



The Free State of Jones, Movie Edition: Mississippi's Longest Civil War (The Fred W. Morrison Series in Southern Studies)

By Victoria E. Bynum

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Between late 1863 and mid-1864, an armed band of Confederate deserters battled Confederate cavalry in the Piney Woods region of Jones County, Mississippi. Calling themselves the Knight Company after their captain, Newton Knight, they set up headquarters in the swamps of the Leaf River, where they declared their loyalty to the U.S. government.

The story of the Jones County rebellion is well known among Mississippians, and debate over whether the county actually seceded from the state during the war has smoldered for more than a century. Adding further controversy to the legend is the story of Newt Knight's interracial romance with his wartime accomplice, Rachel, a slave. From their relationship there developed a mixed-race community that endured long after the Civil War had ended, and the ambiguous racial identity of their descendants confounded the rules of segregated Mississippi well into the twentieth century.

Victoria Bynum traces the origins and legacy of the Jones County uprising from the American Revolution to the modern civil rights movement. In bridging the gap between the legendary and the real Free State of Jones, she shows how the legend--what was told, what was embellished, and what was left out--reveals a great deal about the South's transition from slavery to segregation; the racial, gender, and class politics of the period; and the contingent nature of history and memory.

In a new afterword, Bynum updates readers on recent scholarship, current issues of race and Southern heritage, and the coming movie that make this Civil War story essential reading.

The Free State of Jones film, starring Matthew McConaughey, Gugu Mbatha-Raw, and Keri Russell, will be released in May 2016.

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Editorial Review

Review

Bynum is to be saluted not only for her profound scholarship but for her evenhanded accounts of matters that remain volatile and controversial. . . . [This] book should be praised as an original and cogent piece of scholarship on a devilishly complicated and demanding subject.--*Washington Times*

This is an excellent book and Bynum deserves much praise for her ability to negotiate the minefield of myth and legend to produce a study that not only makes a tremendous contribution to scholarship but is a compelling read as well. Thoroughly researched, thoughtfully argued, well-written, and unfailingly interesting, Bynum's work further demonstrates the potential of local studies to shed light on broader forces that have shaped the American past. It deserves attention from those interested in the Free State of Jones, the Civil War in history and memory, and the enduring impact of race, class, and gender on Southern history.--*H-Net*

Bynum shows how future historians might convincingly knit together the all too-often disparate fields of political, ideological, gender, and racial histories.--*Virginia Quarterly Review*

Bynum's deeply researched and well-written book unravels the historical and sociological significance of the Piney Woods region of southeastern Mississippi. . . . Powerful, revisionist, and timely, Bynum's book combines superb history with poignant analysis of historical memory and southern racial mores.--*Choice*

An ambitious piece of work spanning three centuries that presents a lively and intricate portrait of some fascinating and idiosyncratic characters. . . . Prodigious research in genealogical material, census files, church records, official documents, and oral histories provides as full a picture of Jones County and its people as we are ever likely to have.--*American Historical Review*

Well researched.--*New York Times Book Review*

Bynum has fashioned frustratingly disparate material into an important book that may cause historians who are skeptical about putting too much stress on an 'inner' Civil War to rethink their position.--*American Historical Review*

Review

The Free State of Jones is clearly a story that needs to be told, and Bynum has done impressive research to bring it to a modern audience. She uses a wide range of social history sources to trace the long history not only of Newt Knight and his gang but also of their ancestors. She is interested in social structure, economic patterns, migration, religious revivals, family formation, and community relations--in short, a genealogy of the entire Jones County community before they became famous during and after the Civil War. This is an ambitious project that brings the Jones County community to life for scholars, students, and lay readers.--Altina L. Waller, author of *Feud: Hatfields, McCoys, and Social Change in Appalachia, 1860-1900*

Local studies have made us increasingly aware of the many different ways in which southerners experienced the Civil War. Few communities fought as much of the war on their own terms or generated as distorted yet profound a legacy afterward as did the men and women of this renegade county in Mississippi's Piney Woods. It's a fascinating story, and Victoria Bynum tells it remarkably well.--John C. Inscoe, coauthor of *The Heart of Confederate Appalachia: Western North Carolina in the Civil War*

From the Inside Flap

Across a century, Victoria Bynum reinterprets the cultural, social, and political meaning of Mississippi's longest civil war, waged in the Free State of Jones, the southeastern Mississippi county that was home to a Unionist stronghold during the Civil War and home to a large and complex mixed-race community in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Garnet Veach:

Now a day people who Living in the era just where everything reachable by connect to the internet and the resources inside can be true or not call for people to be aware of each info they get. How people have to be smart in receiving any information nowadays? Of course the answer then is reading a book. Reading a book can help individuals out of this uncertainty Information especially this The Free State of Jones, Movie Edition: Mississippi's Longest Civil War (The Fred W. Morrison Series in Southern Studies) book because book offers you rich information and knowledge. Of course the info in this book hundred % guarantees there is no doubt in it as you know.

Anna Rangel:

The book untitled The Free State of Jones, Movie Edition: Mississippi's Longest Civil War (The Fred W. Morrison Series in Southern Studies) contain a lot of information on this. The writer explains her idea with easy method. The language is very simple to implement all the people, so do not necessarily worry, you can easy to read the item. The book was authored by famous author. The author will bring you in the new period of literary works. You can easily read this book because you can continue reading your smart phone, or program, so you can read the book with anywhere and anytime. In a situation you wish to purchase the e-book, you can open up their official web-site along with order it. Have a nice examine.

Chris McCree:

In this age globalization it is important to someone to acquire information. The information will make someone to understand the condition of the world. The healthiness of the world makes the information easier to share. You can find a lot of recommendations to get information example: internet, newspapers, book, and soon. You will see that now, a lot of publisher this print many kinds of book. The particular book that recommended to you is The Free State of Jones, Movie Edition: Mississippi's Longest Civil War (The Fred W. Morrison Series in Southern Studies) this reserve consist a lot of the information of the condition of this world now. This kind of book was represented so why is the world has grown up. The vocabulary styles that writer make usage of to explain it is easy to understand. Typically the writer made some investigation when he makes this book. That's why this book suitable all of you.

Manuel Rose:

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