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## OVERCOMING

Charles Eagles: *The Price of Defiance: James Meredith and the Integration of Ole Miss*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009. Pp. 584. \$35.00.)

Frank Lambert: *The Battle of Ole Miss: Civil Rights v. States' Rights*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. Pp. xiv, 194. \$22.95.)

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Taken together, Charles Eagles's *The Price of Defiance* and Frank Lambert's *The Battle of Ole Miss* make for diverging companion pieces about the crisis that surrounded James Meredith's integration of the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss) in 1962. To use a simplistic characterization, *The Battle of Ole Miss* is the "Cliffs Notes" version of events by Lambert, who is now a history professor at Purdue and who was a student and football player at Ole Miss when Meredith arrived. By contrast, Eagles's work is the product of a prodigious scholarly effort and is at times correspondingly dense, but *The Price of Defiance* will no doubt be considered by many to be the definitive account of the Meredith story.

Significantly more accessible to a general audience, *The Battle of Ole Miss* contextualizes Meredith by treating him as part of the larger story of the civil rights movement in Mississippi and rightly rejects the view of his desegregation of Ole Miss as some sort of teleological process. Instead, Meredith was a product of his environment, both of his unique upbringing and of Jim Crow Mississippi, and Lambert reveals how the Meredith crisis spelled the beginning of the end of massive resistance, although it did not mean the defeat of white supremacy.

Still, Lambert struggles to balance the "eyewitness account and an historian's perspective" (x). In attempting to explain the competing motives of students on the Ole Miss campus—both those of Meredith and those of white undergraduates—Lambert tackles a major task that he leaves incomplete at best. He admits that his own bias as "one of the self-absorbed students who remained passive as extremists set the course of events" prevents him from being entirely objective (2), but he also fails to nail down Meredith's motivations and reconcile what white students thought then with their memories now.

Although Lambert does touch on other topics such as states' rights and the political shift of the white South from the Republican to the Democratic Party, he returns to two basic arguments: (1) Meredith was a "maverick" who recognized that, whether he liked it or not, he was acting on behalf of black people throughout the country (171); and (2) white Ole Miss students were more interested in football games and classes than race relations but were willing to accept token desegregation "rather than jeopardize the university's future" (106). Lambert does not let those white students off the hook for their indifference, but his explanation does seem apologetic.

Based almost exclusively on secondary sources and an interview with James Meredith, *The Battle of Ole Miss* suffers from insufficient research and, as a consequence, inadequate analysis. For example, Lambert argues that there is no proof that the Sovereignty Commission was implicated in Clyde Kennard's rejection by Mississippi Southern College (now the University of Southern Mississippi), but the evidence he relies on comes from a secondary source. A brief inspection of the now-opened Sovereignty Commission files indicates that the state segregationist organization may have had much more to do with the tragic situation surrounding the Kennard case. At another point, Lambert claims that Ross Barnett "knew that interposition was bankrupt as a legal strategy" and used it only for political gain (97). Yet plenty of evidence shows that Barnett thought he was going to be able to outwit the federal government and that his authority would prevail over that of the Kennedy administration.

Both Lambert and Eagles wrap up their books by describing the events surrounding the erection of a civil rights memorial on the Ole Miss campus in 2006. Lambert describes the monument dedication as "a fitting tribute ... under the leadership of Chancellor Robert Khayat," but he notes that Meredith was not allowed to speak at the ceremony because his comments were feared to be "too dark and political" (151). Lambert does not delve deeper into the reasons for Meredith's exclusion but concludes that, with overt racism "jettisoned," Meredith had "contributed to a new political discourse in Mississippi" (166). Further research would have revealed a less tidy finale. Eagles's conclusion, much like the rest of his book, is more nuanced and in-depth.

In *The Price of Defiance*, Eagles offers a comprehensive look at the Meredith crisis. Like Lambert, he puts Meredith within his historical context and agrees that Meredith was a "complicated" individual who recognized that his actions at Ole Miss could bring an end to segregation at institutions throughout the South (4). Additionally, Eagles argues that Ole Miss was an important symbol because it "self-consciously and proudly defended southern traditions" for whites and that Meredith chose Ole Miss for that very reason (15). He blames both state leaders and administrators at Ole Miss for their racism and points out that they provoked the riots. There is nothing groundbreaking about these arguments, but Eagles thoroughly utilizes the primary evidence to make his case. The problem is that Eagles gets bogged down in his research and in his recounting of events.

In providing background to the Meredith crisis, Eagles composes a detailed history of Ole Miss, Meredith, and race relations in Mississippi that offers some important and engaging contextualization but tends to drag on. The second half of the book is where the story picks up steam, but here the narrative tends to trudge along through minute details of the crisis itself. *The Price of Defiance* is not light reading material.

Ultimately, for Eagles, segregationists may have given in to Meredith's demands, but they rejected the idea that the attendance of one black

undergraduate in any way marked an integrated student body. Meredith's entry into Ole Miss was not a sweeping victory on behalf of civil rights, and the outcome of the larger fight against white supremacy was still uncertain. Not only that, but, with his personal legacy, Meredith had "violated the expectations for a civil rights hero" and opened the door for part of the debate that surrounded the 2006 civil rights memorial on the Ole Miss campus (434).

Eagles explores the decade-long, public process that had resulted in a professionally juried civil rights monument to be built between the Lyceum and the Library but that was subsequently derailed. In particular, Chancellor Khayat objected to a number of issues in the original design, not the least of which was the use of the word "fear." In its place, Khayat hand-picked a plan for a memorial and erected it in a few short months, with quotes etched in it from Meredith that had been taken out of context. For Eagles, the dedication of that memorial "betrayed the limitations of the racial change" at Ole Miss and marked "the continuing inability or unwillingness of some whites to engage the complexity and tragic history of race in Mississippi" (441, 443). In that sense, the civil rights movement and the Meredith crisis left a lot of unfinished business. That should not be news to anyone, nor should much of the information found in *The Price of Defiance*. Nevertheless, it is a work of enormous scholarship that fills in the details of a turning point in the civil rights movement.

—Robert E. Lockett Jr.

### AN ALTERNATIVE LEGACY

Victoria E. Bynum: *The Long Shadow of the Civil War: Southern Dissent and Its Legacies*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010. Pp. xi, 221. \$35.00.)

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Victoria Bynum's *The Long Shadow of the Civil War* traces the "legacies of the American Civil War" by examining Southerners who resisted the Confederate government (xi). The book confronts two longstanding historiographical questions. First, historians have debated the degree of support among Southerners to the Confederate cause. Gary Gallagher, arguing for strong popular support, points out in *The Confederate War* (Harvard University Press, 1997) that approximately seventy-five to eighty-five percent of available white males in the Confederacy were placed under arms and fought a lengthy, brutal, and costly war (28–36). Bynum sees significant dissatisfaction in the populace. Second, historians have asked whether the South in the nineteenth century experienced more continuity or discontinuity as a result of the Civil War. Bynum finds ideological continuity in the nineteenth-century South from "Southern Unionists who evolved into New