

Ballad of Oxford (Jimmy Meredith)

By Phil Ochs

I'll sing you a song about a southern town where the devil had his rule
When marshalls faced an angry mob to send one man to school
His name was Jimmy Meredith
the tide he helped to turn
For he chose to stay on that terrible day
The land was soon to learn

There was blood, red blood, on their hands,
Yellow dirt on their clothes
What they thought they were doing,
Only god and the devil knows
There was hate, cold hate, in their hearts,
Shot from their souls like a gun
And as they threw their stones and bricks,
They screamed, "see what you have done!"

The governor made a promise he would keep the trouble down
But when the mob got ugly no troopers could be found
And men were filled with hate and fear,
They screamed into the night
The rebel flag waved in the air
The symbol of state's rights

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Gas was fired into the mob after each attack
And though the gas was running low, they never fired back
And when the smoke had cleared and the fury felt its pain
Two men were dead and a hundred bled
The south had risen again

So listen Mr Barnet, and Mr Walker, too
The times are changing mighty fast, they'll roll right over you
But someday you'll head for the south, to the southern tip of hell
And it's hot down there, white-hot down there
Let's hear your rebel yell!

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