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Literatu

Assassination Effects Portrayed by Editors

1:33 In Memorium: John F. Kennedy. By Bruce Henderson and Sam Summerlin. Cowles. \$4.95

By JACK WARDLAW

Where were you, and what were you doing, at 1:33 p.m., Nov. 22, 1963? Chances are, you don't have to think twice for an answer.

What other date in your lifetime stands out so boldly in your memory? John F. Kennedy once said the only two dates people remember are Pearl Harbor day and the day Franklin D. Roosevelt died. Tragically, his own death became one of indelible prominence on the memory of Americans.

And that's what this absorbing new book is all about — not the assassination itself, a track that is becoming well-worn, but the effect of the event on individuals in the United States and around the world, on our collective psyche and on history.

The British statesman Disraeli held that assassinations never change the flow of history. The authors of this book seriously question this thesis.

History, the authors say, supports the view that assassins seldom attain the political ends for which they were plotting —

often the direct opposite, as witness the slaying of Abraham Lincoln by John Wilkes Booth, a Confederate sympathizer. All now agree Lincoln's death hurt the South rather than helped it.

But the consequences, expected or not, are there. While not enough time has passed to assess the effect of the Kennedy assassination, the authors raise the question of the role it may have played in bringing on the anarchy that has plagued the nation in recent times, including racial and student unrest and most graphically shown in the further assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert F. Kennedy.

One of the authors, Summerlin, is a former New Orleanian, who headed The Associated Press bureau here several years ago. He is now an AP editor in New York. Henderson is an associate editor of Time magazine.

Like another recent book co-authored by Summerlin, "The China Cloud," this one is well researched and clearly written. The subject matter is by its nature depressing, but if the nation is ever to end the series of assassinations, it must face up to the issues raised by them.