

Preston Cobb Pleads Guilty, Gets 18 Years

Atlanta Daily World (1932-2003); Feb 23, 1968; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Atlanta Daily World

pg. 2

Preston Cobb Pleads Guilty, Gets 18 Years

MATONTON, Ga.—(UPI)— Preston Cobb Jr., 21 has pleaded guilty to a charge of voluntary manslaughter and has been sentenced to 18 years in prison, apparently halting court maneuvers that began approximately seven years ago.

Sol. Gen. George D. Lawrence said the plea came after an agreement between himself, Superior Court Judge Jack W. Ballenger and defense attorney's.

Cobb a Negro was sentence to die when he was 15 for the slaying of

70 year old Colman Dumas, a white farmer, in an argument over a fish caught in Dumas' pond.

The case drew worldwide attention because of Cobb's age. He lived with his family, who were tenants on Dumas' farm.

He was sentenced to life imprisonment in a second trial, and this conviction was over turned by the U. S. Supreme Court last October on grounds that Negroes were excluded systematically from juries in

Jasper County.

Cobb is being held in the Jasper County jail at Monticello, Ga., awaiting transfer to the State Department of Corrections.

During his time behind bars, Cobb has spent three and one-half years on death row at Reidsville State Prison, and was saved from execution four times by legal maneuvers.

Actually, there have been seven appeals in the two previous trials.

Lawrence said he agreed to join in recommending the plea last Monday because of the expense of the trials to Jasper County, and because he said he was convinced that even if another death sentence were meted, he felt the defense would appeal again.

At his first trial, three months

after the slaying, Cobb told the jury he shot Dumas to death after an arguments over a fish he caught in Dumas' pond.

"I was mad with him because he kept telling me about that little old fish I caught, and he told me he was going to blow my brains out," the youth said.

The jury deliberated just 45 minutes before convicting him.