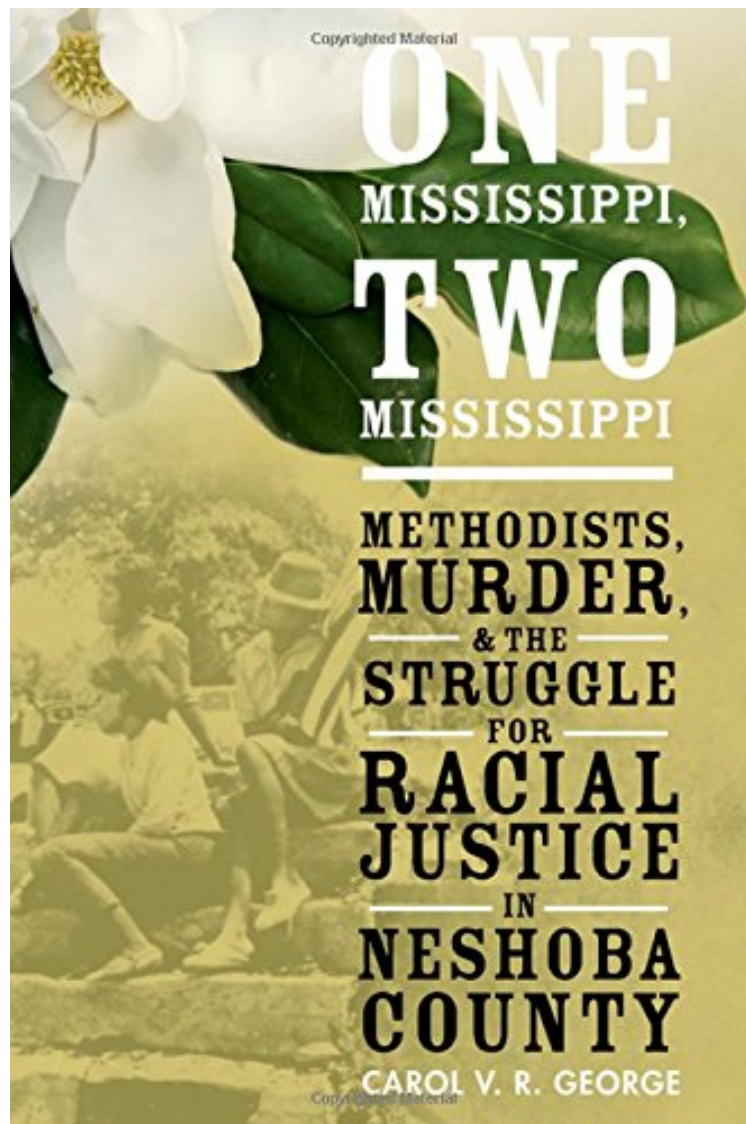


(Free and download) One Mississippi, Two Mississippi: Methodists, Murder, and the Struggle for Racial Justice in Neshoba County

One Mississippi, Two Mississippi: Methodists, Murder, and the Struggle for Racial Justice in Neshoba County

Carol V. R. George

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Carol V. R. George : One Mississippi, Two Mississippi: Methodists, Murder, and the Struggle for Racial Justice in Neshoba County before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised One Mississippi, Two Mississippi: Methodists, Murder, and the Struggle for Racial Justice in Neshoba County:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Jim Crow Racism, Murder, and the Methodist Church By Nancy A. "Evil flourishes when good people sit idly by and do nothing." Attorney General Hood As I read *One Mississippi, Two Mississippi: Murder, Methodists, and the Struggle for Racial Justice in Neshoba County* by Carol V. R. George I experienced shock, depression, and sorrow. I requested *One Mississippi, Two Mississippi* because of the subtitle *Murder, Methodists, and the Struggle for Racial Justice in Neshoba*. The author is a history professor who spent nine years researching the Mt. Zion Methodist Church in Neshoba and the relation between Methodists and the murder of Andrew Goodman, Michael Schwerner, and John Chaney. Goodman and Schwerner had come to the area to work for voter registration of Blacks. Chaney was a local black man. The organizational meeting to create a Freedom School was held at Mt. Zion Methodist Church in Neshoba. The young men were abducted and murdered, their bodies buried and bulldozed over, and the Mt. Zion church was burned to the ground and church members severely beaten. If you want to know about the events the book covers you can visit the Oxford University page on the book here. Or watch the movie "Neshoba" or *Mississippi Burning*. The internet is full of articles about the murders. The Methodist church is a world-wide connectional system; every four years a General Conference consisting of laity and clergy meet to vote on the denominational policies, goals, and regulations. Change does not happen quickly. The stated ideals often lag behind practice. Founder John Wesley allowed free thinking beyond basic Christian tenets. The denomination is diverse in opinion. In theory members are to think and let think. In practice, strife, conflict, and schism occur-- particularly over social issues. Segregation was one of those divisive issues. The denomination showed little prophetic leadership in demanding equality, giving Southern segregationists and the status quo a nod. This book reveals that the Southern White Methodist church laity and clergy were not only complicit in maintaining segregation but were actively involved in KKK hate crimes, murder, and a decades long cover-up. In 1939 the denomination created the Central Jurisdiction composed of Black pastors and churches, effectively establishing segregation as official church polity until 1972 when it was finally disbanded. See more about this at: <http://www.credoconfirmation.com/Leaders/LeadersArticles/tabid/292/ArticleId/449/The-Central-Jurisdiction-and-the-Story-of-Race-Relations-in-the-Methodist-Churches.aspx> It was not until after the Methodist Episcopal church merger with the United Brethren church in 1968, creating the current United Methodist Church, that implementation of federally mandated integration began. In 1970 the Neshoba County accomplished full integration without mass violence; but there were viscous attacks and harassment that led to the (white) School Superintendent's suicide. It took years and several trials before the mastermind behind the murder plot was convicted. In 1999 The Winter Institute began a study of global models of reconciliation, particularly the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, consulting with Peter Storey. It was hard to read this book, the events are so harrowing. I felt angry and ashamed and disheartened. I remembered a Facebook friend's comment about the hypocrisy of the Methodist Church, which had baffled me then. Now I get it. The friend is particularly interested in Civil Rights history. I thought about issues the church avoids today, the injustices we allow. This statement from a United Methodist Church website on confirmation materials says it all: As United Methodists—even United Methodists who weren't alive when the Central Jurisdiction was around—we have to think critically about how a faith tradition birthed by abolitionists and weaned in part by mixed-race house churches could cling to institutionalized segregation for so long. And, as we move forward, we need to make sure that we don't repeat past mistakes. We need to be mindful of ways in which we exclude people or create divisions within the church, whether based on race, nationality, language or culture, age, or any other factor. Paul in Galatians tells us that we are "all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). We should be sure we act that way. In church on Sunday I could barely keep from crying. It seemed insipid, 'feel good', shallow. Last week we heard of a church being closed; the pastor preached 'too much' about acceptance of Gay and Lesbians. The world cries. Do we listen?+++++Contents:Part IHistory and Memory Settling Longdale, MS and Mt. Zion Methodist Church reviews the founding of the church in 1833 through the Jim Crow Years to 1954Part II"The Great Anomaly" The Methodist Episcopal Church and Its Black Members looks at segregation and the creation of the Central Jurisdiction, the politicization of Mississippi Methodist church, the Methodist church's debate over segregation, the Neshoba murders and their relation to Mississippi MethodismPart IIIMt. Zion's Witness: Creating Memories considers how Neshoba struggled to fulfill equality in church and school, the retrial of accused murderers, and reconciliationI received a free ebook through NetGalley for a fair and unbiased review.

During Freedom Summer 1964, three young civil rights workers who were tasked with registering voters at Mt. Zion Methodist Church in Neshoba County, Mississippi were murdered there by law enforcement and Ku Klux Klansmen. The murders were hardly noticed in the area, so familiar had such violence become in the Magnolia State. For forty-one days the bodies of the three men lay undetected in a nearby dam, and for years afterward efforts to bring those responsible to justice were met only with silence. In *One Mississippi, Two Mississippi*, Carol V.R. George links the history of the Methodist Church (now the United Methodist Church), with newly-researched local history to show the role of this large denomination, important to both blacks and whites, in Mississippi's stumble toward racial justice. From 1930-1968, white Methodists throughout the church segregated their black co-religionists, silencing black ministers and many white ministers as well, locking their doors to all but their own members. Finally, the combination

of civil rights activism and embarrassed Methodist morality persuaded the United Methodists to restore black people to full membership. As the county and church integrated, volunteers from all races began to agitate for a new trial for the chief conspirator of the murders. In 2005, forty-one years after the killings, the accused was found guilty, his fate determined by local jurors who deliberated in a city ringed with casinos, unrecognizable to the old Neshoba. In one sense a spiritual history, the book is a microhistory of Mt. Zion Methodist Church and its struggles with white Neshoba, as a community learned that reconciliation requires a willingness to confront the past fully and truthfully. George draws on interviews with county residents, black and white Methodist leaders, civil rights veterans, and those in civic groups, academia, and state government who are trying to carry the flag for reconciliation. George's sources--printed, oral, and material--offer a compelling account of the way in which residents of a place long reviled as "dark Neshoba" have taken up the task of truth-telling in a world uncomfortable with historical truth.

"In One Mississippi, Two Mississippi, church historian Carol V. R. George offers a complex and timely examination of race, religion, and the construction of memory and history in America... This account of the persistent witness of Mt. Zion to justice and equity over nearly two centuries, combined with the hard work of the Philadelphia Coalition in Neshoba County, offers both a hopeful and sobering case study for those confronting systemic racism and seeking justice and reconciliation." --Journal of the American Academy of Religion "[George's] work will always be a useful resource. However, in this particular season of American life and politics, her words not only evoke a time gone by but can hint at a future that may be filled with its own sinister developments." --Journal of Southern Religion "Flannery O'Connor wrote about the value of 'reading a small history in a universal light.' In writing her extraordinary analytic history of Mt. Zion Methodist Church in Philadelphia, Mississippi, Carol V.R. George has taken O'Connor's injunction to heart. The result is an exceptional book that uses the history of a single church, albeit a historically resonant one, as the lens through which to interrogate the enduring American dilemma of race. An altogether exemplary work that humanizes and localizes the dilemma as few other works ever have." --Douglas McAdam, author of *Deeply Divided: Racial Politics and Social Movements in Postwar America* "Carol V. R. George skillfully employs the best traditions of storytelling and micro-history to illuminate the African-American freedom struggle in Neshoba County, Mississippi, the site of the 1964 murders of Andrew Goodman, Michael Schwerner, and James Chaney. While her focus is on the struggles and triumphs of a single church - the Mt. Zion Methodist Church of Longdale - George's greatest contribution is a searching exploration of the complex connections between both history and memory and myth and reality." --Raymond Arsenault, author of *Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice* "By taking religion seriously, Carol V.R. George, vividly recounts why African Americans stayed in Mississippi despite the horrors of segregation, why some whites fought tenaciously to preserve their privilege, and how blacks and whites from a variety of backgrounds implicated the Methodist Church in the fight for civil rights. Read this book to better understand 1964 and the slow, non-linear march toward progress, reconciliation and inclusion." --Earl Lewis, President, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation About the Author Carol V.R. George is Research Professor of History at Hobart and William Smith Colleges.