

James Meredith

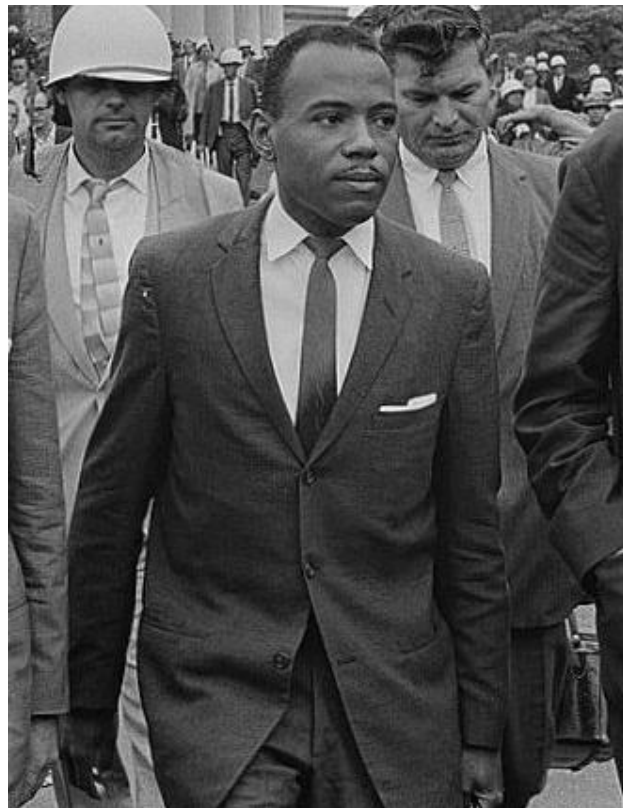
His Impact on America's South

By S.D.

James Meredith

His Impact on America's South

- ▶ A. The Man
- ▶ B. The Times
- ▶ C. The Mission
- ▶ D. The Results



The Man - James Meredith

Born on June 25, 1933 in Kosciusko, Mississippi

The Man - James Meredith

- ❑ Meredith was born in Kosciusko, MS on June 25, 1933 during a time of extreme racial segregation in the Southern United States of America.
- ❑ His father ran their large family farm like a general, mostly protecting them from outside influences.
- ❑ His education after high school included the military (Air Force), Jackson State College, University of Ibadan (in Nigeria), Columbia University, and University of Mississippi.



James Meredith - the Man

- ❑ Meredith married Mary June Wiggins in 1956 and they had three sons.
- ❑ Widowed, he married Judy Alsobrooks now totaling five children.
- ❑ He saw no racial problems while stationed in Japan, kept up with racial tensions home, and set a resolve of doing something about feeling as free at home as he did in Japan.
- ❑ It has been said of him by Medgar Evers, “Meredith has more guts than any man I know, but he’s the hardest-headed son-of-a-gun I ever met.”
- ❑ An attorney for the NAACP Jack Greenburg thought “Meredith was a man with a mission. He acted like he was an agent of God.”



The Times - Civil Rights Movement

1954-1968

The Times - Civil Rights

- ❑ Meredith planned to capitalize on John F. Kennedy's pledge to civil rights for African Americans.
- ❑ The United States Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* that public school segregation was unconstitutional.
- ❑ Boycotts and sit-ins of racially segregated public spaces increased, and powerfully motivating speakers emerged.



The Times - Civil Rights

1954-1968

- ❑ Meredith was inspired by the “Little Rock Nine” attempting to enter a public school. The courage of one, a fifteen year old girl, inspired him greatly.
- ❑ In 1960 he going back to Mississippi, he found the following: black people could not vote, hold political offices, sit on a jury, or participate in public spaces for white people including schools.
- ❑ Racism was rampant and racial violence was routine.



The Mission - University of Mississippi Admissions

The Strategy of 1961

The Mission - University of Mississippi Admissions

- ❑ Acting as though at war, Meredith strategized to overpower white supremacy in the south.
- ❑ Denied admission in winter of 1961, Meredith contacted the US Department of Justice and proceeded with a lawsuit with the NAACP.
- ❑ His case went through the lower courts to the U.S. Supreme Court which ruled in his favor in 1962.



The Mission - University of Mississippi Admissions

- ❑ Mississippi Governor Ross Barnett tried to block his admission.
- ❑ The Kennedy administration send federal marshals with Meredith to register, but it failed due to racial crowds.
- ❑ Finally, Kennedy spoke to Barnett, sent the Mississippi National Guard to the college, and sent the U.S. Army troops to Memphis.
- ❑ Mob violence occurred in which 160 marshals were injured and two bystanders were killed.



The Results - Full Integration

1962 - 2014

The Results - Full Integration

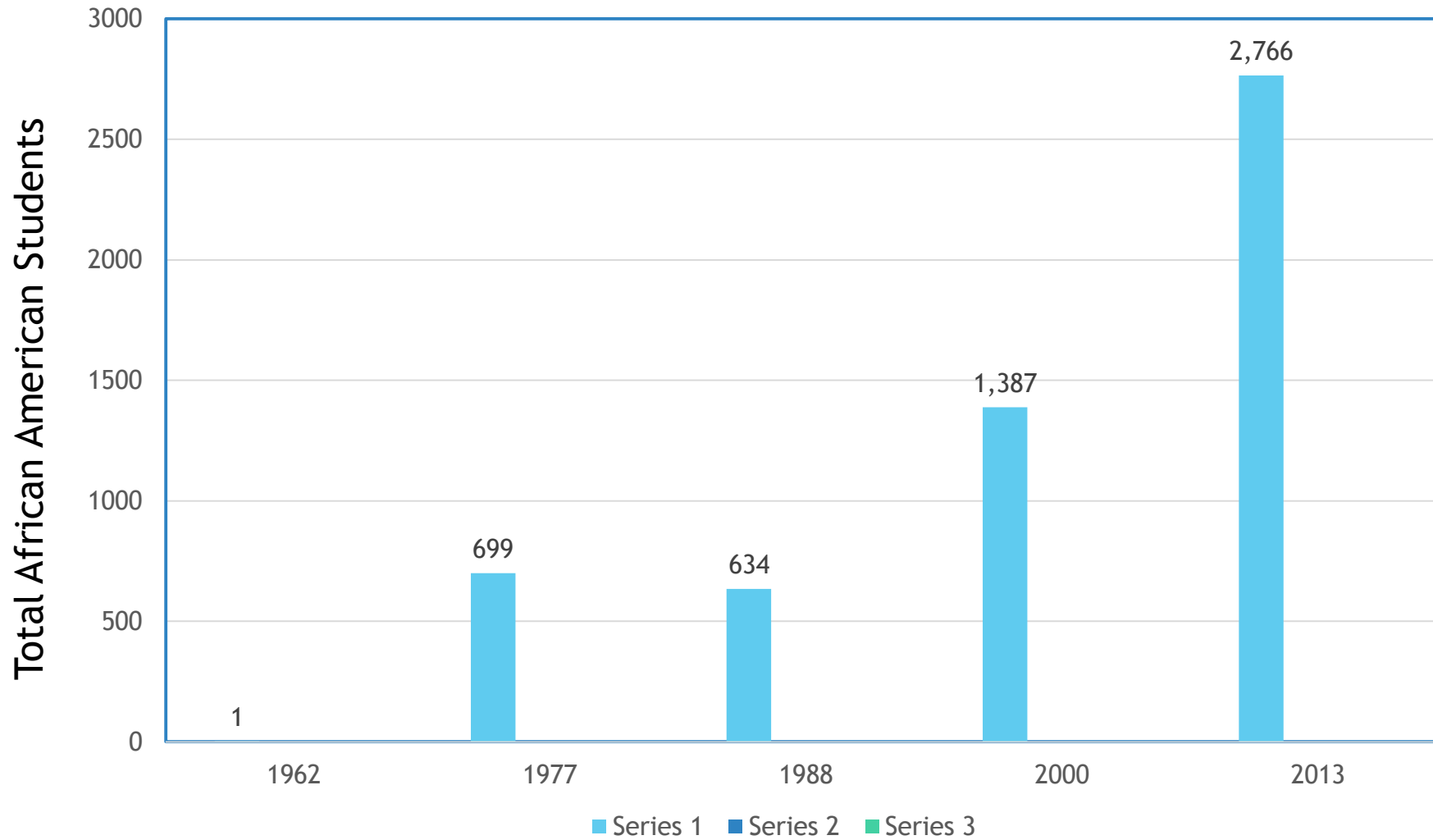
- ❑ James Meredith finally enrolled after much turmoil: two deaths and 375 injured.
- ❑ He was even shot during the March Against Fear from Memphis to Jackson.
- ❑ Enrollments of African Americans have increased steadily, from only Meredith in 1962 to 2,766 in 2013 at the University of Mississippi in Oxford.
- ❑ James Meredith graduated on August 18, 1963 from University of Mississippi.



Federal Troops Called in by President Kennedy - Enrollment Success



University of Mississippi African American Enrollment



Over Fifty Years of Increased Enrollment

How James Meredith Influenced America

“I was creating images then that were designed for forty years in the future.”

- James Meredith

I believe that colleges would have taken longer to integrate without Meredith. The highly oppressive Jim Crow laws would have lasted longer in the South. Meredith wanted 100% American citizenship for all African Americans. The whole nation was watching. An American president was pulled into the chaos. Federal troops were called in into the last battle ground for African American civil rights. Meredith prove that a man with a mission and the right support can get results, and the results were for every generation after him.

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