An atmosphere of crisis prevailed in this quiet and isolated university community of northern Mississippi today, brought on by a feeling that anything might happen.

All eyes were on New Orleans for an expected contempt citation of embattled Gov. Ross R. Barnett by the United States Court of Appeals.

Meanwhile it was considered possible that another attempt would be made immediately to take James H. Meredith, 29-year-old Negro student, through one of five entrances to the University of Mississippi campus.

It was assumed of course that if such an attempt were made it would be made with a large force of deputy United States marshals. The number of marshals being brought to bear in the approaching showdown was growing. Reinforcements on the way were reported vaguely last night to consist of "several hundred" men.

A fight between marshals and state law enforcement officers appeared to be inevitable yesterday until a group of federal men headed this way from Memphis with Meredith turned back. They decided not to proceed because they were decisively outnumbered.

But the delay was only for reinforcement and regrouping—with the declared objective still the same, namely escorting the Negro to the campus by force. If he could only reach the inner precincts of the school grounds he probably would have smoother sailing, because the registrar, Robert B. Ellis, has said that he would enroll him if given the opportunity.

A crowd of perhaps 1000 or more students waited at the main entrance through much of the afternoon yesterday waiting for Meredith and his escort to show up. This was the place where Lieutenant Governor Paul Johnson and the state police blocked the boarding party Wednesday.

Gov. Barnett and Lt. Gov. Johnson both appeared briefly before the crowd yesterday and were given loud cheers. The crowd had been quiet until then, but came to life with enough sudden expression of pent-up force to suggest a terrible potential.