

Max Mason: Case No. 6785.

Case Files.

Interview with Max Mason, August 26, 1922.

OFFICE OF  
**PAROLE DEPARTMENT**  
 Minnesota State Prison

J. J. Sullivan, Warden

STILLWATER, MINN.

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August 26, 1922.

State Agent's interview with Max Mason# 5785

True name, 23 years old, single, home in Decatur, Ala. Parents died when he was quite young. He has one Brother and two sisters living in Alabama where he was born and raised. 6th Grade in school and is a Methodist. He is a common laborer. Admits for the first time that he was convicted of Grand Larceny in his home town and was in prison at Wetumka, Alabama for six years. Later was released on August 28th, 1918, and went to Indiana. He was there for a time and on April 24th up to the time of his arrest in June, he worked for the John Robinson Circus. On June 15th they were showing in Duluth and at nite a young man and woman visited the grounds and it was claimed that six colored men grabbed this young woman and took her to a ravine and that five of them ravished her, that the young man was kept under control by a revolver held by one of the party. He was arrested that nite but they failed to identify him, he was arrested the next day in Virginia and brought back to Duluth. One month later, he was taken to the show grounds and under as near the same conditions as possible, they then identified him by his voice and walk. He claims that he knows nothing about this offense and had nothing to do about it. Claims also that he heard nothing of this among the colored men, then or while in jail relative to the crime and that he has no knowledge who assaulted this girl. At his trial he was represented by F. L. Barnett, a colored Attorney from Chicago also R. J. McCollough of Duluth, they being employed by the National association of the advance for colored people. His case went to the Supreme Court and was there affirmed. He says there were thirteen colored men arrested in Virginia and that thirteen were in Duluth, seven of them were turned loose, three were tried and three hung by a mob. Miller the other man tried was acquitted. His claim is that he did not have a fair trial, that the people of Duluth, were worked up and excited and that the County Attorney wanted to have a conviction and that he was unfair. He says Judge Nelson was very fair. Told him the County Attorney had the reputation of being a fair man and I did not believe that he would want to have an innocent man convicted, but he insists very persistently that he is not guilty. He writes to his sisters and to a Minister.

There has always been considerable mystery and doubt in the minds of the Duluth people about this case. There are people living there who doubt if there was any crime committed, there are many others who think that at least five others should have been convicted. There is a great deal of criticism over the way the matter was handled by the police and others. The real truth of the whole matter will probably never be known. This man's conduct and appearance here is good.

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*J. J. Sullivan*  
 State Parole Agent.