Lesson Three: Protesting Violence without Violence

Objective:
Using primary sources such as newspaper articles and music, students will learn about the death of Emmett Till and the effect it had on Americans. After examining later examples of non-violent protests, student then write their own protest songs.

Materials: *Emmett Till Newspaper Articles* (three) and *Worksheet; Everything Changed on August 28, 1955;* recording of the Bob Dylan song "The Death of Emmett Till" (available on the Internet); *The Line in the Sand Has Been Drawn; Mississippi Civil Rights Map and Timeline; Journal Three: Ask Yourself.*

Procedures:

Activity One: Emmett Till
1. Divide the class into groups and distribute one *Emmett Till Newspaper Article* to each. Also distribute the *Emmett Till Newspaper Article Worksheet.*
2. After students have read their assigned article and answered the questions, have a representative from each group share the content of the article with the class and their impressions of its content.
3. Engage the class with a comparison of the various articles.
4. Distribute *Everything Changed on August 28, 1955*.
5. Prepare students to listen to the song *The Death of Emmet Till* by Bob Dylan. Tell students that this is a protest song. Distribute lyrics to the class or project them on a classroom overhead or projector.
6. Students should read the lyrics silently while listening to the song.
7. Note: A recording of this song can be easily found by Googling "Bob Dylan The Death of Emmett Till." You may also access the song on your cell phone or by obtaining a recording of the song from a local library.

Activity Two: Writing Protest Songs
1. Distribute *The Line in the Sand Has Been Drawn.*
2. Individually or in small groups, have students write protest songs involving one of these events. They can use the tune of a popular song they like and maybe even some of the basic lyrics, but it should be about these cases. Remind them the purpose is to bring awareness of an issue to people around the country and to persuade them to join in the fight.
3. Have students perform their songs for the class.
4. Give students the opportunity to label their *Mississippi Civil Rights Map and Timeline* with locations and events covered during the class activities and discussions.
5. Students will answer the questions in *Journal Three: Ask Yourself* individually before discussing them aloud.

Extension Activity: The Freedom Riders
1. Explore the *Freedom Rides Revisited: How Far Would You Go?* an online teaching unit by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Go to http://www.mdah.ms.gov/new/learn/classroom-materials/lesson-plans-and-teaching-units/ to access lesson plans and primary source documents to help illustrate the story of the Freedom Riders to students.
2. Have students imagine they were Freedom Riders in 1961 who are writing letters home to their families concerning what they have seen using a standard friendly letter format.
3. View *An Ordinary Hero*, the true story of a white Southern girl and civil rights activist name Joan Traumpauer. The film relates her time as a Freedom Rider and resident of Parchman Penitentiary, to her sit-in at the Jackson Woolworth's counter, to her time as a student at the historically black Tougaloo Collage. Color/black and white, 90 minutes. Middle school to adult. This film can be borrowed free of charge from the Mississippi History on Loan Collection. Go to http://www.mdah.ms.gov/new/learn/classroom-materials/mississippi-history-on-loan-film-collection/ or contact the Outreach Programs Coordinator at 601-576-6997.

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Emmett Till Newspaper Articles

Access *Jet Magazine*, September 15, 1955, pages 6-10, via Google Books at http://books.google.com/books?id=57EDAAAAMBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=jet+magazine+1955&hl=en&sa=X&ei=EgptU5m-M4TesATF-4Aw&ved=0CC0Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=jet%20magazine%201955&f=false

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September 10, 1955. MDAH, Archives and Records Services. Used with the permission of The Jackson Advocate.

MISSISSIPPI HARD HIT BY THE SLAYING OF TILL

NATIONAL INDIGNATION SEEN AS AS NATIONWIDE EDITORIAL COMMENT CONDEMNS SLAYING OF 14-YEAR-OLD NEGRO BOY IN WOLF-WHISTLE INCIDENT AT MONEY, MISSISSIPPI

The Atlanta Constitution, One Of South's Greatest Daily Newspapers, Calls The Slaying A Lynch-Murder

State Negroes Take New Heart From Governor White's Response After Bitter NAACP Blast Against State

Jackson, Miss., Sept. 5 (DSN)—The state of Mississippi which has behind it a long and uncomplimentary history of such incidents appeared to be hardest hit than ever before by the slaying of a 14-year-old Negro boy for making a "wolf-whistle" at the White Woman storekeepers wife, at Money, Mississippi, near Greenwood, whose weighted body was found in the Tallahassie River last Wednesday.

The 14-year-old boy, Emmet Louis Till, of Chicago, was taken from the home of his uncle Mose Wright where he was spending a summer vacation early Sunday morning following the Saturday afternoon "wolf whistle" incident.

An aroused national indignation was seen as nationwide editorial comment condemned the incident.

While editorial comment in the state has been largely pointed toward presenting the slaying from being labelled as a lynching, one of the great among the greatest of White Southern daily newspapers, the Atlanta Constitution, Atlanta, Georgia, in a Sunday editorial condemned the slaying as a "lynch-murder."

Commenting on the incident, the editorial in the Atlanta Constitution said: "The body of a 14-year-old Negro boy has been taken from a river near Greenwood, Miss. He had been shot. The weighted body had then been thrown into the river.

Once again the South has been rubber-stamped with a lynch-murder. The victim was a helpless child. His offense reportedly was that some days before his kidnapping and disappearance he had "wolf-whistled" when a lady passed by. If such were the case, juvenile courts or regular legal procedure were in effect to cover any offense."

"The brutal murder is grist in the mill of those who picture all the South as a region of violence. It assists the communist propagandist. It delivers us into the hands of our enemies. Unless the officials of Mississippi vigorously follow up this murder and bring the guilty to justice, all of us will be smeared by it."

"In this critical period in the Souths effort to adjust itself to the rest of the nation, we cannot continue to trample out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored without paying the price in the years ahead."

As the news of the finding of the boy's body hit with shocking impact on decent Negro and white people alike in the state, and spread across the nation, Roy Wilkin, Exexutive Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People released a bitter statement blasting the entire state of Mississippi as a result of the incident.

The Wilkins statements said, "It would appear from this lynching that the state of Mississippi has decided to maintain white supremacy by murdering children. The killers of the boy felt free to lynch him because there is in the entire state no restraining influence of decency, not in the state capital, among the daily newspapers, the clergy nor any segment of the so-called better citizens."

Negro Citizens Heartened by Gov.

Negroes of the state, living under conditions which have developed since the drive for integration described by some of the oldest and wisest of both races as being as bad for Negroes as it was during the Reconstruction era, faced with the threat of total disfranchisement, by futher action to reduce Negro voting in the state as planned by the State Democratic Executive Committee last week, and with threat of economic sanctions and intimidation from the reported spread of the Ku Klux Klan, and the White Citizens Councils, pledge to retain segregation and prevent Negroes voting at any cost, were said to have taken heart from the message of Gov. White to the NAACP following the bitter blast from Roy Wilkins.

In a telegram to the New York office of the NAACP, Governor White said: "Parties charged with the murder are in jail. I have every reason to believe the court will do its duty in prosecution. Mississippi does not condone such conduct."

Following the telegram to the NACP the Governor ordered a full scale investigation of the slaying which had already led to the arrest of two white men, Roy Bryant, the husband of the woman at whom the boy made the "wolf-whistle," and J. W. Milam, his half-brother.

Authorities in two counties were preparing to make charges against the two men. In Leflore County where the boy was taken from his uncle's home they faced a charge of kidnapping. The body having been found inside Tallahatchie County there was some thought that the boy had been beaten and shot on the Tallahatchie River bridge before being weighted and thrown into the river, thus giving the county jurisdiction in the murder charge.

Thousands Attend Funeral

In Chicago Saturday, a crowd estimated at more than 10,000 attended the boys funeral whose father was killed in World War II, and following the demonstrations at the funeral service reports reached the state that an armed crowd of Chicago Negroes were planning to come to Greenwood to avenge the slaying of the boy.

Following the reports that the group was coming from Chicago rumors of all kinds spread across the state, and as a result of the report, Coahoma County Authorities set up a road block north of Clarksdale, Saturday during which a score or more of Negro motorists in cars with Illinois licenses were arrested on charges of speeding and other traffic violations. One was reportedly arrested for carrying a concealed weapon.

In commenting on the arrest of Negro motorists from Illinois one of those stopped pointed out that there are an estimated 300,000 or more Negroes in Chicago alone from Mississippi, practically all of whom still have relatives in the state most of whom did not know much if anything about the Till slaying and were taking advantage of the long Labor Day holiday week end to visit their relatives in the state.

Natl Guardsmen Posted

Although the report that armed Chicago Negroes were planning to come to Greenwood to avenge the death of the boy was regarded by most people as being little more than a rumor the two prisoners were being kept under guard against threatened mob violence.

Sheriff Smith of Leflore County said he had received calls threatening the two men. Sheriff H. C. Strider fo Tallahatchie County said members of the Bryant family and other persons had had their cars forced off the road by automobiles with Illinois license plates.

On Monday some 60 members of the National Guard patrolled the grounds of the Leflore County Court House where the Grand Jury was preparing to study the case.

Maj. Gen. W. P. Wilson, adjutant general of the state was in Greenwood, and an Army National Guard helicopter and L-19 liason plane was there for use in emergency.

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A-1 FIVE CENTS

Jury Hears Defense and Prosecution Arguments As Testimony Ends In Kidnap-Slaying Case

Greenwood Commonwealth

District Attorney Not Concerned By Outside Agitation And Pressure

9-23-1955

By SAM JOHNSON

SUMNER, Miss., Sept. 23 (AP)—A country jury began deliberating at 2:36 p.m. (SCT) today on the fate of two white men accused of murdering a negro boy.

The 13th alternate juror was dismissed after final arguments and 12 shirt-sleeved men, mostly farmers, entered a small room and began considering the case against Roy Byrant, 24, and his 36-year-old half brother, J. W. Milam.

SUMNER, Miss., Sept. 23 (AP)—A defense attorney told a country jury today there are groups which would throw a corpse into a river in the hope it would be identified as Emmett Louis Till.

John Whitten made the statement in final arguments in the trial of two white men accused of murdering Till, 14-year-old Chicago negro youth.

"There are people in the United States who want to destroy the way of life of Southern people," said Whitten.

He said the state did not prove the body could have been Till and the defense proved it could not be. Defense witnesses testified the body had been in the river at least eight days, while Till was missing only three days before the body was found in the Tallahatchie River.

"There are people," said Whitten, ". . . who will go as far as necessary to commit any crime known to man, to widen the gap between the white and colored people of the United States.

"They would not be above putting a rotting, stinking body in the river in the hope it would be identified as Emmett Till."

SUMNER, Miss., Sept. 23 (AP)—Defense attorney J. W. Kellum told a country jury today "your forefathers will turn over in their graves" if the jurors convicted two white men of murdering a 14-year-old Chicago negro boy.

But Dist. Atty. Gerald Chatham shouted "the killing of Emmett Till . . . was a cowardly act," and pleaded for conviction.

Roy Bryant, 24, and his half-brother, John W. Milam, 36, are charged with murdering Emmett Louis Till in a widely publicized wolf-whistle slaying.

The case appeared likely to reach a jury composed principally of Mississippi Delta farmers during the afternoon.

Circuit Judge Curtis Swango Jr. recessed the trial for lunch halfway through closing arguments by the defense.

Kellum—one of five local attorneys defending Bryant and Milam—told the all-white, all-male jury it would be admitting freedom was lost forever, if it convicted the two defendants.

Defense attorney Sidney Carlton demanded: "Where is the motive?"

Testimony by Bryant's wife about a negro man who molested and whistled at her did not implicate Till, Carlton said, adding: "If he (Mose Wright) had known Emmett Till had done something down there, he'd have gotten out and whipped him himself," Carlton said.

Wright is the sharecropper uncle young Till was visiting at the time he was abducted and slain. "Down there" referred to Bryant's country store in which Mrs. Bryant testified the incident with an unknown negro with "a Northern brogue" happened.

Carlton also asked how Wright could testify Milam carried a pistol during the abduction when the only light came from a flashlight shining in Wright's face. Wright testified about the kidnaping during early hours Aug. 28.

"Had any of you gone to Mose Wright's house with evil intent," asked Carlton, "would you have given your name? There's nothing reasonable about the state's theory."

He went on: "If that's identification, if that places these men at that scene, then none of us are safe." He shouted the words.

Sweating profusely in the heat of a Mississippi Delta courtroom, Chatham loudly said: "The first words that entered this case were literally dripping with the blood of Emmett Till."

He charged 24-year-old Roy Bryant and his 36-year-old half brother, John W. Milam, gave the Chicago boy "a court-martial with the death penalty imposed."

The first words in the kidnap-slaying, said Chatham, were "I want the boy from Chicago who did the talking at Money."

Mose Wright, the slain boy's sharecropper uncle, testified Milam used those words when he roused the 64-year-old man from bed early Aug. 28 and took Till from the cottonfield shack.

Attorneys for the two accused white men rested their defense at 10:22 a.m. (CST) today.

The defense concentrated its questioning on identification, the heart of the state's case. If the state failed in jurors' eyes to prove Till was murdered, Bryant and Milam could not be convicted of killing him.

Earlier, Chatham said the state would not seek the death penalty "since a substantial part of its evidence is circumstantial."

Thus, the defendant—if convicted—faced a maximum of life imprisonment, unless the jury overturned precedent and ordered death without the state asking for it.

Another bit of high drama came yesterday when Mrs. Carolyn Bryant, wife of the Money storekeeper accused of murder, testified a negro with "a Northern brogue" molested her a few days before Till was kidnaped early Aug. 28.

Circuit Judge Curtis Swango, Jr. ruled the jury could not hear the bulk of her testimony because it happened too long before the abduction. However, it was admitted to the court record.

Spectators shifted to the front of their chairs as she told her story of the night of Aug. 24.

"This negro man came into the store," began the pretty 21-year-old mother of two children, "and stopped at the candy counter."

She said he ordered bubble gum.

"I held out my right hand for some money," she continued. "He caught my hand. I pulled away. He said, 'How about a date, baby?'

"I turned and started to the back of the store. He caught me at the cash register. . . and put both hand around my waist. He said, 'What's the matter, baby, can't you take it?'"

The young mother said she pulled away. She said the negro used unprintable words which she refused to repeat. She said he concluded with: "I've been with white women before."

Another negro, she said, came in and pulled the first negro out of Bryant's little store.

"I started out to go to the car for my pistol," Mrs. Bryant said. "He (the first negro) was standing on the front porch of the store. He whistled."

Mrs. Bryant said her husband was away on a business trip during this incident.

Defense attorneys did not ask Mrs. Bryant the identity of the negro.

Other witnesses placed the 14-year-old Till in the store the night Mrs. Bryant described. And witnesses testified Bryant and Milam orally admitted taking young Till from the home of his sharecropper uncle Mose Wright.

Bryant and Milam, witnesses said, claimed they released the youth when Mrs. Bryant said he was not the negro who wolf-whistled at her.

Several key pieces are missing from the jig-saw puzzle of murder pieced together so far in the trial — among them, the exact time and place of the slaying, the murder weapon or weapons, the clothes of the victim.

The state sprang three "surprise" witnesses to try to prove Milam and three unidentified white men carried Till to a plantation barn in nearby Sunflower County about four hours after he was kidnaped.

Willie Reed, negro farmhand, testified he heard "licks and hollering" coming from the barn. Reed said four white men and two negro men drove to the barn with Till in a pickup truck. Till sat in the back with two negroes, he said.

Reed told the court he saw Milam leave the barn and go to a well for a drink, then return to the barn.

The plantation is managed by Leslie Milam, the defendant's brother.

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Defendant's Wife Testifies

Till Asked Her for Date

VP. Pilot Sept 23, 1955

Sumner, Miss., Sept. 22 (AP)—Mrs. Roy Bryant testified today that 14-year-old Emmett (Bobo) Till, Chicago Negro, caught her around the waist and asked her for a date. Mrs. Byrant's husband and his half-brother, John W. Milam, 34, are on trial for the slaying of Till whose battered body was taken from the Tallahatchie River August 31.

Mrs. Bryant gave her testimony with the jury absent.

Circuit Judge Curtis Swango, Jr., ruled her testimony was inadmissible before the jury because the encounter between Mrs. Bryant and Till occurred three days before the boy's abduction.

But, the judge gave the defense the right to put Mrs. Bryant's story on the court records in the absence of the jury.

The pretty mother of two children said she was alone in her husband's store at Money, Miss., when "a Negro man came in the store and stopped at the candy case."

"I walked up to the candy counter" and got the candy he wanted. "I held out my right hand for some money. He caught my hand" in a strong grip, Mrs. Bryant said.

Mrs. Bryant said she freed her hand and the "man" said, "How about a date, baby?"

"I turned and started to the back of the store," she said, where her two children, Mrs. Milam and her two children were in the living quarters.

"He caught me at the cash register and put both hands on my waist.

"He said, "What's the matter, baby. Can't you take it? You needn't be afraid of me."

She said the "man" said an unprintable word as she freed herself. She hesitated, then refused to repeat the word or say what letter it began with.

She said the Negro then told her "I've been with white women before.'

Judge Repeats Ruling

The slim brunette said a "Southern Negro" then came into the store, caught the "man" by the arm and pulled him out.

As Mrs. Bryant finished her story of what happened the night of August 24, defense attorneys again asked Judge Swango to al-

See Trial, Page 10, Col. 3

(Continued from Page 1)

low her to testify in the presence of the jury.

The judge repeated his previous ruling the incident happened too long a time before Till disappeared to be connected with his abduction and killing.

Defense attorneys then called Mrs. Milam, wife of the second accused man.

Mrs. Bryant was the first witness called by the defense.

After the State rested its case at 1:56 p. m. (CST), Judge Swango denied a defense motion for a directed verdict of acquittal.

He told defense attorneys:

"The motions will be overruled because the court is of the opinion that the evidence presented by the State of Mississippi presents issues for the determination of the jury.

Before resting, the State introduced testimony tending to place Till and one of the defendants in a Sunday scene of "licks and hollering."

Mrs. Milam, 27, wore a gray cotton Summer dress.

Her testimony was brief. She told of her husband's service record in World War II.

She said he was wounded in Germany and was awarded the Purple Heart.

Both women as they finished their testimony had the opportunity for a courtroom reunion with their husbands. Since testimony began yesterday, the two women and other prospective witnesses have been isolated in another room.

Mrs. Bryant, dressed in black, sat down beside her husband. He put his arm around her.

Third defense witness was Sheriff H. C. Strider of Tallahatchie County, who went down to the river when the body was found August 31.

He described it as "in mighty bad shape."

When the State objected to this as a conclusion, Strider launched into a detailed description of the body's condition.

The State has referred to a small hole above the body's left ear as a bullet hole. Strider said he didn't know what caused the hole but when he probed it with a small stick he could penetrate the skull.

He described the advance state of decomposition in which he found the body. Defense Attorney Sidney Carlton asked: "What, Mr. Strider, is your opinion as to how long this particular body had been in the river?"

"At Least 10 Days"

"At least 10 days, if not 15," replied the sheriff.

He said he had taken many bodies from the same Tallahatchie River.

If the body was that of Till, it could not have been in the river more than three days.

But, on cross-examination, the State asked Strider: "You know don't you that a body wounded and beat up will decompose much faster than one which isn't?"

"Well, I guess so," replied Strider, "yes, sir."

At another point in his description of the body, Strider said: "I couldn't say if he was my son or anybody else's."

Under cross-examination, Strider said he signed a death certificate in connection with the body but he didn't know whether Emmett Till's name was on it.

At the conclusion of Strider's testimony, the defense was granted a brief recess after it informed the court it had only two or three remaining witnesses.

William Reed, gangling Negro youth, testified he heard noises coming from a country barn shortly after dawn, August 28.

He Saw Defendant

Moments earlier, he said, four white men had driven up to the barn with 14-year-old Emmett (Bobo) Till, later found slain.

During the incident, Reed said, he saw defendant John W. Milam, emerge from the barn, drink water from the well, then return to the barn.

"Did you see him before you heard some noise in the barn and hollering?" Reed was asked.

"After I heard it," the 18-year-old witness replied.

Young Reed testified he saw four white men drive Till up to the country barn in a small truck. His grandfather, Add Reed, 65, also said he saw such a truck outside the barn that morning.

Mary (Mandy) Bradley, 50-year-old Negro woman, who lives within sight of the barn, testified she looked out the window after young Reed reported the incident to her.

She continued: "I saw four white men, but I don't know who they were. They were just coming in and out of the barn, but I don't know what they were doing. I didn't see them doing anything but going in and out. One went to the well and got a drink of water and went back. The man that went to the well was a tall man with a bald head."

State Rests Case

Milam, in prior testimony, was described in almost the same fashion.

The Bradley woman said that before the men drove off in the truck they backed it up to the barn.

Final Witness

Mrs. Bradley was the 12th and final witness.

As she concluded at 1:56 p. m. (CST) the State rested and turned the case of Emmett Till over to the defense.

Bryant and Milam are being tried in Tallahatchie County. Young Till was kidnaped in Leflore County. The incident described by Reed allegedly took place in Sunflower County. All three counties adjoin in Northwestern Mississippi, famed as the Delta cotton-land.

Today the youngster's widowed mother, Mrs. Mamie Bradley, 33, no relation to the other Bradley woman, bowed her head and wept, rocking slowly from side to side, as she identified a picture of the Tallahatchie River body as that of her son.

"Without Shadow of Doubt"

"I knew it without a shadow of a doubt," she said of the body when it was returned to her later in Chicago.

Listened In Silence

The predominantly white crowd of some 300 in the courtway to the stand she walked room listened in silence. On her through the crowd without anyone paying her more than normal attention.

Young Reed followed Mrs. Bradley to the stand.

Reed testified he saw Till four or five hours after the kidnaping about 40 miles away from the Bryant store.

Reed said he was walking along a gravel road to a crossroads store about 6:30 or 7 o'clock the morning of Sunday, August 28. Till had been abducted from his uncle's shack about 2 or 2:30 a. m. The witness said Till was riding on the back of a small green and white pickup truck.

Reed said the truck was rolling along near the Drew, Miss., farm home of Leslie Milam, brother of the defendant and half-brother of Bryant. Reed testified he didn't know it was Till at the time but recognized him later from pictures.

Shown a picture of Till, Reed testified:

"This is the boy I seen on the back of the truck."

Reed testified the truck turned in at the Leslie Milam farm.

Reed stood up and pointed his left hand at J. W. Milam in the courtroom after he was asked to identify him.

"Later that morning did you see J. W. Milam out there?" He was asked in reference to the Drew area barn.

"Yes, sir," Reed replied.

Q: State whether or not he had on anything unusual?

A: Yes, sir, he had on a pistol. He went to the well to get a drink of water. Then he went back to

once.

Q: How many licks did you hear?

A: A whole lot of licks.

Reed testified he continued on to the store and went back home to get ready for Sunday School.

Q: On the way back did you see or hear anything from anybody.

A: No, Sir.

Q: Was the truck gone?

A: Yes, Sir.

Under defense cross examination, Reed wavered slightly from previous testimony. Where he had originally said there were seven persons in the truck—four white and three Negro—he now claimed to have seen eight, four of each.

Vague as to Distances

The witness was also vague as to how far away he was from the truck. But he claimed he had a clear view of the Negro boy he identified as Till.

The best Reed was able to estimate his distance from the barn where he claimed he saw Milam emerge from the barn was about 400 yards.

Q: (By the defense): Was Mr. J. W. Milam driving that truck?

A: I don't know, Sir.

Q: Did you see Mr. J. W. Milam in the truck?

A: No, Sir.

Q: You wouldn't say Mr. Milam was inside the truck?

A: No, Sir, I wouldn't.

Twice the defense tried to get Reed's testimony stricken from the record. Each time, the court refused.

The high point of dramatic impact thus far in the trial was the entrance into the courtroom of Mrs. Bradley to testify in her son's slaying.

Apparent Confusion

For a fleeting moment her eyes scanned the spectators in apparent confusion. But the audience was quiet and she then proceeded to the witness stand. The short, plump woman in a gray and white suit with a black and grey jacket wore a small black hat.

It was Mrs. Bradley's introduction to a forgotten past. Born just three miles from this Delta town, she had been taken away at the age of two. Now she was back, seeking to sustain the State's case against two Delta men accused of killing her boy.

Dabs at Eyes

Her testimony, with scarcely a trace of her native accent, touched only on identification of her son's body.

Then she identified a silver ring taken from the body in the river as one Till had put on in Chicago. It had belonged to the boy's father, who died overseas in service in 1945.

The State handed her a picture of her son's body when it was taken from the river, bloated and disfigured. She was asked if she could identify the body as her boy's.

"Yes, Sir," she said.

Then the Negro mother took off her glasses, wiped a hand across her brimming eyes, and lowered her head into her right hand. As she did so, she swayed ever so slightly, rocking her head from side to side.

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NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Emmett Till Newspaper Article Worksheet

Use the newspaper article to answer the following questions.

Name of paper and place of publication: _____

Title and date of article: _____

What events does the article cover? _____

_____

_____

Does the article reveal a bias towards any group or individual? Give examples and explain. _____

_____

_____

_____

How are newspapers valuable research tools? How are they unreliable? _____

_____

_____

_____

If a crime were committed today and your local newspaper reported on it, would there be more information several months later? Will the newspaper do follow-up reports if some initial theories are proved wrong? Explain. _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Everything Changed on August 28, 1955

Use the lyrics below to follow the words of Bob Dylan's protest song about the death of Emmett Till.

The Death of Emmett Till
By Bob Dylan

'Twas down in Mississippi not so long ago
When a young boy from Chicago town stepped through a Southern door
This boy's dreadful tragedy I can still remember well
The color of his skin was black and his name was Emmett Till

Some men they dragged him to a barn and there they beat him up
They said they had a reason, but I can't remember what
They tortured him and did some things too evil to repeat
There was screaming sounds inside the barn, there was laughing sounds out on the street

Then they rolled his body down a gulf amidst a bloody red rain
And they threw him in the waters wide to cease his screaming pain
The reason that they killed him there, and I'm sure it ain't no lie
Was just for the fun of killin' him and to watch him slowly die

And then to stop the United States of yelling for a trial
Two brothers they confessed that they had killed poor Emmett Till
But on the jury there were men who helped the brothers commit this awful crime
And so this trial was a mockery, but nobody seemed to mind

I saw the morning papers but I could not bear to see
The smiling brothers walkin' down the courthouse stairs
For the jury found them innocent and the brothers they went free
While Emmett's body floats the foam of a Jim Crow southern sea

If you can't speak out against this kind of thing, a crime that's so unjust
Your eyes are filled with dead men's dirt, your mind is filled with dust
Your arms and legs they must be in shackles and chains, and your blood it must refuse to flow
For you let this human race fall down so God-awful low!

This song is just a reminder to remind your fellow man
That this kind of thing still lives today in that ghost-robed Ku Klux Klan
But if all of us folks that thinks alike, if we gave all we could give
We could make this great land of ours a greater place to live

Bob Dylan, *The Death of Emmett Till* from *The Bootleg Series, Vol. 9: The Witmark Demos, 1962-1964*. Copyright 1963, 1968 by Warner Bros. Inc.; renewed 1991, 1996 by Special Rider Music. http://www.bobdylan.com/us/songs/death-emmett-till (accessed January 2, 2014).

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The Trial of J.W. Milam and Roy Bryant

J.W. Milam and Roy Bryant. MDAH, Archives and Records Services.

Dr. T.R.M Howard quickly made his home a headquarters for prosecution investigation and began efforts to protect witnesses from corrupt authorities. With his own money, Howard brought Till's mother to Mississippi from Chicago and escorted her around town in a "heavily armored caravan." However, an all-white jury acquitted J.W. Milam and Roy Bryant and under protection of double jeopardy, both later admitted to the crime with smiles and no fear of consequence.

At the funeral, Till's mother chose an open casket so reporters could photograph her son's severely beaten body. Dr. Howard quickly began speaking about Till across the country, drawing attention to the plight of African Americans in the South. In fact, it was only four days after listening to Dr. Howard speak that Rosa Parks chose to keep her seat on a city bus. With the post-trial confession, the photographs of the funeral, and Howard's speeches, people across the country began to demand civil rights for all.

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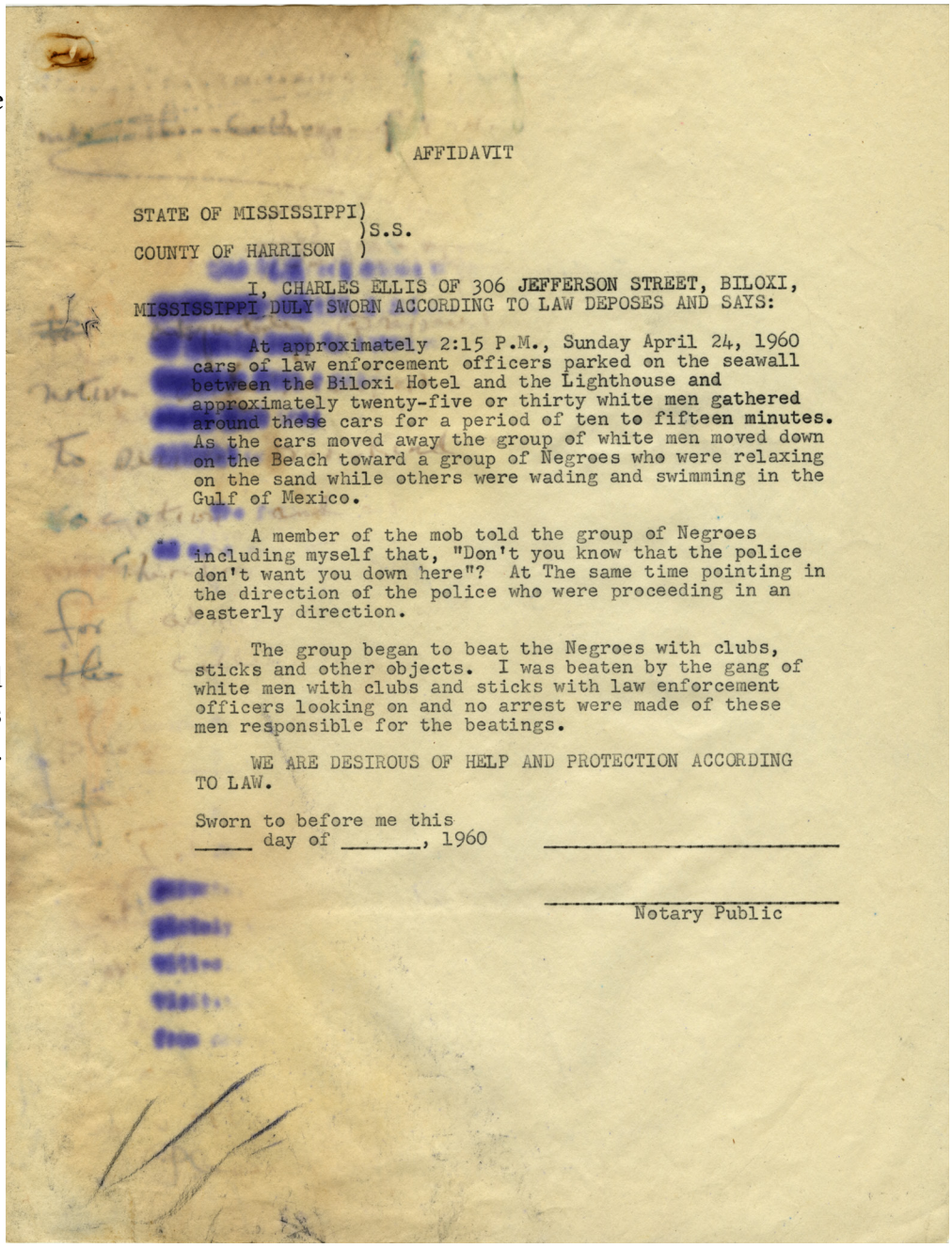
The Line in the Sand Has Been Drawn

Read about the different non-violent protests staged in Mississippi during the early 1960s. Then choose one and write a protest song involving one of the events that contains at least one verse and a refrain. You may use a popular tune, but remember that the purpose of a protest song is to bring awareness of an issue to people around the country and to persuade them to join in the fight.

Biloxi Wade-Ins - Biloxi, 1960: Homeowners along Biloxi's beaches had claimed the shoreline as private property, despite the fact that public funds had built them. Therefore, these beaches were almost entirely segregated with the exception of a small area near the veteran's hospital. During the spring of 1960, Dr. Gilbert Mason, a member of the NAACP and prominent African American doctor on Mississippi's coast, organized a non-violent demonstration. One-hundred-twenty-five African Americans participated in the wade-ins with specific instructions not to bring anything that could be considered a weapon. Some brought footballs and umbrellas, typical beach-gear. But the scene turned violent as white citizens arrived with bats, cue sticks, and chains. The mob beat the beach-goers, in some cases, to near death. Mason reported that one attack became so brutal, a white lady hurried from her home with a gun to shoo away the men attacking the victim. When Mason hurried to help those injured, an officer told him he was under arrest. Mason's response was he didn't have time for arrest and he would come to the station that evening after he had treated the victims. The officers allowed him to do this.



AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI)
)S.S.
COUNTY OF HARRISON)

I, CHARLES ELLIS OF 306 JEFFERSON STREET, BILOXI, MISSISSIPPI DULY SWORN ACCORDING TO LAW DEPOSES AND SAYS:

At approximately 2:15 P.M., Sunday April 24, 1960 cars of law enforcement officers parked on the seawall between the Biloxi Hotel and the Lighthouse and approximately twenty-five or thirty white men gathered around these cars for a period of ten to fifteen minutes. As the cars moved away the group of white men moved down on the Beach toward a group of Negroes who were relaxing on the sand while others were wading and swimming in the Gulf of Mexico.

A member of the mob told the group of Negroes including myself that, "Don't you know that the police don't want you down here"? At The same time pointing in the direction of the police who were proceeding in an easterly direction.

The group began to beat the Negroes with clubs, sticks and other objects. I was beaten by the gang of white men with clubs and sticks with law enforcement officers looking on and no arrest were made of these men responsible for the beatings.

WE ARE DESIROUS OF HELP AND PROTECTION ACCORDING TO LAW.

Sworn to before me this
_____ day of _____, 1960 _____

_____
Notary Public

An affidavit from Charles Ellis relating the events of and violence at the Biloxi wade-in on April 24, 1960. MDAH, Archives and Records Services.

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Tougaloo Nine - Jackson, 1961: On March 27, nine students from Jackson's Tougaloo College went into Jackson's white library. They quietly sat down and read from books that weren't available in the city's colored library. Police soon came and arrested them, charging them with "breeching the peace" and throwing them in jail. The next 24-hours saw prayer vigils and marches organized on the nearby campus of Jackson State and within the capitol city. Police with clubs, tear gas, and dogs were used to disperse demonstrators.

The Tougaloo Nine are escorted from the Jackson Public Library. MDAH, Archives and Records Services.

An African American Freedom Rider attempts to use a women's restroom for whites. MDAH, Archives and Records Services.

Freedom Riders - Jackson, 1961: The US Supreme Court had previously ruled against segregated buses that crossed state lines. However, the southern states ignored this and the federal government did little to enforce the ruling. Soon, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) decided to fight back with non-violent demonstrations. Founded in Chicago nearly twenty years earlier, CORE welcomed anyone who believed that all people were created equal and were willing to work toward the ultimate goal of true equality throughout the world. In 1961, a group of mostly college students began to ride interstate buses in non-violent protest. The first interracial ride traveled from Washington DC to New Orleans, Louisiana, with occasional non-violent sit-ins at segregated lunch counters as well.

After facing violent attacks from mobs in Alabama, more riders arrived to replace wounded activists and continue into Mississippi. Behind the scenes, President John F. Kennedy worked with state governments and decided state police and National Guard would protect the riders, but in return, the federal government would not intervene on the actions of local police. In Jackson, the riders were arrested when they tried to use white-only facilities at the bus depot. When Jackson and Hinds county facilities could hold no more, Mississippi Governor Ross Barnnett had them placed at the Mississippi State Penitentiary known as Parchman. Guards strip-searched the Riders, took away their beds, and placed them in the maximum-security unit also known as death row. Prisoners received only their underwear (if that) and no exercise time or mail. All of this happened because African Americans had used white facilities while whites used "colored" facilities.

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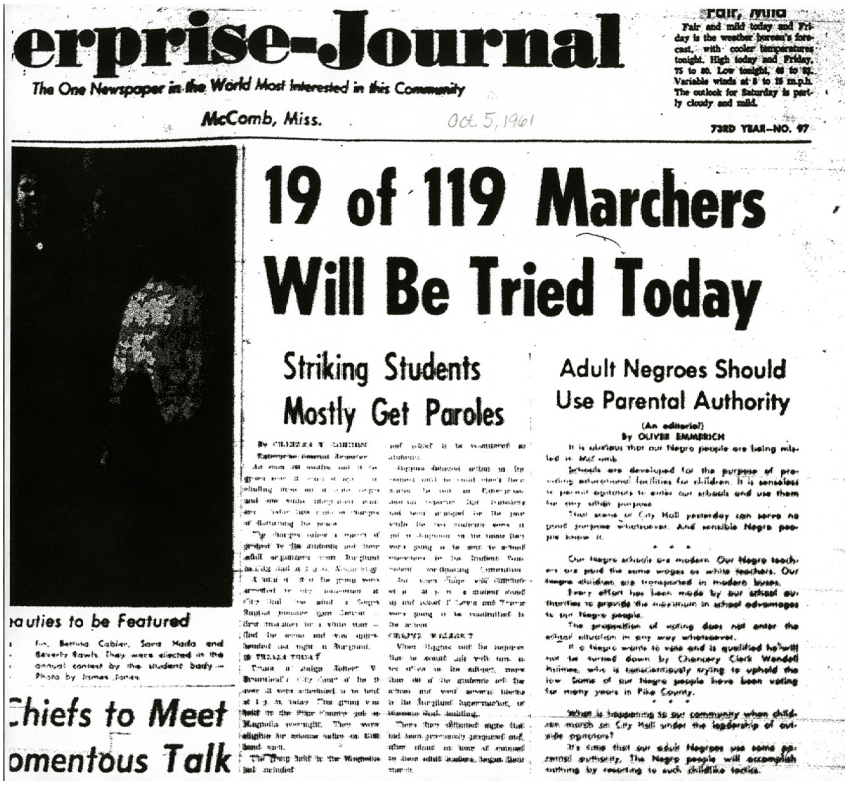

erprise-Journal

The One Newspaper in the World Most Interested in this Community

McComb, Miss. Oct. 5, 1961

73RD YEAR—NO. 97

Fair and mild today and Friday is the weather bureau's forecast, with cooler temperatures tonight. High today and Friday, 75 to 80. Low tonight, 45 to 50. Variable winds at 5 to 15 m.p.h. The outlook for Saturday is partly cloudy and mild.

19 of 119 Marchers Will Be Tried Today

Striking Students Mostly Get Paroles

Adult Negroes Should Use Parental Authority

(An editorial)

By OLIVER EMMERICH

It is obvious that our Negro people are being misled in McComb.

Schools are developed for the purpose of providing educational facilities for children. It is senseless to permit agitators to enter our schools and use them for any other purpose.

Street scenes at City Hall yesterday can serve no good purpose whatsoever. And sensible Negro people know it.

* * *

Our Negro schools are modern. Our Negro teachers are paid the same wages as white teachers. Our Negro children are transported in modern buses.

Every effort has been made by our school authorities to provide the maximum in school advantages to our Negro people.

The proposition of voting does not enter the school situation in any way whatsoever.

If a Negro wants to vote and is qualified he will not be turned down by Chancery Clerk Wendell Holmes, who is conscientiously trying to uphold the law. Some of our Negro people have been voting for many years in Pike County.

* * *

What is happening to our community when children march on City Hall under the leadership of outside agitators?

It's time that our adult Negroes use some parental authority. The Negro people will accomplish nothing by resorting to such childlike tactics.

auties to be Featured

Chiefs to Meet omentous Talk

***Headline from the* McComb Enterprise-Journal *in the days following the Burglund walk-out. MDAH, Archives and Records Services. Used with the permission of the* McComb Enterprise-Journal.**

Burgland High School Student Walk-Out - McComb, 1961: After 15-year-old civil rights activist Brenda Travis was released from jail for attempting to purchase a bus ticket at a "whites only" counter, she tried to return to school at Burgland High School. Finding herself expelled, over 100 students walked-out in her support on October 4, 1961, in what would become the first mass student-led civil rights activity in Mississippi.

Woolworth's Sit-In - Jackson, 1963: Organized by Medgar Evers, a group of white and African American students from Tougaloo College walked into Woolworth's Department Store, and sat down at the segregated lunch counter. They did nothing but sit, but the consequences were far from peaceful. As participant Ann Moody wrote in her 1968 memoir, "all hell broke loose." A mob arose and did everything from dousing the participants with condiments to beating them. One student was knocked unconscious while Jackson police ignored the incident. Evers received reports on the sit-in over the phone and despite the escalating violence decided not to call off the protest. The sit-in lasted for several hours before the store closed. Regarding the Woolworth's sit-in, a friend said of Evers, "Medgar has more courage than us. He knew he would be blamed."

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NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Journal Three: Ask Yourself

1. After receiving death threats following the Emmett Till trial, Dr. T.R.M Howard moved his family to Chicago and continued giving speeches on civil rights. As you continue to study the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi, you will learn of others who chose to stay and some who even lost their lives. Do you believe Howard showed fear or weakness by leaving or do you think he made a bigger difference by protecting himself and his family where he could continue the fight? Why?

2. Dr. Mason received the rare privilege of working in hospitals when many African American doctors had not. Once, when a man came to speak to the medical community in Biloxi and refused to speak to an integrated audience, four white doctors left with Mason, saying they would not participate either. Yet even with this amount of respect in the white community, he was not allowed to go to the beach. Based on your understanding of segregation in Mississippi, why was he not allowed?

3. Each Freedom Rider had to go through training where others would yell at them, spit on them, and hit them. If they could not remain non-violent and control themselves without retaliating, they couldn't travel South. What current issue is important to you? Would you be willing to protest for it non-violently? Explain.

4. In McComb, high school students chose to walk-out of school in support of a student activist. Would you be willing to sacrifice your education in the present if the result would be better education in the future? Why or why not?

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