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In Remembrance of Emmett Till: Regional Stories and Media Responses to the Black Freedom Struggle (Civil Rights and the Struggle for Black Equality in the Twentieth Century)

Darryl Mace

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On August 28, 1955, fourteen-year-old Chicago native Emmett Till was brutally beaten to death for allegedly flirting with a white woman at a grocery store in Money, Mississippi. Roy Bryant and J. W. Milam were acquitted of murdering Till and dumping his body in the Tallahatchie River, and later that year, an all-white grand jury chose not to indict the men on kidnapping charges. A few months later, Bryant and Milam admitted to the crime in an interview with the national media. They were never convicted.

Although Till's body was mutilated, his mother ordered that his casket remain open during the funeral service so that the country could observe the results of racially motivated violence in the Deep South. Media attention focused on the lynching fanned the flames of regional tension and impelled many individuals -- including Rosa Parks -- to become vocal activists for racial equality.

In this innovative study, Darryl Mace explores media coverage of Till's murder and provides a close analysis of the regional and racial perspectives that emerged. He investigates the portrayal of the trial in popular and black newspapers in Mississippi and the South, documents posttrial reactions, and examines Till's memorialization in the press to highlight the media's role in shaping regional and national opinions. Provocative and compelling, *In Remembrance of Emmett Till* provides a valuable new perspective on one of the sparks that ignited the civil rights movement.

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