NEGRO DEATH LAID TO MISSISSIPPINANS

Six Are Accused of Murder When Body Is Found in a Bayou After Flogging

LEXINGTON, Miss., July 30 (UP) — Six white Mississippi landowners have been charged with the murder of a Negro whose body was found in a bayou, County Attorney Pat M. Barrett said today.

The Negro, Leon McTatie, 35, was flogged July 22, Mr. Barrett stated, and his body was found two days later about sixty miles away in Sunflower County.

Tuskegee Institute declared that it would record McTatie's death as a lynching.

McTatie was a tenant on the farm of Dixie Roberts, one of the accused white men.

Mrs. Roberts quoted her husband as saying that he and her father-in-law, Vernon Vale, went to McTatie's tenant house after other Negroes had accused him of stealing a saddle. They beat him with a leather strap and buggy whip, she reported, and told him to "go on down the road." This meant, she added, to get off the farm.

Roberts acknowledged that the Negro had been beaten but denied he had been killed.

"We whipped him and ordered him to leave this section," Roberts said. "The last we saw of him he was running down the road."

Statement Absolves Four

Mrs. Roberts declared that her husband told her the four other men held in the flogging were not involved.

Mr. Barrett identified the other four men as Jeff Dodd, owner of the saddle which McTatie allegedly had stolen; Jeff Dodd Jr., Spencer Ellis and James E. Roberts, nephew of Dixie Roberts.

Sheriff W. L. Murtagh said that it was "evident" the Negro was thrown from a car into the bayou, but Roberts denied this.

Murtagh disclosed that on July 19, Dodd had sworn out a warrant for McTatie's arrest, charging theft of a saddle, and that McTatie was jailed, but that the next day Dodd made bond for the Negro, stating, "I need him to help me make my cotton crop."

The Sheriff said that McTatie was not guilty of the theft of the saddle because two other Negroes later confessed.

E. W. Williams, Sunflower County Sheriff, said that there were no recognizable marks on the Negro's body when it was taken from the water. The coroner, William Sals, returned a verdict of "cause of death unknown."

Mississippi's last proven case of lynching was in March 26, 1944, when a Negro minister, the Rev. Isaac Simmons, was taken from his home near Liberty and shot to death by a mob.

Mississippi Deputy Held

HATTIESBURG, Miss., July 30 (AP) — Deputy Sheriff John Lewis was being held in jail today pending a preliminary hearing Wednesday on a murder charge which, Mayor J. D. Arrington of Collins, said, was filed in connection with the fatal shooting of a 37-year-old Negro father of ten children.

Mayor Arrington declared that the Negro, Buddy Wolf, was shot Saturday night in a small store just west of Collins. He quoted Lewis as saying he fired after Wolf had attacked him. A group of Negroes was present, the Mayor added, but up to this morning none had made a statement.

Lewis was arrested on an affidavit sworn out by Wolf's wife.