

Upstate Negro Is Lynched By Mob Jury Debates Fate

Oxford—An angry mob forcibly raided the county jail here Tuesday night and seized and lynched Elwood Higginbotham, Lafayette county negro, who had previously admitted to the slaying of a white farmer. The jury was debating the fate of the negro when the mob invaded the jail.

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The mob, variously estimated at 40 to 150 persons, crashed two doors in the county jail, overpowered Jailer D. A. Pritchard and stood off at least three sheriff's deputies to seize the 28-year-old negro.

Higginbotham was spirited away to a lonely rural road, some three miles north of Oxford and hung to a tree by the mob.

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Dr. S. T. Lyles, sheriff of the county, cut the negro's body down, returned it here at midnight.

Higginbotham was charged with the murder last May 21, of Glen Roberts, Lafayette county planter. He was held in the mob-proof Hinds county jail at Jackson following his arrest after a two-day chase and returned here several days ago to face trial.

In circuit court Tuesday, Higginbotham was tried on the murder charge, the case reaching the jury about 6 p.m. State's counsel asked the death penalty for the negro, on the contention that Higginbotham shot the planter in cold blood as the white man sought to talk to the negro at the latter's place.

Witnesses for the state testified that Roberts went to the negro's house and asked him to come outside. The negro stately refused, and was quoted as saying "if you want to see me come into the house." The state charged that Higginbotham shot Roberts fatally as he started to enter the house.

Higginbotham took the stand late Tuesday and denied making any statement to Roberts about having to enter his house to talk to him.