



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*

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*

Powerful, revisionist, and timely, Bynum's book combines superb history with poignant analysis of historical memory and southern racial mores.--*Choice*

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*

About the Author

Victoria E. Bynum is Distinguished Professor Emeritus of history at Texas State University.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jonathan McLean:

Have you spare time for a day? What do you do when you have considerably more or little spare time? Yep,

you can choose the suitable activity to get spend your time. Any person spent their particular spare time to take a stroll, shopping, or went to often the Mall. How about open or perhaps read a book entitled The Free State of Jones, Movie Edition: Mississippi's Longest Civil War (The Fred W. Morrison Series in Southern Studies)? Maybe it is to become best activity for you. You realize beside you can spend your time with the favorite's book, you can wiser than before. Do you agree with its opinion or you have various other opinion?

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Playing with family in a park, coming to see the marine world or hanging out with close friends is thing that usually you might have done when you have spare time, then why you don't try factor that really opposite from that. One particular activity that make you not feeling tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you are ride on and with addition info. Even you love The Free State of Jones, Movie Edition: Mississippi's Longest Civil War (The Fred W. Morrison Series in Southern Studies), you could enjoy both. It is good combination right, you still want to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh can occur its mind hangout men. What? Still don't obtain it, oh come on its referred to as reading friends.

Lloyd North:

The Free State of Jones, Movie Edition: Mississippi's Longest Civil War (The Fred W. Morrison Series in Southern Studies) can be one of your nice books that are good idea. Many of us recommend that straight away because this reserve has good vocabulary that will increase your knowledge in terminology, easy to understand, bit entertaining but nonetheless delivering the information. The writer giving his/her effort to set every word into joy arrangement in writing The Free State of Jones, Movie Edition: Mississippi's Longest Civil War (The Fred W. Morrison Series in Southern Studies) however doesn't forget the main stage, giving the reader the hottest in addition to based confirm resource information that maybe you can be one among it. This great information could drawn you into brand-new stage of crucial pondering.

Margaret Thompson:

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