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JAMES MEREDITH, J. EDGAR HOOVER, AND THE INTEGRATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI



In the fall of 1962 the college town of Oxford, Mississippi, erupted in violence. At the center of the controversy stood James Meredith, an African American who was attempting to register at the all-white University of Mississippi, known as "Ole Miss." Meredith had the support of the federal government, which insisted that Mississippi honor the rights of all its citizens, regardless of race. Mississippi's refusal led to a showdown between state and federal authorities and the storming of the campus by a segregationist mob. Two people died and dozens were injured. In the end, Ole Miss, the state of Mississippi, and the nation were forever changed.

Date Range: 1961-1962

Content: 8,792 images

Source Library: Federal Bureau of Investigation Library

Detailed Description:

History is often made when one person stands his ground and demands his dream. When James Meredith sought to legally become the first African American to attend the University of Mississippi, the duty of upholding the federal law allowing him to do so, fell upon the shoulders of the Justice Department and the FBI. James Meredith launched a legal revolt against white supremacy in the most segregated state in America and the iconic institution, Ole Miss. Meredith's challenge ultimately triggered what Time magazine called "the gravest conflict between federal and state authority since the Civil War," a crisis that on September 30, 1962, exploded into a confrontation between University students, the community of Oxford Mississippi, the state governor Ross Barnett, and a small corps of federal marshals. On October 1, President John F. Kennedy ordered 20,000 U.S. combat infantry, paratroopers, military police, and National Guard troops to Oxford, Mississippi to restore order.

This collection contains extensive FBI documentation on Meredith's battle to enroll at The University of Mississippi in 1962 and white political and social backlash, including his

correspondence with the NAACP and positive and negative letters he received from around the world during his ordeal.