Mamie Till:

“Let the people see what they did to my boy.”

Senior Division

Group Exhibit

Exhibit: 496 words

Process paper: 298 words

At the beginning of our junior year, we went on a field trip to the National Museum of African American History and Culture in DC. There, we learned about significant figures throughout history and African American culture. The aspect of the museum that was most compelling to us was the Emmett Till exhibit. In the memorial, we learned about the profound bravery of Mamie Till, who showcased to the world the injustices done to her son, Emmett, who was brutally murdered. As we were walking through the exhibit, we approached the recreated open casket. This moment was very powerful because we gained an understanding of how individuals in 1955 would have experienced the funeral. Along the exhibit walls, we learned through pictures how Mamie was a catalyst for the Civil Rights Movement, which relates to the annual theme.

We conducted our research by locating primary and secondary sources that supported our thesis. We looked at scholarly journals, newspaper articles, and interviews to help further our research. In addition, we explored excerpts from Mamie's book, *Death of Innocence,* which enlightened us on more specific components of Emmett's story and her grief. We created our project using Noodletools, which enabled us to organize our information and categorize it into secondary and primary sources. For the poster, we started by writing an outline of our board on a Google document with our content, quotes, and images. After finalizing our content, we printed our pictures and information and pasted them to our board.

Our historical argument is that Mamie Till's decision to hold an open casket for her son, Emmett Till, proved crucial to the burgeoning Civil Rights Movement. Our topic is significant in history, as the Civil Rights Movement sought to pursue equal rights for African Americans and end racial segregation.

Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources

American Experience; Interview with Mamie Till Mobley, mother of Emmett Till The Murder of Emmett Till. Retrieved from the Digital Public Library of America, http://americanarchive.org/catalog/cpb-aacip-15-tx3513w354. (Accessed December 13, 2023.)

This is an interview with Mamie Till regarding her son Emmett Till and the events leading up to his murder. We will use this interview to incorporate details about Emmett and Mamie in our research. It will help us gain a better understanding of the in-depth aspects of Mamie's life and memories. This is a primary source because Mamie herself is speaking about her life and events that are relevant to the project.

Chicago Daily Sun-Times. "Slain Boy's Mother Going to Mississippi." *Chicago Daily Sun-Times* (Chicago), September 8, 1955. Accessed January 9, 2024. https://graphics.suntimes.com/sun-times-75th-anniversary/emmett-till-mother-mamie-bradley-mississippi-white-supremacist-civil-rights/.

This is a newspaper about Mamie going to Mississippi to retrieve her dead son. The source illustrates how Mamie immediately went to get her son and wanted an open casket. This is a primary source because the newspaper was published at the time of the event.

"Emmett till." In *The American Mosaic: The African American Experience*, ABC-CLIO, 2024. Image. Accessed January 3, 2024. https://africanamerican.abc-clio.com/Search/Display/1464646.

This is an image of Emmett Till that illustrates his innocence and young age. This is a primary source because it was taken from the time period.

"Emmett till Murder Defendants." In *The American Mosaic: The African American Experience*, ABC-CLIO, 2024. Image. Accessed January 3, 2024. https://africanamerican.abc-clio.com/Search/Display/2252926.

This is an image of the two men that murdered Emmet Till. We will use the images to shed light on their murderous personas. It is a primary source, as it was taken at the time of the trial.

"Emmett Till's Mother Collapses As Casket Arrives in Chicago." In *The American Mosaic: The African American Experience*, ABC-CLIO, 2023. Image. Accessed December 13, 2023. https://africanamerican.abc-clio.com/Search/Display/2295044.

This image shows Mamie Till Mobley, mother of Emmett Till, collapsing at the train station as the casket bearing the remains of her murdered son arrives in Chicago. We will use this image as context before the open casket and how significant Emmett's death was to Mississippi's black community. This image will help us to build contextual evidence regarding what happened before the funeral, and what events led up to Mamie's decision. This is a primary source, as the photographer was there at the event, taking the picture of Mamie.

"Funeral of Emmett till." In *The American Mosaic: The African American Experience*, ABC-CLIO, 2023. Image. Accessed December 13, 2023. https://africanamerican.abc-clio.com/Search/Display/2255238.
This image shows Mamie Till weeping at her son's funeral at Burr Oak Cemetery in suburban Chicago, Illinois. We will use this source to provide authentic reactions to Emmett's funeral. This will help us gain a better understanding of how raw and intense the emotions were on the day of Emmett's open-casket funeral. This is a primary source, as it was taken at the funeral.

Ivie, Devin. "Jay-Z and Will Smith Are Bringing Emmett Till's Story to ABC, from the Perspective of His Mother." In *Vulture*. Last modified August 5, 2019. Accessed January 20, 2024. https://www.vulture.com/2019/08/abc-jay-z-bring-emmett-till-story-to-civil-rights-series.html.
This is an Image of Mamie Till that we will use to illustrate her strength and vulnerability.

"Jurors in the Emmett till Murder Trial." In *The American Mosaic: The African American Experience*, ABC-CLIO, 2024. Image. Accessed January 3, 2024. https://africanamerican.abc-clio.com/Search/Display/2252625.
This is a picture of the all-white jury during the trial. It shows how unfair and biased the trial was. This is primary because it was taken at the time period.

Mamie Till. 1908 - 2015. Retrieved from the Digital Public Library of America, http://purl.flvc.org/fsu/fd/FSU_MSS_2015-007_S03_SS02_I016. (Accessed December 13, 2023.)
This source shows Mamie when they found her son. We will use this source to show how hard it was for Mamie to see her son when they found him. This source shows the sacrifice Mamie made to show how awful African Americans were treated. This is a primary source because it was taken at the time of the event.

Till, Mamie. "Transcript - Emmett Till Trial." Interview. UMKC School of Law. Accessed January 3, 2024. http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/till/Bradley.pdf.
This source outlines an interview with Mamie Till regarding the Emmett Till trial. We will use this to provide more specific details about the trial and the specific events that ensued. This is a primary source, as Mamie Till herself is expanding on these ideas.

Till-Mobley, Mamie, and Christopher Benson. *Death of Innocence: The Story of the Hate Crime That Changed America*.
This book explores Mamie Till's life and how she dealt with the murder of Emmett. We will use this source to first hand explain how Mamie felt during this time and how what she did impacted the Civil Rights movement like nothing had ever before. This source will help us show why Mamie did what she did. This is a primary source because she wrote the book about her own life.

Villet, Grey. *Mamie Bradley speaking to anti-lynching rally after acquittal of men accused of killing her son, Emmett Till, Harlem, NY*. Photograph. 1955. Smithsonian.
Mamie Till is shown speaking to a large crowd about racial injustices and the death of her son in Harlem, NY. We will use this picture to show the immediate effects of Mamie Till's decision to hold an open casket. This image will help us support the idea that Emmett's death sparked the Civil Rights Movement. This is a primary source, as the photographer was there when Mamie gave her speech in Harlem, NY.

Secondary Sources

ADAM BERNSTEIN Washington Post,Staff Writer. "Mamie Till-Mobley; Civil Rights Figure." *The Washington Post (1974-),* Jan 08, 2003. https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/mamie-till-mobley-civil-rights-figure/docview/2267537696/se-2.
This newspaper addresses the news of Mamie Till's passing and how, during her life, she never gave up on fighting for her son. We are going to use the information regarding Mamie's specific accomplishments and what prompted Emmett Till's murder. This source will help us gain an understanding of how much Emmett meant to Mamie and how she turned his passing into her life's calling and mission. This is a secondary source, as the author is writing about Mamie and her life events, who had passed away recently.

Corrigan, Maureen. "'Let the People See': It Took Courage to Keep Emmett Till's Memory Alive." In *WAMU*. Last modified October 18, 2018. Accessed January 5, 2024. https://wamu.org/story/18/10/30/let-the-people-see-it-took-courage-to-keep-emmett-tills-memory-alive/.
This source is about Emmet Till's story and a book that was written about him. We will use the excerpts of the book, and include how people still talk about what happened to Emmett and his mother's bravery. This is a secondary source from a different time than the event.

Harold, Christine, and Kevin Michael DeLuca. "Behold the Corpse: Violent Images and the Case of Emmett till." *JSTOR*. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41939982?searchText=mamie+til&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%3FQuery%3Dmamie%2Btil&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&refreqid=fastly-default%3A80be0c28ff0aee2f05d7631b6f4e0693&seq=2.
This journal helps further explore the reasoning for the open casket. The information we are using from this article is about the unfairness of the trial and the outrage after the trial. This is important because it shows the unfairness during the trial. This is a secondary source because it is information that was created later by someone who did not experience firsthand the events in which the author is writing about

Hill, Michael E. "Touchstone, Turning Point." In *The Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/tv/2003/01/19/touchstone-turning-point/e261acdf-c256-4bc1-b53b-3b336884a0ea/.

The article covers the tragic examination of Emmett's body and the injustices that were done to him. Moreover, it discusses the events leading up to Emmett's death. We are going to use the source to set up the background before Emmett was killed and the aftermaths, including the violence he endured. This source will help us gain an understanding of the events leading up to Emmett's death. This is a source that was not created first-hand by Mamie or an individual during the time period of the event; therefore, it is a secondary source.

"The Impact of Emmett Till's Murder." In *PBS*. https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/emmett-impact-emmett-tills-murder/#:~:text=One%20hundred%20days%20after%20Emmett's,violating%20Alabama's%20bus%20segregation%20laws.
This source discusses the short-term impacts of Emmett Till's death in America. This will help us understand the significant effects of Emmett's funeral. This is a secondary source, as the author was not involved in the event first-hand.

"Life Story: Mamie Till-Mobley (1921-2003)." In *NY History*. Women and the American Story.
This article addresses the false allegations that were made against Emmett and the efforts the Till family made to find his missing body. We will use this source to expand on Mamie's efforts to find her son, and why specifically he was targeted. This will help us get into more detail about the truth about his allegations. This is a secondary source, as it was not written by someone there firsthand.

Linder, Douglas O. "The Emmett Till Murder Trial: An Account." In *UMKC School of Law*. Last modified 2023. Accessed January 3, 2024. https://famous-trials.com/emmetttill/1755-home.
This source is an account of what happened to Emmett Till and covers events of the trial. It emphasizes the inequities of the trial and is a secondary source because it was written after the fact.

"Mamie Till Mobley 1920-2002." *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, no. 39 (2003): 89–89. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3134389.
This journal covers information regarding Emmett Till's attackers and the trial. We will use this information to go into Emmett's murder and how it created a sense of anger and a cry for justice. This source will help us organize information about the trial and the background of the attackers. This is a secondary source, as it is written by an individual recounting the events involving others.

"MAMIE TILL: MORE than a MOTHER." In *Civil and Human Rights*. https://www.civilandhumanrights.org/mamie-till/.
This source incorporates segments of Mamie Till's speech regarding the injustices that caused her son's death. We will use the source to show how Mamie became an outspoken advocate in the fight for civil rights after Emmett's tragic death. This will help us to express the reasons why Mamie Till wanted to have an open casket. This is a secondary source, as it contains information created by someone who did not experience the event firsthand. However, the article does incorporate original aspects of her speech.

"Mississippi Timeline." In The American Mosaic: The African American Experience, ABC-CLIO, 2023. Accessed December 14, 2023. https://africanamerican.abc-clio.com/Search/Display/1541425.
This source outlines the Mississippi Timeline throughout the period 1717 to 2023. We will use this source for the context notecard pile. This will help us grasp a better understanding of other hate crimes occurring in Mississippi. This is a secondary source, as it is a timeline of important events throughout Mississippi's history.

Morgan, Julianna. "Propagating the Truth: Mamie and Me." *Word Press* (blog). https://fsuspecialcollections.wordpress.com/2021/07/23/propagating-the-truth-mamie-and-me/.
This blog is a personal reflection regarding Mamie Till and how she has made the author a better person. We will use this source as evidence of Mamie's lasting influence on generations. This will help us include more personal connections with Mamie's story. This is a secondary source, as the blog author discusses information originally presented elsewhere.

Morrison, Aaron. "Mamie till Depiction Seen as Tribute to Black Female Leaders." In *AP News*. AP News.
This source reviews the movie "Till," which retells the "historic atrocity and Till-Mobley's pursuit of justice for Emmett." We will use this to provide information on the lasting impact of Mamie Till. This will help us gain an understanding of how the movie impacted its viewers. This is a secondary source, as it is talking about the movie and not firsthand events.

"The Murder of Emmett Till, August 28, 1955." In *Historic U.S. Events*. Detroit, MI: Gale, 2020. *Gale In Context: U.S. History* (accessed December 7, 2023). https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/TXFIPB266071575/UHIC?u=bullischl&sid=bookmark-UHIC&xid=bdca4d48.
This source addresses the crucial impacts of Emmett Till's death, key figures, and a summary of the event. We will use this source to provide a timeline of events leading up to Emmett's murder and those following his open-casket funeral. This will help us understand the chronological order of events and how Emmett affected so many individuals. This is a secondary source, as it covers events of individuals who did not create the source first-hand.

The Nation. "He Called for His Mother." In *The Nation*. Last modified May 14, 2023. Accessed January 5, 2024. https://www.thenation.com/article/society/mothers-day-emmett-till-mamie/.
This source is about the longterm impact of Mamie Till and how her son’s murder impacted the present day. This will be helpful because it shows how the murder was a turning point and is still talked about today. This is a secondary source because it was written after the event.

PBS. "THE MURDER of EMMETT till | ARTICLE Mamie till Mobley." In *PBS*. https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/emmett-biography-mamie-till-mobley/.
This source is about how Mamie Till sparked the Civil Rights Movement. The information from the article we are going to use is about how Emmet Tills death sparked frustration in the black community. This is a secondary source because it is information that was created later by someone who did not experience the event firsthand.

Tikkanen, Amy. "Mamie Till-Mobley." In *Britannica*. https://www.britannica.com/biography/Mamie-Till-Mobley.
This source explores Mamie Till's life and her background. We are going to use the information about her upbringing. This source will help us explore Mamie's background and upbringing. This is a secondary source because it contains information that was created later by someone who did not experience the events firsthand.

"The till Trilogy." In *Mosaic*. N.p., 2022. Mosaic Theater Company.
This source covers Mamie's early life, her family life, and the murder of her son. In addition, it discusses Mamie's work for social justice. We will use this source to provide information about Mamie's activist work and how she advocated for civil rights. This is a secondary source, as the author is not speaking first hand from the event.

Wexler, Ellen. "How Emmett Till's Mother Galvanized the Civil Rights Movement." In *Smithsonian Magazine*. https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/emmett-till-mother-galvanized-civil-rights-movement-180980925/.
The article covers the historical context at the time of Emmett Till's passing and how, compared to other Southern states, Mississippi was extremely dangerous for black individuals. We are going to use the information regarding the hate crimes involved in Mississippi during the mid-1900s. This source will help us to build the situation of what was happening at the time of Emmett's murder and how it was influenced by these hate crimes already prevalent in the state. This is a secondary source because it is information that was created later by someone who did not experience firsthand or participate in the events in which the author is writing about.

Whitaker, Hugh Stephen. "A Case Study In Southern Justice: The Emmett Till Case", 1963. http://purl.fcla.edu/fsu/etd-05272004-140932.
This Case Study discusses Emmett Till, 1941-1955 murder victims, kidnapping victims, and lynching victims in Mississippi during the time period. We will use this case study to research specific events in Mississippi during the time period of Emmett's murder. This will help us provide context to what other hate crimes were occurring in the state before Emmett. This is a secondary source, as it was not written by someone directly involved in the event.

Women & The American Story. "Life Story: Mamie Till-Mobley (1921-2003)." In *Women and the American Story*. https://wams.nyhistory.org/growth-and-turmoil/cold-war-beginnings/mamie-till-mobley/.

The source explains why Mamie Till decided to have an open-casket funeral and about the trial. We are going to use how the open casket impacted the Civil Rights movement. This source will help us explore the reason Mamie Till did what she did. This is a secondary source, as it contains information created by someone who did not participate in the events firsthand.