th Amendments would have the force of law in Mississippi: federal troops directly protecting Black political activity and Black voting. But as the 1870s wore on, this was increasingly unpopular outside the South, and it became more and more politically difficult for President Ulysses S. Grant to respond militarily to the militia activity. In several instances across the South, White militias forcibly ousted Black elected officials and took over county courthouses. Arkansas and Louisiana had two competing state legislatures and governors.

Here in Mississippi, matters came to a head in the summer of 1874. In Vicksburg, a militia group came to a Republican political rally on July 4 and started shooting. A general campaign of terror followed, and produced a Democratic victory in the municipal elections in August. Ames appealed to President Grant to send troops to Vicksburg, which was the site of his greatest military victory, nine years earlier—and Grant declined.

There was a second outbreak of violence in Vicksburg in December, just before the Black county sheriff, Peter Crosby, was supposed to collect taxes. Crosby fled to Jackson in the middle of the night. Governor Ames ordered him back to Vicksburg. When Crosby returned, he was put in jail. There was another days-long outbreak of violence, which left twenty-nine African Americans dead, and the Democrats, without having won an election, installed themselves in control of the county courthouse. This time Grant empowered General Philip Sheridan, now stationed in New Orleans, to send troops to Vicksburg to restore Crosby to power.

Mississippi was set to have statewide elections in the fall of 1875. During the early stages of the campaign, there were major outbreaks of White militia violence in Yazoo City, in the Delta, and in Clinton, a few miles west of Jackson. Hundreds of Black Mississippians fled for their lives and came to Jackson to live in temporary encampments, not far from where we are right now [in the Old Capitol]. Ames again asked Grant to send troops, but this time Grant told him that he would have to solve the problem himself.

A few weeks before the election, a representative of the U.S. attorney general arrived in Jackson and brokered a peace treaty between Ames and the Democratic Party: if Ames would agree not to raise a state militia, which would inevitably be almost all Black, to fight the White militias, the Democrats would guarantee a peaceful

election. No sooner did Ames sign the treaty than the Democrats broke it. Election-day violence against Black voters was widespread all over the state, and the Democrats won. The legislature impeached Ames. Rather than stand trial, he left Mississippi, never to return. In 1890, what the Democrats had won at gunpoint in 1875, the right to nullify the 14th and 15th Amendments, was enshrined in law through a new state constitution. These matters rested until the 1960s.

Many years ago, when I was in college, I persuaded the great Mississippi-born historian David Herbert Donald to admit me to an upper-level class that I was not really qualified for. I remember being surprised, in the first session of the class, to discover that we never talked about history in the sense of what actually happened, but only about arguments among historians about how to interpret what happened. That is, we were studying historians rather than studying history.

Over the years, I have come to see the wisdom of the approach Professor Donald introduced me to back then—and there is no better demonstration of why than Reconstruction. Everything I just told you about Reconstruction in Mississippi happened. It is based on primary documentary source material that I have read, at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History and elsewhere, and cited in my book so that other researchers can find it for themselves. But my account, like all histories, is highly selective, and it heavily emphasizes one aspect of the story—organized violence to deny Black Mississippians their voting rights. This has not, to say the least, been the only possible way of presenting the history of Reconstruction in Mississippi. The history has been understood in radically different ways over time. It is useful, but incomplete, to wonder which way of understanding the history is most factually accurate; changing values, rather than additional or corrected facts, explain most of the differences over time in the way Reconstruction history has been told. This is as good an example as I can think of for why historical disputes are anything but petty and academic. History matters. How people have understood Reconstruction has profoundly shaped the way that they have confronted racial issues in the present.

In Mississippi, and to some extent nationally, it is not a great exaggeration to say that history, as a professional pursuit, was invented in order to tell the history of Reconstruction. Franklin L. Riley, one of the

first Mississippians to be formally trained as a historian, became the first professor of history at the University of Mississippi in 1897. He revived the moribund Mississippi Historical Society and began publishing an associated historical journal. Then, in 1902, he successfully lobbied the state legislature to create the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. The department's first director, a lawyer named Dunbar Rowland, served in that position for thirty-five years, until his death in 1937.

The Proceedings of the Mississippi Historical Society were substantially devoted to the story of the end of Reconstruction, which Whites called Mississippi's "Redemption." These writings were mainly by the Redeemers themselves, who were often also Confederate veterans. They made no pretense to objectivity or conventional research methods. In 1906, for example, W. Calvin Wells, in an article called "Reconstruction and its Destruction in Hinds County," proudly described using his pistol to kill a Black man, who was armed only with a stick, during the battle in Clinton. He also laid out in candid detail the White Line's plans for winning the 1875 election through any means necessary, including intimidation and outright fraud, which turned out to be unnecessary because the intimidation had worked so well. "We were forced to a choice between the evils of negro rule and the evils of questionable practices to overthrow it," he wrote. "We chose what we thought was the lesser evil, and it is now not to be regretted." Dunbar Rowland himself wrote an article in the Proceedings in 1898 called "The Rise and Fall of Negro Rule in Mississippi," in which he called Reconstruction "the greatest and most criminal mistake of all time," and the successful campaign to overthrow it "the supreme effort of a brave people to save themselves and their posterity from the blighting ruin of Black supremacy."

These articles are useful as historical documents, not because they provide completely reliable information about what actually happened, but because they offer an unvarnished look at the self-concept of the Redeemers. These were people who lived in an emotional world that some of you in the audience may remember hearing about from your older relatives, as I do—a world of the lost paradise of the antebellum South, of the nobility of Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee, of the depredations visited on Mississippi after the war by scalawags and carpetbaggers. They treat the idea of legal equality of the races as simply unthinkable, and they are, as you have just seen, fairly candid, though not detailed, about having used organized political violence to overthrow Reconstruction. Some of the leading Redeemers' wives, during

the same period, formed the United Daughters of the Confederacy, and erected monuments in courthouse squares all over Mississippi.

It is important to note that during this period, outside the South, almost nobody except for the great African American scholar-activist W. E. B. DuBois was writing favorably about Reconstruction. The dominant historian of Reconstruction was a professor at Columbia, the university where I teach, named William Archibald Dunning. His graduate students produced a shelf's worth of state-by-state histories of Reconstruction; the one on Mississippi is by James Garner. Dunning was also an important leader of the American Historical Association in its early days.

The work of the Dunning School was self-consciously professional, but it treated Reconstruction as a terrible mistake. A Columbia political scientist, John W. Burgess, just as prominent in his field as Dunning was in his, was another impassioned critic of Reconstruction. And so was the only academic ever to become President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson. These people wrote in a calmer tone than the Redeemers, and they drew a gauzy curtain over the violence that ended Reconstruction. Their main argument was that the Reconstruction governments were corrupt and had nearly bankrupted their states through excessive taxation (the respectable wing of the opposition to Ames called itself the Taxpayers' League). Adelbert Ames, who lived to the age of ninety-eight, devoted a good deal of time in his later years refuting these arguments in detail. Dunbar Rowland, as the years went on and his own sense of himself as a professional grew, emphasized these non-racial aspects of Reconstruction more too. In 1934 he waged a spirited and nearly successful campaign to be named the first Archivist of the United States, which is a sign that his views were in no way out of the respectable mainstream.

Rowland worked hard and successfully to create an institution to preserve the history of Mississippi for researchers and the public. It was not automatic that that would happen. Just as history is complicated, the history of history is too. We would not be standing here today if it were not for the work of Dunbar Rowland. Although it did not occur to him to collect material from Black Mississippians, he did obtain plantation records that are of interest to students of Black history. He also carefully maintained and catalogued Adelbert Ames's gubernatorial papers, the records of his impeachment trial, and some papers from the period after he had left Mississippi. Researchers who are interested in Reconstruction from the point of view of its supporters can find primary material about that elsewhere, for example in the papers of the Freedmen's Bureau

and of the U.S. Army officers who were stationed here, and in the copious eyewitness testimony taken by Congressional investigators who often came to the South during the final years of Reconstruction.

Why did the Jim Crow system last so long? The answer to that question is complicated, but one important reason, I believe, is that the history of Reconstruction was written in the way it was. It was not a secret that Reconstruction ended because of a successful organized terrorist campaign to deny American citizens their rights and to defy provisions of the U.S. Constitution. That is amply documented, including, as I have said, by the Redeemers themselves. But the leading historians of the day chose to minimize this aspect of Reconstruction, to maximize its alleged corruption, and to celebrate its end nationally, following the 1876 presidential election, as the closing of a terrible chapter in American history, which enabled the country to move forward into its future as a great world power. This version of Reconstruction appeared in several generations' worth of history textbooks and was taught to almost all young Americans for decades, and also appeared in plays, movies, and popular histories. When Senator John F. Kennedy published *Profiles in Courage*, in 1956, he included a chapter about Mississippi's leading Bourbon and Redeemer, Senator Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus Lamar, which treated Governor Ames as indefensibly incompetent at governance.

During the time this version of Reconstruction was the conventional wisdom, no president sent troops to the South to enforce civil rights, and Congress passed no civil rights bill. When historians began to re-examine the period, beginning in the 1950s and 60s, it helped empower the civil rights movement. For one memorable example, Martin Luther King, in his great speech about voting rights on the steps of the Alabama state capitol building at the conclusion of the Selma to Montgomery march in 1965, extensively cited the work of one of the leading revisionist historians of the Jim Crow period, C. Vann Woodward. And as the historical consensus changed, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History began to change too. It appointed its first Black board member, Dr. Estes Smith of Jackson State University, in 1976, and it began collecting material from and about Black Mississippians. The opening of the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum later this year was made possible by a change in the way the history of Mississippi is understood and practiced.

Without in any way diminishing the admiration the Department of Archives and History has earned for what it is accomplishing, I would like to end by cautioning us against falling into a comfortable feeling that our forebears may have gotten history wrong while we have gotten it right. All history that is done well captures the essential elements of contention and contingency in the way that human affairs unfold. Nothing important ever happens without a fight, and everything that happened could have turned out differently. Understanding history as a smooth, stately progression is always a mistake. And the work of historians is, likewise, inescapably contentious. The past is subject to continuous reinterpretation, as new material emerges, as each new group of historians sets out to correct the flaws it perceives in the work of its predecessors, and as what is happening in the present makes us see things in the past that we had been missing.

The White Mississippians who supervised the making of Mississippi history during the first decades of the twentieth century would have been the first to admit that they were what we would now call “racist,” which is to say that they believed in an enforced rank-ordering of the races, by violent and extralegal means if necessary, into two distinct categories with different rights, resources, and powers. The more academic White Northerners who supervised the making of American history during the same period were not so explicit, but most of them also believed a rank-ordering of the races was natural, even scientifically justified, and, although they may have seen the violent way Reconstruction ended as unsavory rather than heroic, they treated it as a minor matter. Were they racists? Today we would probably say yes. But if we are going to make that kind of judgment, let us do it with a measure of humility. What happened in the past that we do not see as wrong, or as important enough to warrant our primary attention, but that future generations will chastise us for having downplayed or missed? I guarantee you, there will be something.

Of course, there are lessons for us in the mistakes of the early writers of the history of Reconstruction in Mississippi. The most obvious one is: always find all the available information, and always consider every possible point of view, before committing yourself to a version of the past. This is harder to do than it sounds, because the limitations of human consciousness, and of the scope of vision of the present in which all historians live while they do their work about the past, constrict the imaginations of even the most careful members of

the profession. In struggling to understand the past, we have a duty to push ourselves to try our best, and also not to be self-congratulatory about how well we are doing at this inescapably difficult task. That we are all gathered here today shows that we have come a long way. We should be proud of that. And we should be just as proud that the ongoing practice of history inevitably means that people who do this work after us will find that we did not get it right either.

Writing the Wrongs of History? Mississippi c. 1945–c. 1970

by George Lewis

The drafting of history is often an incremental affair, which tends to be more reliant on gradually expanding the breadth and depth of existing knowledge than on radically reinterpreting it with a single, transformative work. In the case of the history of Mississippi's turbulent post-war epoch, there has also proven to be another route into the state's written memory. In 1964, drawing upon his president's address to the previous year's Southern Historical Association annual meeting, historian turned historical witness James W. Silver published *The Closed Society*. In it, he described a state in which the power structure had become so insular and defensive that it had lost its ability for critical self-reflection. In Silver's account, Mississippi's political leaders were so desperate to protect their long-standing White supremacist hegemony against the threats posed by civil rights protest that, effectively, they sought to impose their own version of an "official orthodoxy" of White supremacy on the state. The first casualty of that approach, Silver believed, was "the search for historical truth."¹ Silver's book has been remembered as much for its emotional impact and capturing of a zeitgeist as for its historical detail. Fifty years after it was first published, histories of the period which do not cite Silver's work are few and far between, and one key scholar of post-war Mississippi still reflexively chooses to refer to the state as "the closed society."²

Silver's role as the on-campus advisor to African American student James Meredith, coupled to the book's publication in the immediate aftermath of the murder of Council of Federated Organization volunteers

¹ James W. Silver, "Mississippi: The Closed Society," *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Feb., 1964), 3-34; Silver, *Mississippi: The Closed Society* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966);

² John Dittmer, "Local People and National Leaders: The View from Mississippi," in Emilye Crosby [ed.] *Civil Rights from the Grassroots Up: Local Struggles, a National Movement* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 43-51.

GEORGE LEWIS is a professor of American history at the University of Leicester's School of History and Centre for American Studies in the United Kingdom. He is the author of *Massive Resistance: The White Response to the Civil Rights Movement*.

James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner, brought the search for that truth into sharp focus. If, as a native of Rochester, N.Y., there was always a lingering sense that he could be dismissed as an “outsider” by those who wished to diminish the power of his critique, he had nevertheless been employed by one of the institutional pillars of White Mississippi for nearly thirty years by the time that his study was published. Writing three decades later, another president of the SHA, historian James C. Cobb, appeared to consolidate Silver’s view by re-appropriating geographer Rupert B. Vance’s 1930s description of Mississippi as *The Most Southern Place on Earth*. Cobb set out to use Mississippi to distill the essence of the Deep South, and encountered a state and a system in which, even by the 1960s, “the white planter’s word was still the law.” Even as he did so, however, Cobb found greater complexity than he had initially imagined in a state that was also a transmission belt for a range of consistent cultural, economic, and political interactions across the modern United States.³ This was no closed society, and if there is an irony in Silver’s words on historical truth, it is that the years that followed his 1964 book have seen the creation of a densely-textured and nuanced historical record, complete with detailed analyses of the state-sanctioned systems of repression and oppression to which he was referring, that is unparalleled in the United States. It is a record which Cobb and many others have subsequently helped to uncover.

Historians who have sought to chronicle Mississippi in the three decades following World War II have, for obvious reasons, often concentrated on various aspects of the struggle for civil rights. Indeed, while the historiography of the Movement and of Mississippi are not interchangeable, the relationship between the two during that period has been greatly inter-twined and largely symbiotic. Mississippi’s historians have not been immune from developments in the wider historiography of the civil rights struggle, but equally have also often been in the vanguard of changes of approach or have triggered significant shifts within that field themselves. Broader questions have caught the attention – and informed the work—of historians of Mississippi, and vice versa. Issues that have passed back and forth include regional identity, ways of understanding the dynamics of social movements, the relationship between citizens and power, timescales of protest, relationships between

³ James C. Cobb, *The Most Southern Place on Earth: The Mississippi Delta and the Roots of Regional Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). See in particular Cobb’s self-effacing “Preface,” quotations from pp 231 and 329.

violence and non-violence, and the politicization of commemorating the past. That relationship is probably best expressed in the development of local community studies. Where, for example, pioneering and transformative works were first published on areas beyond Mississippi's borders, most notably on Greensboro, North Carolina, St Augustine, Florida, and Tuskegee, Alabama, subsequent studies on Mississippi communities have set a new benchmark. Seminal books by Charles M. Payne and John Dittmer have been followed by illuminating work by a wealth of scholars including J. Todd Moya, Emilye Crosby, and Françoise N. Hamlin, and those curated in collections, for example by Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodard. Each of those studies has pushed and added to knowledge. In doing so, however, they have also collectively added to the complexities of the historical picture at hand.⁴

With the addition of new thematic studies, whether on armed resistance during the civil rights years, on the practical political management of segregation, or on the impact of federal anti-poverty programs on the state at the end of the "classical" civil rights era, the most pressing question may no longer be whether we have a sufficiently weighty and dense historiography of Mississippi in the quarter century

⁴ William H. Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina and the Black Struggle for Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981); David R. Colburn, *Racial Change and Community Crisis: St. Augustine, Florida 1877-1980*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); Robert J. Norrell, *Reaping the Whirlwind: The Civil Rights Movement in Tuskegee* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1985); J. Todd Moya, *Let the People Decide: Black Freedom and White Resistance Movements in Sunflower County, Mississippi, 1945-1986* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodard [eds.] *Groundwork: Local Black Freedom Movements in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2005); Emilye Crosby, *A Little Taste of Freedom: The Black Freedom Struggle in Claiborne County, Mississippi* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Françoise N. Hamlin, *Crossroads at Clarksdale: The Black Freedom Struggle in the Mississippi Delta after World War II* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012). Moya, notably, has pushed at the class assumptions that were common to previous community studies, arguing for the need to explore the experience of poor, rural communities in and of themselves.

since World War II.⁵ Instead, it may be more pertinent to ask whether it is possible to unite the increasingly balkanized strands of that history into a single narrative, without falling foul of scholars claiming that their own particular specialist area has been neglected or omitted entirely. As Charles M. Payne acknowledged when returning to his majestic 1995 community study, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*, for a new edition in 2007, what was once an over-arching master narrative that was almost parable-like in its simplicity—which, in his words, was “so familiar as to constitute almost a form of civic religion”—had been dismantled “assertion by assertion” by “a remarkable flowering of movement scholarship.”⁶ The way in which historians have tried to reconstruct a single-volume history in recent times from what has become an interconnected, interdependent ecosystem of separate studies highlights both the issue at hand and potential solutions to it. For Ted Ownby, who sought to capture the history of *The Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi*, the answer included an admission that “for years” the flow of that history “had seemed relatively clear,” but in its current state was one best addressed by bringing together a collection of short essays from scholars whose work had established new tributaries. For Dennis J. Mitchell, *A New History of Mississippi* was to be found in a single volume providing an “interpretative narrative” unencumbered by notes, but fully freighted with the findings of the most recent research, and “new” in terms of its inter-disciplinarity and reach rather than its reassessments of the known past. Rare indeed is the 500-plus page book which concludes with ten densely-packed pages of suggested further reading, but in light of the richness of Mississippi’s history, the range of the published studies which have done justice to it, and the insightful and controlled narrative that Mitchell has woven across those previous 500 pages, here it is both justified and welcome.

⁵ On an armed response which was “persistent and pervasive” in Mississippi civil rights, see Akinyele Omowale Umoja, *We Will Shoot Back: Armed Resistance in the Mississippi Freedom Movement* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2013); on practical management of segregation, see Robert E. Luckett Jr., *Joe T. Patterson and the White South’s Dilemma: Evolving Resistance to Black Advancement* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2015); on White resistance and Federal aid programs, see Emma J. Folwell, *The War on Poverty in Mississippi: From Massive Resistance to New Conservatism* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2020).

⁶ Charles M. Payne, “Preface to the 2007 Edition,” *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* [A Centennial Book] (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), xiii-xiv.

The clearest vision of the subject's future, though, most probably lies with the flexibility and accessibility offered by digital platforms. *The Mississippi Encyclopedia* is the current field leader of these, offering updates and reorganization without reprinting, and, increasingly importantly for those without ready access to an institutional library, offering ready access without the hefty price tag of a monograph.⁷

Under such circumstances, it can be helpful—and no little relief—to have an overall structure imposed upon all of that history, whether as a student seeking to study it or as a scholar seeking to define a new project with which to add to it. Historians have sought to find that structure not just in meta-studies such as Ownby's and Mitchell's, but also in regular reviews of the state of the field in the shape of historiographical essays. In conjunction with the histories that they have sought to analyze and compartmentalize, the importance of those essays has developed over time, and can now be felt in four distinct ways. Their primary importance remains their attempts to impose some comprehensible order on the panoply of available published works. The most effective of them have done so by either noting or imposing the development of a pleasingly progressive linear pattern: first, initial histories which tended to focus on a single leader at the helm of one national organization in a sketchy first draft of the battles of the post-war Freedom Struggle; then, as it became increasingly clear that the dynamics of that struggle could not be forced to conform to a single triggering start date – whether it be a Supreme Court decision in 1954 or a bus boycott the following year – came the idea of a “two act play,” in which much of the activism of the 1950s and 1960s could only be explained through the groundwork provided by the first act of previous decades; next came an interactive model which sought to posit a “third way” connective approach merging early top-down histories with grassroots community studies; and, most recently, the replacement of the two-act play with a four-phase production, in a move that broke away from a traditional chronological

⁷ *The Mississippi Encyclopedia* is a partnership between the Center for the Study of Southern Culture and the Mississippi Humanities Council. It is also available at www.mississippiencyclopedia.org.

explanation of events to one based around analytical themes.⁸

Not all readers have been in agreement with those structural approaches, but most historians would acknowledge the importance of the way in which, at the very least, they have offered a means of stepping back, pausing for breath, and taking stock before careening into yet more scholarship. Over the past quarter century or so, as those historiographical reviews have proliferated either as free-standing essays or as discrete sections within larger, broader works, they have also become important sites for suggesting new modes of study. Projects have come into production which have filled many of the gaps that those works have identified. It would be wrong, though, to suggest that historians were always doing so consciously. As at least one of the historians involved in recent Mississippi histories has intimated, working to fill voids identified by earlier historiographical reviews is not necessarily the same as working to placate the concerns or demands of a particular reviewer. If, as one such historiographical essay has recently described, the increasing number of published local community studies has left a picture that is “messy” and “complex,” it is no more complex than the process which often takes a historian from the original genesis of a project to its eventual completion.⁹ The journey through identifying, researching, writing and publishing a history is rarely an entirely tidy one, and is usually the product of a combination of factors. Only some of those fall within an author’s direct sphere of control, and many take considerable time.¹⁰ It is entirely possible—even probable—for a subject identified by a historiographical essay as ripe for future study to be already underway, but yet to have come to fruition. That is particularly true of Mississippi, which Ownby has correctly called “one of the most studied states,” not least because of its

⁸ Harvard Sitkoff, *The Struggle for Black Equality, 1954-1980* (Hill and Wang, 1981); Adam Fairclough, “State of the Art: Historians and the Civil Rights Movement,” *Journal of American Studies* 24, no. 3 (Dec. 1990): 387-398; Steven Lawson, “Freedom Then, Freedom Now: The Historiography of the Civil Rights Movement,” *American Historical Review*, No. 96 (April 1991), 456-471; Ted Ownby, “Introduction” in Ownby [ed.] *The Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi*, vii-xvii.

⁹ Emilye Crosby, “The Politics of Writing and Teaching Movement History,” in Crosby [ed.] *Civil Rights from the Grassroots Up: Local Struggles, a National Movement* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 8.

¹⁰ For one such experience, see, J. Todd Moya, “Focusing Our Eyes on the Prize: How Community Studies are reframing and Rewriting the History of the Civil Rights Movement,” in Crosby [ed.] *Civil Rights from the Grassroots Up: Local Struggles, a National Movement* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2011), esp. 147-163.

provenance as the geographical home to what he has also identified as the most intense series of civil rights struggles in the United States.¹¹

The third and fourth points at which the impact of those historiographical essays have been felt are more tightly bound together. As the histories that have been written to describe, analyze, and understand Mississippi's past have become more fragmented, so the processes and structures through which historians have sought to understand them have also become increasingly complex. Argument has always been a core value in modern history, often over conclusions, sometimes over evidence, and occasionally over approaches. One of the unintended consequences of the billowing of historiographical essays, however, has been the proliferation of arguments between reviewers of history, rather than within histories themselves. It may seem a specious difference, but it has had a tangible impact. Some of the debates that have been generated between reviewers on how best to represent the past have become almost as dense and entangled as some of the works under review, as it has become increasingly apparent that, as well as being helpful, historiographical essays can also prove highly contentious. It is a quirk of the profession that historians struggle to explain to those beyond the academy, but historiographical essays dealing with some aspect of Mississippi's past have become so central to the way in which histories of the state have been written and understood that they have, in essence, created their own sub-field. In the historians' equivalent of breaching the fourth wall, historiographical reviews have become the subject of significant space and debate in their own right, and are now regularly cited in the histories that have followed their publication.¹² Indeed, it has become sufficiently common as to appear obligatory for authors of new works on aspects of Mississippi history to contextualize their work twice: once within the historiography of which they form a part, and once within the debates surrounding that historiography

¹¹ Ownby, "Introduction" in Ownby [ed.] *The Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi*, vii–viii.

¹² The irony of this situation is not lost here.

within which—consciously or otherwise—they are also participating.¹³

The most notable of these reviews has been Charles W. Eagles's 2000 essay, "Toward New Histories of the Civil Rights Era," which is now known as much for the debate that it has engendered as it is for the scope of its coverage.¹⁴ With its titular reference to a field that was still in development, and with its nod to the growing impossibility of a single history that could do justice to the complexities of the field, much of Eagles's work was, and continues to be, appreciated by historians and students alike, especially for his critique of the "asymmetrical" history of civil rights scholarship. His contention that much of the existing scholarship was loaded in favor of civil rights' proponents because it was written by activist-scholars who had sympathies with Movement ranks, and who were unable or unwilling to bring critical perspective to their work, has, however, proven to be more contentious.

In terms of post-war Mississippi, the headline assumption of an asymmetrical view of the state's history is a beguiling idea, but the detail is as problematic for what it misses as for what it seeks to critique. It is certainly true that a greater number of histories were initially written from the point of view of civil rights activists and organizations than of their segregationist foes or the state apparatus which sustained them. That is despite the fact that, as Payne has written in terms at least as strident as Eagles, many of those activists did not recognize the histories of which they were supposed to have been a part.¹⁵ Where Whites did

¹³ Eagles' provocative work is often the focus here. See, for example, debates between Crosby and Eagles in Emilye Crosby "The Politics of Writing and Teaching Movement History," in Crosby [ed.] *Civil Rights from the Grassroots Up: Local Struggles, a National Movement* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2011), esp. footnote 18; Lawson and Eagles in Steven F. Lawson, "Freedom Down to Now," in Steven F. Lawson, *Civil Rights Crossroads: Nation, Community, and the Black Freedom Struggle* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2005); Moye and Eagles in J. Todd Moye, "Focusing Our Eyes on the Prize: How Community Studies Are reframing and Rewriting the History of the Civil Rights Movement," in Crosby [ed.], *Civil Rights from the Grassroots Up*. Elsewhere, see, for example, David L. Chappell and Lawson in Chappell, "Civil Rights: Grassroots, High Politics, or Both?" *Reviews in American History*, 32 (December 2004); Draper critiquing Dittmer and Payne, beginning in Alan Draper, "The Mississippi Movement: A Review Essay," Alan Draper, "The Mississippi Movement: A Review Essay," *Journal of Mississippi History* 60, no. 4 (1998): 355-66, and then continuing in Payne, "Preface to the 2007 Edition," in *I've Got the Light of Freedom*.

¹⁴ Charles W. Eagles, "Toward New Histories of the Civil Rights Era," *Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 66, No. 4 (Nov., 2000), 815-848.

¹⁵ Payne, "Preface to the 2007 Edition," *I've Got the Light of Freedom*.

appear in those narratives—whether as White Mississippians or as “outsiders”—the way in which they were often portrayed did not always reflect well on the discipline of history. As Payne argued elsewhere, the core of that problem lay with the racial politics of those Whites who were included in published accounts, and the distorting effect that this representation had on the histories that were being produced, rather than with any concentration on African American histories per se. He berated in particular the publication of poorly conceived historical works in which history itself was only understood as “something that happens when the White Folks show up and stops when they leave.” Warming to his theme in one particularly savage critique of a limited attempt to condense the complexities of the civil rights struggle into a single volume, Payne bridled at the study’s sense that, “The White Folks are here, therefore something historically important must be happening, therefore we slow down a little.”¹⁶ Two correctives were needed: one was to end the long-enduring trope of the “white savior”; the other, to restore segregationist Whites to that history as actors in their own right. Eagles was entirely correct to note that, for too long, there had been a reliance upon three substantial but increasingly tired texts on the segregationist side of what had, after all, been a struggle between different sides: Numan Bartley’s work on the rise of massive resistance to civil rights change, Neil McMillen’s work on the White Citizens’ Councils which sought to organize strands of that resistance, and I. A. Newby’s intellectual history of segregationist science.¹⁷

Those who were keen scholars of Mississippi’s post-war racial conflicts, though, would have been aware of other, state-specific segregationist studies which did exist by the time of Eagles’s review, however narrow in focus. Charles Marsh, for example, sought to give voice to Mississippi Whites who, while supporting Jim Crow, sought to

¹⁶ Charles M. Payne, “The Social Construction of History,” in Payne, *I’ve Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), esp. pp. 424 and 433. Payne was particularly damning of Robert Weisbrot, *Freedom Bound: A History of America’s Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Norton, 1989).

¹⁷ Numan V. Bartley, *The Rise of Massive Resistance: Race and Politics in the South During the 1950’s* (Baton Rouge: University of Louisiana Press, 1969); Neil R. McMillen, *The Citizens’ Councils: Organized Resistance to the Second Reconstruction*, (Urbana, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1971); Idus A. Newby, *Challenge to the Court: Social Scientists and the Defense of Segregation, 1954-1966* (Baton Rouge, University of Louisiana Press, 1967).

separate themselves from “extremist zealots.” Notably, too, Tony Badger offered a nuanced take on the politics of Mississippi’s racial liberalism, in which a lack of political will to lead the state to a middle ground of gradualism and away from stark segregation was analyzed through a series of short case studies. Those included analyses of a clutch of Magnolia State politicians and laid the groundwork for later studies on Mississippi’s “southern moderates,” however that moderation might be defined, and however much their authors took issue with Badger’s view of the “fatalism” that undermined the potential of their leadership.¹⁸

More seismic, however, in terms of its foretelling of histories to come, was what was billed awkwardly as “An Interpretive Documentary with Personal Experiences” by Erle Johnston, published a decade before Eagles’s essay. In the second of what was a triptych of books based around his own political activism in the Magnolia State, Johnston tested the logic of Eagles’s critique of asymmetrical history and a “lack of detachment” from authors whom, Eagles contended, had been compromised by a “participant-observer status.” A decade before Eagles’s review appeared, Johnston’s book began the historical autopsy of the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission (MSSC), of which he was both a participant and an observer during his eight years as public relations director during the 1960s. Rumors of the scale of MSSC activities had been rife for years, but details had remained as elusive as the Commission’s formal archives, which were yet to be opened when Johnston’s account appeared. The architecture of the production of his study offered a clear attempt to mitigate the role of the Commission and his work within it. A “Foreword” by former governor of Mississippi William F. Winter now serves as an early example of what has become the lingua franca of politicians wanting to explain palatable truths from the recent past in a tone that mixes acknowledgement of pain with attempted rationalization: these were different times, with different circumstances. Johnston, too, was careful to contextualize his own personal role with equally carefully worded “Testimonials”

¹⁸ Tony Badger, “Fatalism, Not Gradualism: The Crisis of Southern Liberalism, 1945-65,” in Ward and Badger [eds.] *The Making of Martin Luther King*, 67-95. Badger reprised this line of argument in, “Closet Moderates: Why Liberals Failed, 1940-1970,” in Ted Ownby [ed.], *The Role of Ideas in the Civil Rights South* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2002), 83-112. For later studies, see in particular the chapter on J.P. Coleman in Anders Walker, *The Ghost of Jim Crow: How Southern Moderates Used Brown v. Board of Education to Stall Civil Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 11-48.

from a range of historians, publishers, politicians, and activists from both sides of the struggle. Perhaps most importantly, Johnston alerted researchers to the probable wealth of the Commission's archival files, and whetted researchers' appetites for their potential future release.¹⁹

It took almost a decade of legal challenges for those files to be opened in 1998, at which point Yasu Katagiri won the race to provide the first monograph of the Commission's activities. Katagiri's account was not as intellectually ambitious as Jenny Irons's later work, which sought to use the Commission's activities to test and reveal fluidities in White identity – especially when that fluidity served the purpose of maintaining White hegemony – but nevertheless transmitted the core activities of the Commission clearly. Readers were left with uncompromising truths and a level of detail which, until then, had largely been the preserve of local community studies. A state with citizens living in severe poverty had spent vast sums of taxpayers' money creating and supporting a secret architecture of oppression. In the midst of a Cold War against a totalitarian foe, a democratic state had spent a portion of those funds to spy on its own citizens, keep files on their activities, infiltrate legitimate private groups, and distort judicial processes. And, on a scale that far outstripped state-sponsored segregation agencies in Louisiana and Florida, the Commission provided hard-copy propaganda and hosted junkets with the sole purpose of defending the state's White power structure.²⁰

By the turn of the century, the age of representing Mississippi segregationists as monolithic reactionaries in the academic historical record was clearly over. The drivers of that shift have been manifold. In a time at which the community study approach—while still richly valuable—had begun to offer gradual, incremental gains to the knowledge of the state's past rather than transformational difference, a sea change in the availability of source materials such as those MSSC records enabled scholars to develop increasingly complex projects centered upon segregationists. The difficulties of securing oral history interviews with active segregationists has long brought its own lack

¹⁹ Erle Johnston, *Mississippi's Defiant Years 1953-1973: An Interpretive Documentary with Personal Experiences* (Forest, MS: Lake Harbor Publishers, 1990); Charles W. Eagles, "Toward New Histories of the Civil Rights Era," *Journal of Southern History* 66, No. 4 (Nov, 2000): 815-848. See esp. 815-6 and 820.

²⁰ Yasuhiro Katagiri, *The Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission: Civil Rights and States' Rights* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2001); Jenny Irons, *Reconstituting Whiteness: The Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2010).

of symmetry: where oral histories have traditionally provided the backbone of community studies, historians of segregation have relied on them far less often. That may have allowed those historians to side-step some of the more contentious debates over the veracity of community history oral interviews, but it has also reduced the richness of those works. As the events of the period have receded further into the past, though, and as the national narrative surrounding civil rights has shifted, so oral histories have also become more common for those studying segregationists, and have been put to use alongside the opening of an increasing number of formal archival collections.²¹ Recent developments in the digitization of archival records, too, and, even more importantly, the decision to make those collections open access to anyone with an internet connection, has democratized the process of researching history in a way that is particularly useful to those focusing upon segregationists. Those processes of democratization have been relevant to both content and access. Where, for example, viewers once had to watch short clips of oral history interviews seen through the prism of the “Eyes on the Prize” documentary series’ editors, they can now be viewed in their original, full, and unedited form. Where once scholars had to spend significant resource tracking down the Citizens’ Councils “Forum” radio broadcasts, these are not only freely available via Mississippi State University library, but also come with transcripts created and then donated by scholar Stephanie R. Rolph, whose work has brought a much-needed update in terms of breadth, depth, and

²¹ Moye takes issue with Eagles on the oral history point in Moye, “Focusing Our Eyes on the Prize,” 165. For a biography which includes segregationist sources including oral histories, see Charles C. Bolton, *William F. Winter and the New Mississippi: A Biography* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2013). Elizabeth Gillespie McRae, *Mothers of Massive Resistance: White Women and the Politics of White Supremacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018) draws from archival materials deposited in four separate special collection archives in Mississippi alone.

analysis to McMillen's sound but ageing study on those Councils.²²

With momentum clearly behind the production of segregationist histories, the question remained of how best to capture and present their many complexities. There were many potential routes towards creating a more symmetrical record of Mississippi's post-war racial politics, but attempting to do so by producing facsimiles of previous studies, this time read through a segregationist-centric lens, was clearly not a useful one. What have begun to emerge are two broadly separate approaches. First, in a way that offers greater continuity, have come closely-focused studies on the figures and flashpoints of Mississippi's civil rights past, which have been augmented by greater analysis of segregationists' roles and are strengthened by the use of segregationist sources, especially those of the MSSC.²³ Second are an invigorating, detailed, and important set of studies which have sought to bring nuance and weight to an understanding of Mississippi's segregationist power structures and the citizens who supported and sustained them. These are far from the "white savior" histories rightly berated by Payne, and closer, if anything, to the cathartic experience of South Africa's post-Apartheid Truth and Reconciliation Commission.²⁴ Once again, as there had been with the early genesis of civil rights histories, so with these segregationist-centric studies was there a symbiosis between studies published on Mississippi itself, those on the wider region of which the state was a part, and those on segregationists' relationships both to the wider United States and to the international community. Those wider histories, for

²² The original "Eyes on the Prize" interviews are now available here: <http://digital.wustl.edu/e/eyes/browse.html>; the Citizens' Council "Forum" shows are available at <http://lib.msstate.edu/digitalcollections/citizenscouncil/>; Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission materials are also increasingly on-line, too: https://www.mdah.ms.gov/arrec/digital_archives/sovcom. Stephanie R. Rolph, *Resisting Equality: The Citizens' Council, 1954-1989* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2018). The second edition of McMillen's study contained a much-needed and thoughtful new preface. See Neil McMillen, *The Citizens' Council: Organized Resistance to the Second Reconstruction, 1954-64*, [Second Edition] (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994). Segregationists' global networks are also explored in Zoe Hyman, "American Segregationist Ideology and White Southern Africa, 1948-1975," (PhD, University of Sussex, 2012).

²³ For one of the first of these studies to use the MSSC documents, see Gilbert R. Mason with James Patterson Smith, *Beaches, Blood, and Ballots: A Black Doctor's Civil Rights Struggle* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2000).

²⁴ Evangelical attempts to promote racial reconciliation via "Mission Mississippi" are documented in Peter Slade, *Open Friendship in a Closed Society: Mission Mississippi and a Theology of Friendship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

example, have ranged from studies detailing the relationship between organized segregationist politics and groups of progressive White women who sought to curb segregationists' greatest excesses to Elizabeth Gillespie McRae's long-gestated but truly groundbreaking study of White women's relationship to the politics of segregationist massive resistance. Such studies range far beyond the Magnolia State's borders, but nevertheless include—and often center upon—analysis of examples and even case studies drawn from Mississippi.²⁵ Collectively, this new generation of studies has brought a signal shift in the way in which Mississippi's post-war past has been understood and documented.

Away from the prosaic issue of sources, it is also because historians of Mississippi have begun to move away from their previous concentration on the “set pieces” of segregationist resistance to racial change—from those episodes of near theatrical but also visceral conflict—that those more nuanced histories of segregationists in the state have been allowed to emerge. One of the most informative outcomes of these new histories is the way in which they have not just illuminated segregationists as multi-dimensional historical actors with often significant personal agency, but that they have also used that focus on segregationists to look outwards. So, for example, segregationist-focused studies have developed new ways of exploring the most suitable chronological timeframes through which to understand Mississippi's postwar past, as well as issues around class, gender, and politics. They have also enlivened readers to the ways in which the Magnolia State's segregationists fitted in with broader national debates and regional, national, and international networks. Thus, for example, although Rolph's work ostensibly focuses on the Councils as a whole, she sensibly centers much of her work on the complex interactions between grassroots activists and political elites in Mississippi, whilst also defining the lattice of inter-connecting alliances which the Councils were able to build across the United States and globally. Others, too, have brought attention to the way in which Mississippi's segregationists worked to forge links with White supremacist regimes across the world, notably in Rhodesia and South Africa. If Mississippi was a

²⁵ Helen Laville includes a chapter on the group “Wednesdays in Mississippi” in her *Organized White Women and the Challenge of Racial Integration, 1945-65* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). A pivotal work within these new segregationist histories is Elizabeth Gillespie McRae, *Mothers of Massive Resistance: White Women and the Politics of White Supremacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

“Closed Society,” nobody, it seems, had told organized segregationists.²⁶

As Mississippi historians have joined others to test what had long been accepted as the chronological framework of White segregationist “backlash” to civil rights activism, a number of studies have sought to expand the idea of what might be termed a “long massive resistance.” In one sense, then, this appeared to be the segregationist equivalent of the paradigm shift to a “long civil rights movement” that gained purchase in the wake of Jacquelyn Dowd Hall’s work on Black activism. It is notable, though, that the studies which sought an elongated timeframe in order to mirror Hall’s argument—to create, in other words, a “long segregationist movement”—have not been as persuasive as those studies which have sought to alter timeframes organically, as a direct reflection of sources discovered in archives.²⁷ Amidst a number of works which, at least in part, might be most simplistically described as answering the question of “what happened to massive resistance?”, the standout transformative work in this respect remains Joseph Crespino’s *In Search of Another Country: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution*. The brief answer is that a more politically savvy and less myopic generation of leaders sought to develop a moderate façade of what has variously been tagged “responsible resistance,” “evolving resistance” or, in the phrase that has come to gain most traction, “strategic accommodation.”²⁸ These were the means by which they guided the state to minimum compliance with the new legal and political imperatives on race relations created by civil rights movement pressures, but did so whilst maintaining as much “practical segregation” as possible in all other aspects of Mississippi life.²⁹ More ambitiously still, Crespino also plots Mississippi’s transformative path into Republicanism and national conservatism, via a politics ostensibly

²⁶ Rolph, *Resisting Equality*; Segregationists’ global networks are also explored in Zoe Hyman, “American Segregationist Ideology and White Southern Africa, 1948–1975,” (PhD, University of Sussex, 2012).

²⁷ An example of the former is Jason Sokol, *There Goes My everything: White Southerners in the Age of Civil Rights, 1945–1975* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007). For the latter, see Jason Morgan Ward, *Defending White Democracy: The making of a Segregationist Movement & the Remaking of Racial Politics, 1936–1965* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2011), who invokes that idea because of the impact of federal challenges to southern segregation during the New Deal Era and, later, during World War II.

²⁸ Ward, *Defending White Democracy*, p.4; Luckett, *Joe T. Patterson*; Joseph Crespino, *In Search of Another Country: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution*, (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 2007), 11 and 18.

²⁹ Crespino, *In Search of Another Country*, 11 and 18.

blanched of racism, but which nonetheless retained the dog whistles of racial politics. As Rolph's later focus on the Citizens' Council movement reinforced, organized segregationists in Mississippi were, for the most part, sufficiently patient to wait for the currents of national conservatism to drag the rest of the nation to a position which reflected the practical segregation Crespino had identified in the Magnolia State. Many of Mississippi's segregationists, those scholars have showed, were shrewd, adaptable, sensitive to their environment and even, at times, dynamic.³⁰

Studies that have sought to place Mississippi's political and racial adaptations into broader context have also by necessity had to wrestle with the myth of Mississippian exceptionalism, which has generated its own lively scholarly debates for generations.³¹ Indeed, in his contemporary review of Silver's *The Closed Society*, Mississippi-born Louis R. Harlan noted that the urban riots of the late 1960s had weakened "public belief in Mississippi's singularity as a rural cancer-spot of bigotry isolated from an urbanizing, progressive America. It is now clear that there is a bit of Mississippi in the heart of every metropolis," he concluded, and "that the suburbs are still 'closed societies.'"³² For some, Mississippi's lack of exceptionalism was most clearly exposed by its natural home in a grouping of "the Gulf South," which runs from Texas to Florida.³³ More consistently, others have seen commonalities with what Atlanta historian Kevin M. Kruse has referred to as the politics of suburban secession.³⁴ The consensus that emerges is one of a myth of Mississippian

³⁰ Rolph, *Resisting Equality*, 186-187.

³¹ Although it is a debate that has touched a number of other studies, its timelines are best crystallized as running between John Egerton, *The Americanization of Dixie: The Southernization of America* (New York: Harper's Magazine Press, 1974) and James C. Cobb, *Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

³² Louis R. Harlan, "Review of Mississippi: The Closed Society," *Journal of American History*, Vol. 54 (Dec. 1967): 724.

³³ Samuel C. Hyde, Jr. [ed.] *Sunbelt Revolution: The Historical Progression of the Civil Rights Struggle in the Gulf South, 1866-2000* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003).

³⁴ Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005). See, too, M. D. Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South*, (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 2006). Crespino argues less that the new color-blindness was a side-product of that suburban shift, and more that it was and always had been an integral part of the Magnolia state's segregationist politics. This may have been a new politics for the Sunbelt South, but for Mississippi, it was closer to representing continuities both in the style and the substance of the state's segregationist politics.

exceptionalism, although, as with many such historical myths, this one, too, had a purpose: a Mississippi long imagined as so exceptional as to be “the South on steroids” at least offered the state’s Whites the defense of having become a convenient scapegoat for wider ills.³⁵ In much the same way that being a named state in one of the original Brown cases led to enhanced scrutiny of segregationist practices and resulted in greater pressures to desegregate, so, surely, other states which overtly or covertly tolerated racist practices benefited from Mississippi’s mythical position as somehow separate from the norms of United States racial practice and standards of justice. Mississippi, though, was not exceptional in the South, and nor was the South exceptional in the United States. Indeed, as the growing number of transnational racial histories triggered by Mary L. Dudziak’s pivotal work attest, the United States was not even exceptional among White, avowedly democratic nations.³⁶

The protection of the race- and class-based privileges of suburban White America, often under the moniker “freedom of choice,” came to replace the violent repression of civil rights activism, a shift which was perhaps best exemplified by the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission’s late term attempts to suppress the rougher edges of both Council and Klan. Indeed, at least in a symbolic sense, these new histories reaffirm that what have been termed the “set pieces” of Mississippi’s massive resistance acted as a conjurer’s trick to draw the eye, while the real work of sustaining White privilege continued quietly but effectively beyond the immediate gaze. As an increasing number of studies are now beginning to show, many of the issues which intersected in the daily lives of both civil rights activists in the Delta and the segregationists who opposed an increase in those rights continued to be felt once the national spotlight brought by the “classical phase” of Movement activity

³⁵ Crespino, “Mississippi as Metaphor: Civil Rights, the South, and the Nation in the Historical Imagination,” in M. D. Lassiter and J. Crespino (eds.), *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism*, (Oxford University Press: New York, 2010). This is freely available, although without page numbers online, at: [https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=0xNbY2CehHgC&pg=PT76&dq=M.+D.+Lassiter+and+J.+Crespino+\(eds\),+The+Myth+of+Southern+Exceptionalism&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwio0OSBqP_hAhVeQRUIHaVICYQQ6AEIODAD#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=0xNbY2CehHgC&pg=PT76&dq=M.+D.+Lassiter+and+J.+Crespino+(eds),+The+Myth+of+Southern+Exceptionalism&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwio0OSBqP_hAhVeQRUIHaVICYQQ6AEIODAD#v=onepage&q&f=false)

³⁶ Mary L. Dudziak, “Desegregation as a Cold War Imperative,” *Stanford Law Review* 41, No. 1 (November 1988), pp. 61-120 and *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000); Rolph, *Resisting Equality*; Hyman, “American Segregationist Ideology and White Southern Africa.”

in the state had dimmed. The management of, and protests against, endemic poverty and inadequate funding for services ranging from childcare to education has lent historians a new lens through which to view the lives of many Mississippians as the 1960s drew to a close. The recent growth in studies of the War on Poverty in the Delta have served to show not only the sheer scale of the Johnson Administration's endeavor and just how entangled its bureaucracy became, but also why and how it became a new locus for protest. Again, this is a history of continuity and not change.³⁷ It was Mississippi's Freedom Schools which begat the Child Development Group of Mississippi as one of the War on Poverty's Head Start programs, and it was through the unequal dispensing of War on Poverty funding that segregationists found yet another mechanism for perpetuating inequalities and sustaining White hegemony well into the 1970s.³⁸ Again, where scholars have begun to look nationally in a bid to identify the origins of what is now known widely as the New Right, much of the conservative populism that underpinned that rise in Mississippi found clear voice in sustained attacks against the War on Poverty's Community Action Programs.³⁹

In a final strand of Mississippi's history that has grown significantly in stature and purpose in the very recent past, historians have been questioning the processes by which that history is remembered, and, increasingly, how it might best be commemorated. Some of the momentum behind this emerging sub-field has come from books that look not at the postwar epoch *per se*, but at the development of "cold

³⁷ For continuities and, in particular, for issues of legacy, see A. Jordan, 'Fighting for the CDGM: Poor People, Local Politics and the Complicated Legacy of Head Start' in A. Orleck and L. G. Hazirjian (eds), *The War on Poverty: A New Grassroots History 1964-1980* (University of Georgia Press: Athens, 2011), 280-307.

³⁸ J. N. Hale, "The Struggle Begins Early: Head Start and the Mississippi Freedom Movement", *History of Education Quarterly* 52, No. 4 (2012) 506-534; Emma J. Folwell, *Poverty Wars in Mississippi* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, forthcoming) and "The legacy of the Child Development Group of Mississippi: White Opposition to Head Start, 1965-1972" *Journal of Mississippi History* 76, No. 1 (Spring/Summer 2014): 43-68.

³⁹ Michael Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion: An American History* [Revised Edition] (New York: Cornell University Press, 2014); Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Ronald P. Formisano, *Boston Against Busing: Race, Class, and Ethnicity in the 1960s and 1970s* [Revised Edition] (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Folwell, *The War on Poverty in Mississippi*. For a study bridging conventional timeframes, see C. Danielson, *After Freedom Summer: How Race Realigned Mississippi Politics, 1965-1986*, (University Press of Florida: Gainesville, 2011).

case” investigations of crimes committed during that period.⁴⁰ Scholars have shown that work centered on memory can be outward-looking, and can bring new analyses of wider issues to the fore. A concerted historiographical wave in the 1990s re-centered the role of female activists in the civil rights era, for example, but that scholarship, too, has been revived by the emergence of memory studies. As Steve Estes has shown, not simply women’s history but gender more broadly has been central to the way in which some of the epochal events of Mississippi’s postwar past have been recalled and continue to be remembered.⁴¹

Elsewhere, however, the driver has been one of reconciliation: how to reconcile the complexities of this past with the simplicity of the narratives that society prefers to tell when discussing it, and how to do so in such a way that allows the space for different Mississippians to remember—and commemorate—different pasts. Much of that literature probably belongs to an analysis of Mississippi history in the twenty-first century, but placing it can become as complex as the histories it has tried to commemorate. As Chris Myers Ash has written when explaining the Sunflower County Freedom School of which he formed a part, living with a university library named after James O. Eastland and a reservoir after Ross Barnett demands careful negotiation. As important work on the national commemoration of the history of this period continues to appear, so it becomes clear that acts of commemoration can be as political as the acts which they attempt to commemorate.⁴² That can prove a particularly difficult balancing act for those institutions which had an active role in the sustenance of White supremacy in

⁴⁰ See, for example, Maryanne Vollers, *Ghosts of Mississippi: The Murder of Medgar Evers, the Trials of Byron de la Beckwith, and the Haunting of the New South* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1995).

⁴¹ Steve Estes, “Engendering Movement Memories: Remembering Race and Gender in the Mississippi Movement,” in Renee C. Romano and Leigh Raiford [eds.] *The Civil Rights Movement in American Memory* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 2006), 290–313.

⁴² See in particular Renee C. Romano and Leigh Raiford [eds.] *The Civil Rights Movement in American Memory* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 2006) and Crosby [ed.] *Civil Rights History from the Ground Up* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2011). For Mississippi-centric studies, see Chris Myers Ash, “The Movement is in You: The Sunflower Freedom Project and the Lessons of the Civil Rights Past,” and Emilye Crosby, “Looking the Devil in the Eye: Race Relations and the Civil Rights Movement in Claiborne County History and Memory,” both in in Ownby [ed.] *The Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi*, 250–265 and 266–299 respectively.

the mid-twentieth century, but which have—ever so slowly—turned to commemorate those struggles at the start of the twenty-first.⁴³ As the institutions of White supremacy grapple with the very real issues of how to commemorate—and even whether to acknowledge—their own roles in the many battles of the post-war era, it is fitting here to return to the figure with whom this essay first began. When a new edition of James W. Silver's most critical work was published half a century after he left Ole Miss and in time to commemorate 50 years since the riots which greeted James Meredith's attempted entry to the university, it was not with the same northern New York-based press which had issued his initial work. In one appropriate symbol of a state striving to come to terms with its own racial past, at least, a new edition of *The Closed Society* was published by the University Press of Mississippi, to which Ole Miss was and remains a core contributor.⁴⁴

⁴³ See, for example, the film *Rebels: James Meredith and the Integration of Ole Miss*, (Dir. Matthew Graves, 2012), which was produced by the Southern Documentary Project, an institute of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture affiliated with the School of Journalism and New Media at Ole Miss. The documentary revealed the lack of knowledge among contemporary students of the events surrounding Meredith's admission, but also left difficult questions unasked of interviewees, who consistently positioned themselves as witnesses but not participants.

⁴⁴ Silver, *Mississippi: The Closed Society* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2012).

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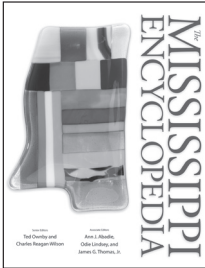
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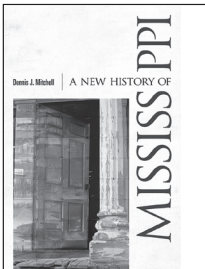
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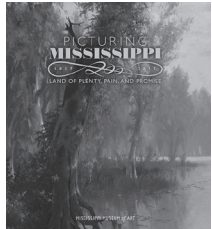
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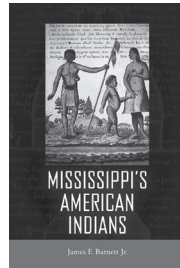
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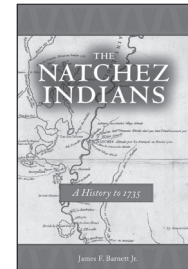


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