

# THE COURT REPORTER

UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES AND MUSEUM

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

## Till's Tragedy: An End and a Beginning

The traveling historical display of the infamous 1955 Emmett Till murder opened recently to much interest at the Capps Archives on Delta State University's campus in Cleveland, MS. The display provides both primary and secondary sources related to the events of the slaying, allowing the viewer to travel to another time and place in history to gain an understanding of the event.

### IMPACT STILL FELT

The U.S. Justice Department in recent years reopened the investigation into the Emmett Till case. Till, a black Chicago teen, was murdered while visiting family in Money, Mississippi. The events surrounding his murder would have a strong impact on the American Civil Rights movement and provide a powerful story that continues to unfold even today.

### BACK IN TIME

The display takes the viewer back in time to the scene of the murder, describing the events that led to the death of Till. In addition, original documents describe the participants and jurors in the trial of the accused murderers.

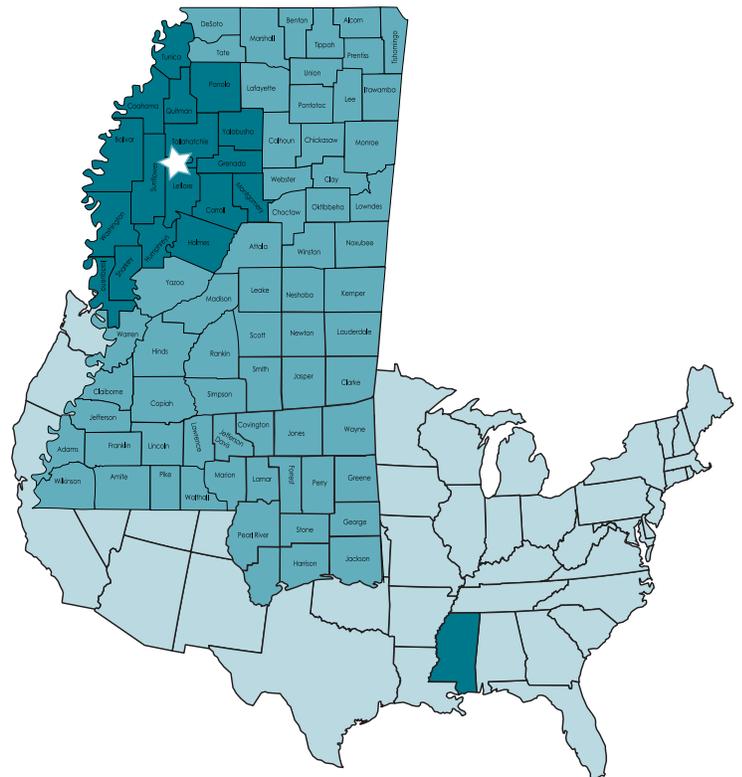
### VERY REAL STORY

Through newspaper articles, pictures and various other documents, the viewer will weave a story set in a small, rural Mississippi town in the 1950s. It is important for the viewer to capture the characters of this very real story as they existed in this place and time. Only then can one answer the questions that naturally come to mind.

### FORWARD WITH THE INVESTIGATION

Why would someone commit such an act? What were the circumstances surrounding the events related to this murder? How did this event change the people and places of Mississippi? The United States? The world? Perhaps you will find the answers to these questions and more as you proceed through the exhibit.

**Now, forward with the investigation!**



### INTERPRET THE QUOTE

*"The past is not dead. It is not even past."*

– William Faulkner

**In recent years, the Till case has been reexamined.**

**How does this quote relate to long ago and present day events surrounding the Till case?**

# Get the Facts!

Newspaper reporting typically allows the reader to answer certain questions related to an event. Choose an article in the exhibit, and answer the questions listed below. Record your answers in the spaces provided for use in follow-up writing/discussion.

**WHO:** Identify the key figures in the piece.

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**WHAT:** Describe the actions of the key figures. Include details from the article.

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**WHEN:** Describe when the deed(s) or action(s) took place. Remember that both date and time are important.

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**WHERE:** Describe in detail where the deed(s) or action(s) took place.

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**WHY:** Describe why, according to the journalist, the event(s) took place.

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**HOW:** Describe how the event(s) unfolded, paying careful attention to the sequence of events.

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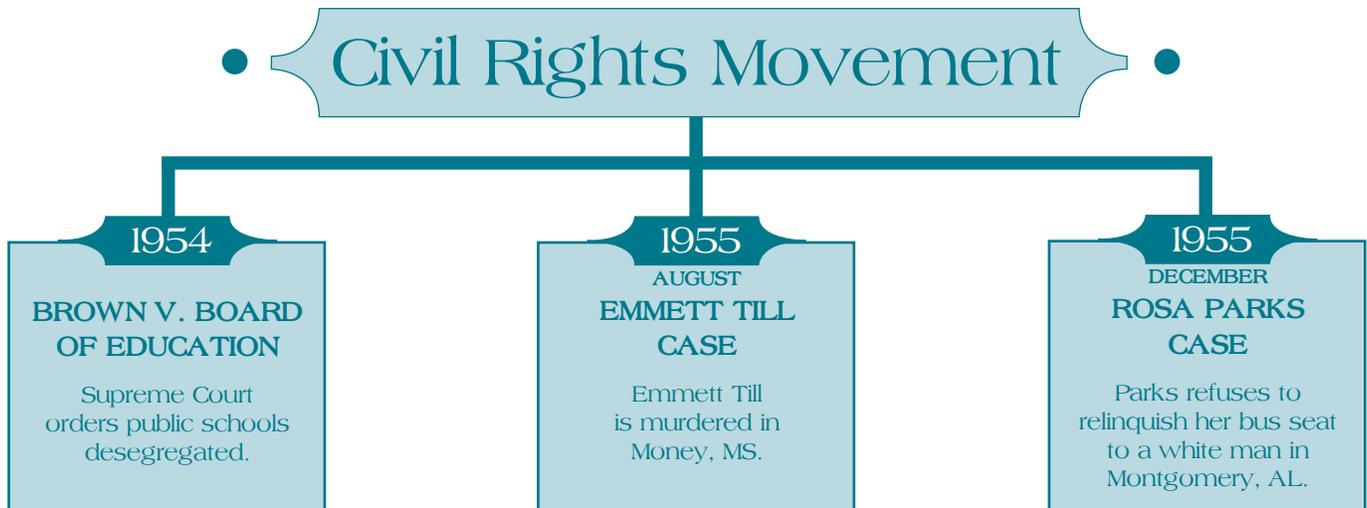
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**SUMMARY:** Provide a summary statement describing the event(s).

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## Investigate and Report

The diagram above shows major events within the time line of the Civil Rights Movement. Investigate and research each of the three events to identify the similarities and differences among the events. Write a brief report explaining the similarities and differences.

### BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION

1. [www.brownvboard.org](http://www.brownvboard.org)
2. Stewart, Loraine Moses. "The ABCs of Brown v. Board of Education: A Primer for the 50th Anniversary," *Social Studies and the Young Learner* 16, no. 3 (January/February 2004): 10–13.

### EMMETT TILL CASE

1. [www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/till/filmmore/index.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/till/filmmore/index.html)  
(Resources related to PBS film, "The Murder of Emmett Till")
2. Crowe, Chris. (2002). *Mississippi Trial, 1955*. New York: Dial Books.

### ROSA PARKS CASE

1. [www.teacher.scholastic.com/rosa](http://www.teacher.scholastic.com/rosa)  
(My Story: Rosa Parks — online story/activities)
2. Parks, Rosa. (1996). *Dear Mrs. Parks: A Dialogue with Today's Youth*. NY: Lee & Low Books.
3. Pinkney, Andrea Davis. (2000). *Let It Shine: Stories of Black Women Freedom Fighters*. San Diego: Harcourt, Inc.



# The Problem Is...

The problems of society are most often many years in the making, and may actually be the result of a series of related problems. Through your study of the Emmett Till display, identify a central problem related to the case, as well as the possible underlying causes for the problem. Or, you may identify several related problems.

The following cause-and-effect diagram will be helpful when used in the following manner.

1. Identify a problem. Write it clearly and briefly in the head area of the fish diagram.
2. Along each diagonal line on the fish skeleton, write an identified cause related to the problem.
3. Study the possible causes to pose solutions to the problem.  
Gather further information if necessary.

The problem should be identified first.  
Then all possible causes related to the problem should be recorded.

