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8 Hrs. With Mrs. Bradley

Mother of Till Boy Unselfishly Carrying Lynch Story to Nation

By BARBARA TATE

A keen awareness of what she feels is the lethargy of the Negro to the racial problems, the fact that "people are asleep" and a desire to awaken them has motivated Mrs. Mamie Bradley, mother of 14-year-old lynch victim, Emmett Till, to travel throughout the country addressing the NAACP mass meetings and fund-raising drives. This demure, soft-spoken little lady, who is more attractive than she photographs, has courageously and unselfishly put aside her own feelings, left her job and given her time to informing the world of her horrible tragedy, hoping that by so doing, she will motivate some Americans to take action necessary to prevent a recurrence of the Mississippi lynching.

During an eight-hour visit with Mrs. Bradley, Sunday, when she addressed NAACP meetings in Alton, Madison and East St. Louis, we learned much about this mother who "can't hate Milam or Bryant," the men accused of brutally beating and murdering her only son, because he allegedly whistled at one of their wives.

The stress and strain of the hardship Mrs. Bradley has undergone is not evidenced in either her appearance or actions. Only her forceful determination to do all within her power, "to make any sacrifice to let the people know what happened and ask them not to let it happen to their children," is noticeable.

ARRIVED IN ALTON

Arriving in Alton at 1 p.m., Mrs. Bradley was accompanied by her cousin, Rayfield Mooty, a constant companion since the horrible Mississippi incident, her attorney, William Henry Huff, and a delegation of Illinois NAACP representatives, including state president, Attorney Billy Jones of East St. Louis.

A capacity crowd filled the St. John's Baptist Church in Alton to hear Mrs. Bradley and Mooty tell of what went on in Mississippi. As Mooty told of how Mrs. Bradley had been warned not to open the box containing the body of her son, and how she determinedly insisted that she "would show the world what they have done to my boy," she sat with her head high and eyes in a fixed stare, occasionally dabbing away tears. When her turn to speak came, she cried as she recalled for the group how she looked at the body of her child, beaten, mangled and swollen almost beyond recognition. With a quivering voice she asked the people to make any possible sacrifices to see that such an incident was never repeated.

SURROUNDED BY GROUP

On the way out of the church she was surrounded by a group of well-wishers who just wanted to shake hands with such a "courageous woman" and wish God's blessing upon her, to which she quietly answered, "thank you, and God bless you, too."

During the drive from Alton to Madison she talked freely about the trial of Milam and Bryant in Sumner, referring to several incidents, including the arrival of Congressman Charles Diggs of Detroit; the work of the Negro press; the final argument of the prosecuting attorney and the times her chair was missing when she returned from a recess.

In a dejected manner, she told of times "I felt proud of myself to take two hours off from work to go and vote, thinking that by so doing I had fulfilled my civic duty." And quickly added, "It's too bad that things had to happen as they did to make me realize that I had a part to play, too."

Mrs. Bradley, who was born in a small Mississippi hamlet, was educated in Chicago and nearby Argo, a small Illinois town, where she attended high school, and where Emmett often visited relatives on week-ends. She is on leave from her job as voucher examiner, a \$3900-a-year position with the U.S. Air Force.

NO COLLEGE DESIRE

In spite of her mother's insistence, she never really had a desire to go to college, because she didn't feel that married women should work, and had no inclination that one day her husband would be killed, protecting the freedom of his country, and she would be left with the responsibility of rearing a fatherless boy.

Although she has had no formal training in public speaking, the importance of the message she feels is hers to deliver, enables her to speak with the force and ability of a professional orator.

For Sunday's engagements, Mrs. Bradley dressed simply in a black faille full-skirted dress with an ice blue bertha collar, black suede shoes, velvet pillbox and gloves, all of which were trimmed with rhinestones and seed pearls. Her jewelry consisted of a man's gold wrist watch, a necklace, bracelet and earrings of sapphire blue stones.

WEPT OPENLY

During the meeting at Madison, she wept openly. When she spoke to another capacity crowd, she mentioned the children's choir which sang during the meeting, and asked the audience to make every effort to see to it that their children would be spared the suffering hers had undergone.

In the car driving from Madison to St. Louis, Mrs. Bradley explained that she had never cried at any of the other meetings she had addressed as much as she had in Madison. She showed pictures of Emmett as a baby, and as ten-year-old boy, comparing facial features of each picture with those of the body taken from the Tallahatchie River last August. With the pride and enthusiasm of a new mother, she talked of happy moments she had with her son, and recalled how she had worked to give "Bo," her pet name for Em-



MISS TATE SPEAKS to Mrs. Bradley as the two occupied seats on the platform at the St. Louis meeting at the Masonic hall. Mrs. Bradley is the mother of slain Emmett Till.

mett, a happy life without the help of a father. She remembered the time she had told him "we will have to work together as a team to make it" and how he pitched in to do his part. "Bo was a good boy" she added several times, "often he would help me with the house work and even family problems."

The mother, who admits that the hard and difficult labor of bearing her only child was not comparable to the "pain and agony of my heart now and ever since my son was so bru-

tally killed," holds no malice for the ruthless murderers who robbed her of her only child, nor for

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