Negro Widow Files $20 Million Suit

JACKSON Miss. —(UPI) — A Negro widow filed a $20 million damage suit charging police officers beat and shot her husband to death without justification at his home July 9.

The suit filed by Mrs. Bertha Stewart alleged eight state, county and local police officers were liable for the slaying of her husband, Eddie James Stewart, 24.

Civil rights attorney Alvin J. Bronstein, who filed the suit in federal district court here, said original news stories had carried claims "that Stewart had been shot while escaping from officers."

The suit alleged that he was killed while actualy in custody of a number of officers after having surrendered.

Named as defendants were Col. T. B. Birdsong, state commissioner of public safety; A.D. Morgan, chief, Mississippi Highway Patrol; T. L. Oglesby, highway patrolman; Fred N. Pickett, sheriff of Hinds County; Herbert Deaton, sheriff of Copiah County; a deputy sheriff "Walker" of Copiah County; Boyce Ferguson, chief of Crystal Springs Police, and the firms which filed bonds for the officers.

The suit listed 67 separate claims totaling $20 million.