

LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE

**II. BACKGROUND:**

Fifty years have passed since the events under investigation here. The persons alleged to have been involved in the kidnaping and murder of Emmett Louis Till were born, raised, lived and worked in the Mississippi Delta. At the time of these events in 1955, the Mississippi Delta was a place where racial attitudes now considered abhorrent were the norm for a significant segment of society. "Jim Crow" laws were a framework through which the races interacted; and "Negro Justice", an unwritten, de facto, separate legal system, served as the foundation for jurisprudence between blacks and whites. The sweeping reforms of the civil rights movement which occurred in the decades following these events caused vast changes which led to the integration of the black community into main stream society.

This background contains geographic and population data concerning the counties in which the crimes took place; Mississippi Delta socioeconomic information; information regarding segregation, education and other social issues; and a summary of precipitating events leading up to August 1955.