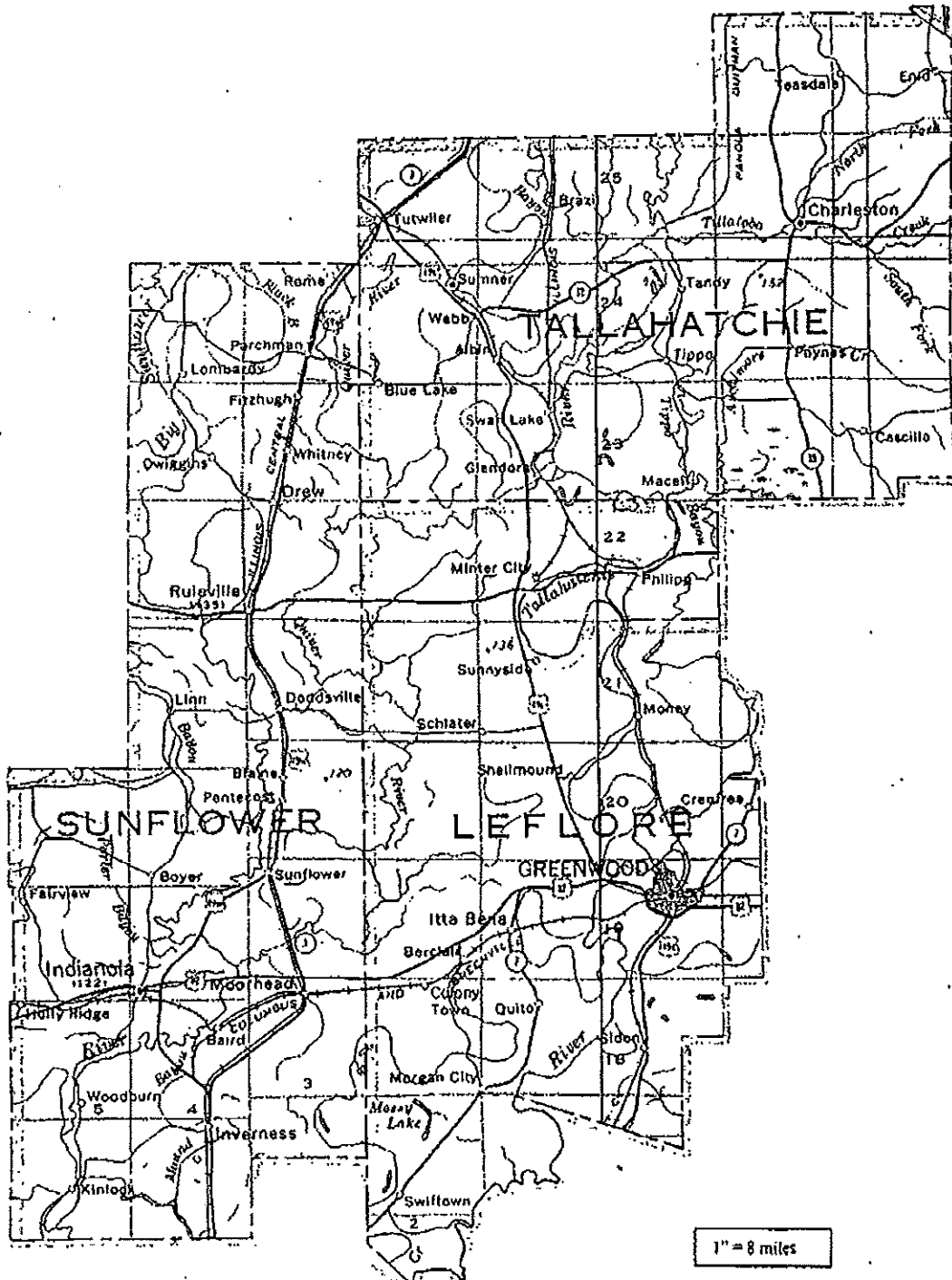


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MAP 1 - TALLAHATCHIE, LEFLORE and SUNFLOWER COUNTIES

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A. Geographic/Societal Points of Interest: The geographic areas of importance in this investigation center on the Mississippi counties of Leflore, Sunflower, and Tallahatchie. Till was kidnaped in Leflore County, taken by force to Sunflower County, his body was discovered on the border of Tallahatchie and Leflore Counties, and the trial of Milam and Bryant occurred in Tallahatchie County.

These three counties are all situated, in whole or in part, within the Mississippi Delta area. In 1955 these counties were populated by a majority of black citizens and were mainly comprised of vast plantations which were sharecropped by black tenant farmers. The exception was the "Hill" area of Tallahatchie County, the easternmost portion of the county, which was comprised of much smaller farms and where sharecropping was rare.<sup>1,2</sup>

1. **Leflore County:** Leflore County, like neighboring Tallahatchie and Sunflower Counties, is now, and was in 1955, a primarily agrarian county. It is comprised of 606 square miles, the majority of which are farmed. Greenwood is the county seat and the municipality of the greatest population. In 1950 Greenwood had a total population of 18,061 persons, with approximately fifty percent of the population being black. The median per capita income was \$1,891. In 1950 Leflore County had a population of 51,813, with sixty-eight percent of the population being non-white, of which 17,893 were of voting age and 297 were registered to vote. Forty-three percent of the working population was engaged in agricultural work and 4.7 percent of the working population was employed in manufacturing jobs. The median annual per capita income was \$918, with the average

<sup>1</sup> Hugh Steven Whitaker, "A Case Study in Southern Justice - The Emmett Till Case", (Master's Thesis, Florida State University, 1963), 17 to 18

<sup>2</sup> United States Commission on Civil Rights, *Report of the United States Commission on Civil Rights 1959*, 59

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annual income of black families being \$595. The average adult had completed 6.4 years of school with black adults averaging 4.3 three years of education.<sup>3,4</sup>

2. **Sunflower County:** Sunflower County is comprised of 693 square miles, all in the fertile Mississippi Delta area. It is approximately fifty miles long, running north and south, eighteen miles wide for one-half its length and fifteen miles wide for the other half. In 1950 Sunflower County had a population of 56,031, with sixty-eight percent of the population being non-white, of which 8,949 were of voting age and 114 were registered to vote. Indianola, the county seat, had a population of 4,369 in 1955. The town of Drew is located approximately thirty miles north of Indianola and, in 1950, had a population of 1,681 persons. The majority of the working population, sixty-seven percent, was employed in the agricultural sector, and one percent of the working population was employed in manufacturing jobs. The median annual per capita individual income at the time was \$744, with the average annual income of black families being \$544. The average adult had completed 5.7 years of school, with black adults averaging 4.1 years of education. In the eight years following the *Brown v. The Board of Education* decision in 1954, only four Sunflower County black citizens were registered to vote.<sup>5,6,7</sup>

Sunflower County was the home of United States Senator James O. Eastland, a staunch segregationist who was in office during 1955, and who owned a plantation near the town of Doddsville, eleven miles south of Drew. Additionally, the first Citizens' Council, a segregationist

<sup>3</sup> United States Bureau of Census, *1950 Census of the Population, Volume II, Characteristics of the Population, Part 24, Mississippi*.

<sup>4</sup> United States Commission on Civil Rights, *Report of the United States Commission on Civil Rights 1959*, 60

<sup>5</sup> United States Bureau of Census, *1950 Census of the Population, Volume II, Characteristics of the Population, Part 24, Mississippi*

<sup>6</sup> *Let the People Decide, Black Freedom and White Resistance Movements in Sunflower County, Mississippi, 1945 - 1986*, J. Todd Moye, 2004, 226

<sup>7</sup> United States Commission on Civil Rights, *Report of the United States Commission on Civil Rights 1959*, 60

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organization and the model for other segregationist organizations, was formed in Indianola, Mississippi.

3. **Tallahatchie County:** Nicknamed the "Free State of Tallahatchie", Tallahatchie County is comprised of 644 square miles, divided geographically, politically and socially into two distinct sections: the Delta, to the west; and the Hills, to the east. The county is bisected by the Tallahatchie River and has two county seats, located in the towns of Charleston and Sumner. Glendora, where J.W. Milam lived and operated a store, is located on the west side of the county, in the Delta area. Glendora had a population of 178 persons in 1950.<sup>8,9</sup>

In 1950 the county had a population of 30,486, with 19,408 persons (sixty-three percent of the population) being non-white, of which 9,235 blacks were of voting age and none were registered to vote. In 1950 the county's total labor force consisted of 9,476 persons, of which 6,541 were engaged in agricultural jobs. The median annual per capita individual income was \$607, with the average annual income of black families in the county being \$462. The average adult had completed 5.7 years of school with black adults averaging 3.9 years of school attendance. In 1950 1,262 homes had flush toilets with 173 of these homes being occupied by blacks.<sup>10,11</sup>

4. **Delta Socioeconomics:** In 1955 there were definitive socioeconomic strata within Mississippi Delta society. Black persons were considered to be at the bottom of the socioeconomic scale. The next level above blacks was the white sharecropper, followed by the white business person who catered to the black community. The white subjects in this investigation fall into the latter category. All other segments of white society, farmers, store owners who catered to the white

<sup>8</sup> Hugh Steven Whitaker, "A Case Study in Southern Justice - The Emmett Till Case", (Master's Thesis, Florida State University, 1963), 20

<sup>9</sup> United States Bureau of Census, *1950 Census of the Population, Volume II, Characteristics of the Population, Part 24, Mississippi*

<sup>10</sup> United States Bureau of Census, *1950 Census of the Population, Volume II, Characteristics of the Population, Part 24, Mississippi*

<sup>11</sup> United States Commission on Civil Rights, *Report of the United States Commission on Civil Rights 1959*, 60

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community, business leaders etc., were perceived to be socioeconomically superior to these two segments of the white community.<sup>12</sup> The Milam and Bryant families operated a number of small country stores throughout the counties of interest. Each of these stores catered to the black community.

Few opportunities for employment outside of the agricultural sector were available for blacks in the Delta. For those blacks who were able to attend more than a few years of school, career prospects were few.<sup>13</sup>

J. W. Milam operated an agriculture service business in addition to a store in Glendora, Mississippi, and had interest in at least two other stores, one owned by his half-brother Roy Bryant and the other by his brother Thomas Lamar "Bud" Milam. At least one other brother, Leslie Milam, managed a farm. Other brothers and sisters, including Louise Campbell and her husband Melvin Campbell and mother, Eulah Bryant, operated stores which primarily catered to the black community.

<sup>12</sup> Personal experiences of members of the investigation team and anecdotal evidence related to investigators by persons interviewed and/or interacted with during the investigation

<sup>13</sup> *Let the People Decide, Black Freedom and White Resistance Movements in Sunflower County, Mississippi, 1945 - 1986*, J. Todd Moyer, 2004, 24