In the rolling hills of northern Mississippi, 500 feet up off the black delta land sits Oxford, population 6,400, seat of Ole Miss University and the center of higher learning in the State. It is an old town, founded in the 1830's shortly after Lafayette County was laid out and named for the French Revolutionary War general of the same name. But before the desegregation crisis here Oxford was best known as the home of Nobel prize winning author William Faulkner. Etched out of the black earth and its whiskey boiling countryside Faulkner drew his characters larger than life. The spirit is there though. The craft of the Sartorises and Snopes runs through the thin, Anglo-Saxon features of the townsfolk stretched out on the benches around the Lafayette County courthouse. This is a land in the words of Faulkner, "roaring with Protestant scripture and whiskered whiskey. The discretion mildly puzzled the citizens of Oxford for it is also a town filled nine months of the year with freshly scrubbed, crew cut college kids.

The white, Greek revival courthouse still sits in the center of the square, and the main road from Jackson to Memphis...