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*The Lynching of Emmett Till and the Case for Preserving
Print Culture*

Post-lecture Discussion Guide

1. When did you first learn about the lynching of Emmett Till? What did you learn of this event and how? How did or does knowledge of this event inform your understanding of citizenship and democracy in the post-World War II United States?
2. The [Emmett Till case](#) proved highly profitable for the [Johnson Publishing Company](#). There is often resistance to historical narratives that connect the civil rights movement or Black activism to capitalism. What accounts for this? What benefits – or costs – are there to considering social movements in relation to market dynamics?
3. Historically, African Americans regularly bought and read “white” or “general market” newspapers and magazines, due to a paucity of print culture, relatively speaking, targeted to them. By comparison, white consumers generally eschewed Black periodicals (as well as media targeted to other marginalized race groups). How do you imagine these respective trends have affected race relations, ideologies, and politics?

4. What popular magazine and news sources do you consume? Why? How do you imagine your choice of these media products affect your understanding of various issues?
5. In the field of History, there is a growing move towards [digital history](#). This is the use of online resources (such digital archives, online photograph collections, and digitized primary and secondary sources), digital media (digitized audio, video, and graphics) and digital tools (databases and mapping, text-generating, and multi-media creating software) for the purposes of doing research, presenting research, and teaching.* This is a logical and useful development that reflects advances in many technologies and the increasingly digital world that historians must navigate, as well as document and analyze. The embrace of digital sources and technologies often accompanies and even motivates a devaluing of print sources and collections. How might this affect the telling of particular histories? What is the case to be made for preserving print culture – particularly print culture deemed frivolous? How do we support colleges, libraries, and archives in preserving such material?
6. What value does print media have (to you) in today’s intensely digital world?
7. In the present-day United States, evidence of racial violence against Black people (as well as indigenous and other peoples of color) typically comes to us through digital formats, perhaps most famously in the May 2020 police killing of George Floyd. What effect has this had on understanding of and responses to such events?
8. Currently, there are efforts – many of them legislative – to restrict or prohibit teachings on systemic racism and white power in elementary and secondary education. How does the Emmett Till case figure in history lessons that do not allow for discussion on these topics? The George Floyd case?

*For examples of the “stuff” of digital history that is useful to researching, teaching, and learning U.S. history, see the following: <https://ushistoryscene.com/>, <https://www.bunkhistory.org/>, <https://americanarchive.org/>, <https://lynchinginamerica.eji.org/explore>, <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2021/09/atlantic-slave-trade-history-animated-interactive.html>, <https://www.blackpast.org/>