

DOCUMENTATION OF THE BOOT HILL CEMETERY (8JA1860),  
AT THE FORMER ARTHUR G. DOZIER SCHOOL FOR BOYS,  
MARIANNA, FLORIDA

INTERIM REPORT (DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES PERMIT NO. 1112.032)



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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

COD	Cause and/or Circumstances of Death
DC	Death Certificate
FDLE	Florida Department of Law Enforcement
FIS	Florida Industrial School for Boys
GPR	Ground Penetrating Radar
GPS	Global Positioning System
JJOC	Jackson Juvenile Offender Center
NFYDC	North Florida Youth Development Center
PRIDE	Prison Rehabilitative Industries and Diversified Enterprises Inc.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This interim report provides a summary of the archaeological and historical investigation into the creation and initial identification of graves at the Boot Hill Cemetery in Marianna, Florida to date. The Florida State Reform School, also known as the “Florida Industrial School for Boys” (FIS) and most recently as the “Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys”, first opened on January 1, 1900 on 1400 acres of land. Children were committed to the school for criminal offenses, such as “theft and murder,” but the law was later amended to identify minor offenses including “incurability”, “truancy”, or “dependency,” which propelled the school to become the largest training and reform school in the country at the time. Originally, the school housed children as young as five years old, including both males and females who were segregated by race. Daily activities including dormitory assignments and work and school responsibilities were dictated in the context of a system that racially classified people as “white” or “colored”. Beginning as early as 1901, reports of children being chained to walls in irons, brutal whippings, and peonage surfaced. During the first 13 years of operation, there were more than six state led investigations. A recent investigation in 2008-09,2009 by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) into the deaths that occurred at the school, reported 81 school-related deaths from 1911-1973. It was reported that 31 of these boys were buried on the school’s grounds, while others were shipped home to families or buried in unknown locations.

An area designated as “Boot Hill Cemetery” was established on school property in the early days of the school. Recorded burials in this location occurred from 1914-1952. Located on the north side of the school, the side designated as the “colored” side, the cemetery was positioned in a small, elevated clearing immediately adjacent to the school’s garbage dump (GPS location 30° 45’ 59”N, 85° 15’ 43”W, Jackson County, Township 4 North, Range 10W, Section 4). The cemetery today is marked by 31 white metal crosses, and is surrounded by a wire perimeter. Grave markers and delineation of the cemetery grounds were constructed in the early 1960s and again in the mid-1990s, long after the interments were made, in efforts to mark or commemorate the burials. However, the markers do not correspond to the actual interments, as burials were not originally marked. Very little documentation about the history of the cemetery or who is buried there exists, and the exact locations of individual burials were never documented. Even at the time that recorded deaths occurred (dating back to 1914), multiple investigations and reports summarized different accounts of who died and the surrounding circumstances. Therefore, uncertainty, speculation, and folklore regarding these deaths are prevalent today. Many family members and witnesses believe children died under suspicious or questionable circumstances. Given the lack of existing documentation (and the incomplete recording of information), many questions persist about who is buried at the school and the circumstances surrounding their deaths.

Historic cemeteries are among the most valuable cultural resources for documenting community heritage, and provide an important means to understand past events. Florida Statutes (Chapters 267 and 704.08) provide protection for them, and mandate the rights of families to have access. Therefore, the purpose of this research project was to conduct an initial field survey of the Boot Hill Cemetery, and research the history of the site and variables surrounding the deaths to determine the number, location, and identity of graves to the largest extent possible.

In 2012, a pedestrian survey and mapping of the Boot Hill Cemetery along with associated archival research on the history of the cemetery was undertaken with the permission

of the Department of Environmental Protection to accomplish the following objectives (permit number 112.023, Division of Historical Resources):

- 1) Register, document, and map the cemetery as currently demarcated;
- 2) Identify existing and any additional graves through multiple remote sensing and archaeological methods, such as ground penetrating radar (GPR) and soil chemistry;
- 3) Research the site's history, creation, and use based on archival research and ethnographic interviews;
- 4) Research primary and secondary sources to determine who is buried in the cemetery and the morbidity and mortality patterns of those who died; and
- 5) Establish if there was one or more burial areas at the school.

To accomplish these objectives, multiple methods were employed, including those primarily used by forensic anthropology, archaeology, and cultural anthropology. Historical imaging and archival research was supplemented with ethnographic interviews of family members and former students and employees, remote sensing, soil chemistry, and archaeological excavation. Through the course of this investigation, a number of outside experts were also consulted in the areas of forensic pathology, fire investigation, and integrative biology. Historical imaging and archival research was supplemented with interviews of family members and former students and employees, remote sensing, soil chemistry, and archaeological excavation. Through the course of this investigation, a number of outside experts were also consulted in the areas of forensic pathology, fire investigation, and integrative biology.

As a result of this investigation, a record of 98 deaths was found in historical documents, including boys aged 6-18 years and two adult staff members. These deaths occurred between 1914-1973. However, state records regarding cause of death and school ledgers are only public record for the years prior to 1960. Therefore the scope of this investigation was 1900-1960. For this period, records indicate that 45 individuals were buried on the school grounds between the years 1914-1952, 31 bodies were shipped to other locations for burial, and 22 cases do not have recorded burial locations. Throughout, the historical records are incomplete and often provide conflicting information. The cause and manner of death for the majority of cases are unknown. Infectious disease, fires, physical trauma, and drowning are the most common recorded causes of death when a cause of death is recorded. Other mortality patterns show trends among the boys that died including deaths following attempted escapes from the school (n=7), a high number of boys who died within the first three months of being remanded to the school (n=20), and inconsistency among those who were issued death certificates. Archaeological fieldwork shows an estimated minimum of 50 grave shafts in the area of Boot Hill and the surrounding wooded area. It is possible that additional graves and/or burial areas are present given the practice of segregation and number of cases that are still unaccounted. Recommendations for further research and preservation of the site are also discussed for recognizing the historical significance of human and civil rights issues in Florida in the area of juvenile justice and the rights of families to have accountability and transparency as important aspects of restorative justice.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: THE ROAD TO REFORMATION**

The State of Florida opened its first juvenile center as the Florida State Reform School on January 1, 1900, which remained in operation until it was closed on June 30, 2011. The institution was originally located on 1200 acres of land south of the town of Marianna in Jackson County, Florida and grew to 1400 acres over time as additional land was purchased. From its inception, the institution was supposed to be a “school” not a “prison”, and the boys who were committed were “students” rather than “inmates”. This dichotomy proved conceptually sound but, in practice, difficult to maintain. Throughout the school’s early history a multitude of narratives seem to contradict the “school” and “student” focus of the institution. These contradictions resulted in many reform measures to the school itself, from its practices of child labor and corporal punishment to its very name. In order to understand the nature and circumstances of those who died at the school, it is important to understand why boys were committed to the school, the use of a convict-lease and peonage systems of corrections rather than prisons during this time, and the early practices of the school itself.

Originally, children were committed to the school after criminal conviction, though this changed to include minor offenses such as “incurability” and “truancy”. Additionally, many children were committed to the school not having been charged with a crime but as wards of the state and orphans. The school housed children as young as five years old including both males and females. Over the course of time, the name changed as did the demographic structure of children committed there: Florida State Reform School (1900-1913); Florida Industrial School for Boys or FIS (1914-1957); Florida School for Boys (1957-1967); and the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys (1968-2011).

In the beginning, the school was managed by a superintendent who reported to Board of State Directors or Commissioners, a five member group appointed by the Governor. Chapters 4565 and 5398 of the Laws of Florida required that the Board submit reports on the condition and progress of the school. The Superintendent also wrote reports in the form of Biennial reports that were submitted to the Board. Only a limited number of these reports were found during this investigation, ranging in time from 1901-1935. Demographic and financial information does not consistently appear in any detail except in a few of the recovered documents dating 1908, 1911, 1913, 1926-1935. However, the numbers of deaths in these reports are typically not the same as listed in the school discharge and record ledgers and tend to underreport the total number.

Due to over-crowding a second campus was opened in Okeechobee in 1955. Staff from the Marianna campus went to work at the Okeechobee campus where they instituted the same policies and practices. An additional facility also opened on the Marianna grounds, the Jackson Juvenile Offender Center (JJOC), which was a maximum-risk facility for children convicted of felonies or violent crimes and together these facilities constituted the North Florida Youth Development Center (NFYDC).

Nearly all of the documented deaths and the documented burials on the school’s grounds occurred during the FIS years (1914-1957), which may be a reflection of availability of the historical documents from that time for review combined with the lack of documents from earlier periods in the school’s history. Throughout this report the institution is referred to as the “school” or “FIS”.

Until 1968, the school was segregated into two completely separate campuses or “departments” for “white” and “colored” students. Throughout this report, the terms “white” and “colored” are used when necessary following the documentation practices used in historical

records and the school documents consulted. Spatially, the south school was for “whites” and was called “No. 1”. The north school was for African Americans and other “races” [or students identified as non-white] and was referred to as school “No. 2”. Attendance ledgers show that for many boys who may have had mixed ancestry or Latino backgrounds (i.e., Spanish surnames such as Fernandez), administrators were less sure of where to place them, and would transfer boys between the two schools. This is because race is a social construction with no biological association that uniquely identifies one race at the exclusion of all other races. Arbitrary markers used in an attempt to classify people by race often change depending on who is making the decision or attempting to draw lines defining features or characteristics that place a person in particular racial category at the exclusion of another.

## **ERA OF SEGREGATION IN THE NEW SOUTH UNDER JIM CROW**

To understand the creation and development of the school, it is important to contextualize the laws and practices at the time with regard to a lack of prisons, the convict lease system, and segregation. Following the death of Ossian Hart (1821-1874) who served as Governor of Florida from 1873 to 1874, gains for freedmen (freed blacks) secured after the Civil War in 1865 during the period known as Reconstruction began to be rapidly eroded. Hart was a reform minded Republican Governor who had openly opposed succession and championed rights for freedmen to the disdain of the opposing Democratic Party. The Democratic Party during this period of Florida’s history was focused on ensuring white power and control and negating civil rights for blacks, especially freedmen. Hart’s death signaled a decline of the Florida Republican Party and an eventual shift in control of Florida’s state government to the Democratic legislature (Brown 1997). By 1895, laws enacted by a Democratic controlled legislature in Florida as well as elsewhere throughout the South resulted in complete oppression of blacks under restrictive laws known as Jim Crow that mandated segregation at every level (see: Litwack 1998; Wilkerson 2010; Williamson 1984; Woodward 1951). Kevin Boyle (2004) in his book, *Arc of Justice*, wrote:

Florida was one of the first southern states to require blacks to ride in separate railroad cars. And the legislature made it a crime to teach black children and white children in same classroom.

As the Democrats made it more and more difficult to be black, whites became more and more determined to assert the power of their race. So they piled prohibition on prohibition. Blacks couldn’t be buried in the same cemeteries as whites. They couldn’t eat in the same restaurants. They couldn’t ride in the front of streetcars. They couldn’t drink from the same drinking fountains. Whites also segregated their workplaces. Blacks could be servants and farm laborers, of course, and they could work in the turpentine and lumber camps, where most whites didn’t want to go. But whites claimed the vast majority of jobs for themselves. They also demanded privileges that superiority conferred. They expected blacks to step off the sidewalk when a white person approached. They insisted that blacks keep their eyes downcast when they spoke to whites. They demanded that blacks call them ‘sir’ or ‘ma’am’, though they would not dream of reciprocating. They felt free to level any

insult, to inflict any injury, without fear of reprisal. Jim Crow taught the great mass of southern whites to see ordinary places and everyday interactions as sacred and to protect the sacred with the profane (Boyle 2004:56).

Segregation permeated every aspect of life in Florida and throughout the US South until the passing of the Civil Rights Act in 1964. No understanding of the Florida State Reform School over the course of its history can be understood without consideration of the impact and implications of segregation, particularly those relating to criminal justice. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Florida did not have prisons but relied on the convict lease system to house and maintain individuals convicted of crimes. This system placed men, women and children together into labor camps. Typically individuals arrested were taken to the courthouse for trial and imposed with fines. The number of people arrested rose significantly in the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In his book, *One dies, Get Another*, Mancini (1996) wrote: "Vagrancy was a widespread 'offence' in the South throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, one that frequently led to outright peonage, but in Florida it was most pervasive."

Many laws were created or used during this time, such as the vagrancy laws as a means to obtain labor. Mancini wrote (1996;188): "Florida had 208 prisoners in January 1883, 291 two years later... There were 530 convicts in 1895 and 1,071 by 1904. There can be little doubt that part of the growth can be attributed to the assiduous enterprise of the labor agents whom Dutton hired to pay the fines of vagrants and transport them to the stockades." More than 90% of these men were African American (Mancini 1996;189).

Local business owners from the timber, phosphate, citrus, cotton and other industries would pay the fees or lease convicts from labor agents who had control of the individuals for a period of time (often one year or more). The labor agent was responsible for the housing, food, and maintenance of the individual who would work to pay off the court fees, housing, and other expenses incurred for their care.

The business owners would often contract with labor agents to use this labor in their business or subcontract the labor to other industries. Despite the men who ran the convict lease programs not being sworn law enforcement, they could legally discipline convicts in their care and even legally shoot and kill convicts that tried to escape. The convict lease program labor camps became notorious for deplorable conditions, the spread of infectious disease, and deaths due to brutal treatment such as flogging. In 1899 a House investigative committee reported the convict labor camps were "a system of cruelty and inhumanity" (Mancini 1996;191). One foreman was reported to have "...beat men that died... some would be so badly beaten that they could not lay on their back for weeks" (Mancini 1996;191).

Typically, deaths that occurred were undocumented and underreported. The dead were often buried in folk burial grounds at the edge of fields without markers. In some cases, small wooden crosses were used.

According to Mancini (1996;193), a turning point came when a 16 year old, whose autopsy report stated "Death from Torture", died in 1887 from a whipping received in a convict labor camp. Public attention over this death and others at the camps grew as did demands for reform and that children be taken out of the convict lease system. Calls for reform grew louder with the publication of J.C. Powell's, *The American Siberia* (1891) which described the brutal conditions of labor camps. It was in this environment that the idea for a reform and training school in Florida developed.

## CREATING REFORM—STARTING A REFORM SCHOOL

The Florida reform school was created through “An Act to Provide for the Locating and Erecting a State Reform School, and to Appropriate Money Therefore” (Laws of Florida Chapter 4565, sec. 1 signed into law June 4, 1897). The objective in creating the reform school was to provide a safe and productive alternative for juvenile offenders away from the convict lease system. According to the Laws of Florida (1897, Ch. 4565, sec. 4, 108) the purpose was to create:

... a reform school where the young offender of law, separated from vicious associates may receive physical, intellectual, and moral training, be reformed, and restored to the community with purpose and character fitting for a good citizen, an honorable and an honest man with a trade or skilled occupation fitting such person for self-maintenance.

The law called for the purchase of 350 acres of land to construct “a reformatory school for the employment, instructions, and reformation of juvenile offenders.” Section 9 of the law mandated that only children between the ages 10-16 years who had been convicted of a misdemeanor or felony be admitted. Sentencing was not to be less than 6 months nor more than 4 years. The students included both males and females, white and colored children. Boys and girls were housed together however two separate facilities were built for the segregation of the colored students from the white students. Segregation at the school included all living, dining, educational, religious, and work related activities and continued until the late-1960s.

Gubernatorial candidate and State Senator William H. Milton was instrumental in getting the institution brought to his hometown of Marianna and collected more than 1200 acres and \$1400 in donations as several towns competed to build the school in their community (Figure 1). The 1200 acres was substantially more than the 350 acres mandated by the State for the school. W.H. Milton was the grandson of John Milton, Florida’s Governor through the Civil War. Combined, the Milton family gave more than \$200 and 40 acres to bring the school to Marianna, more than any other donor or family and continued to play important roles at the school in various administrative positions for decades to come, including positions of Superintendent and President of the Board.

The first Biennial report (Feb. 14, 1901) from Superintendent Walter Rawls to the Board of Directors stated that there had been thirty child inmates with an average of twenty children at a time (5 white boys and 25 negro boys and girls), with sentences ranging from 6 months to 4 years, according to the law.

In the earliest years, the school was funded by state appropriations, a \$50.00/per child fee paid by the county that sent the child to the school, as well as money raised through the farm and business activities of the school. State appropriated funding came from the Convict Lease Program, for example, \$250/per inmate was provided in 1907 (Lundrigan 1975:70). Early on, the appropriations and resources were inadequate to meet the demands of the school. This lack of resources helped fuel numerous crises and affected the educational, developmental, and disciplinary practices of the school. School officials quickly began to clamor to the legislators for changes to the length of sentencing, determination of parole, and reason for commitment presumably due to the financial impact these factors had on the school’s funding and revenue. For example, Superintendent Rawls wrote (1901). “The sentences of those serving six and eight month terms have expired, and they were discharged without having derived any perceivable

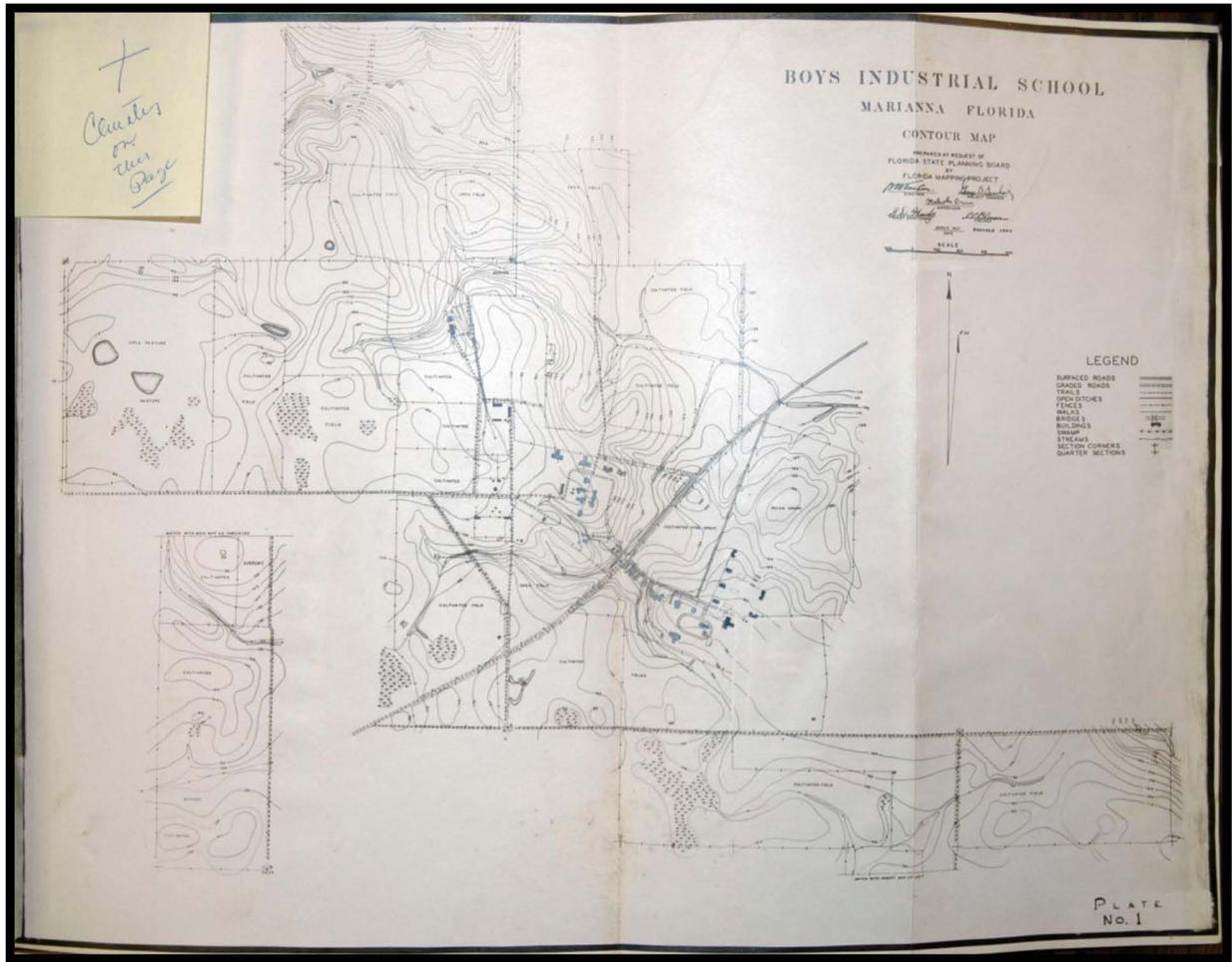


Figure 1. Map of the Florida Industrial School property (1947). Map obtained from Florida State Archives (Florida School for Boys, Administrative Records). This is the only map recovered among the instructional documents that shows a cemetery. It is pictured here at the north school.

benefit. Such short sentences do not give them much in reforming habits and building characters.”

Subsequently, the Board of Directors, under leadership of Hon. W. H. Milton, issued a report requesting that the law be amended to allow longer sentences and that the length of the sentence be turned over to the discretion of the managers of the school, rather than the courts. Another request for a legislative change came again on April 7, 1903 when Milton asked Governor Jenkins to authorize that “...incorrigible children be sent, without conviction, for an indefinite period, leaving the term to be fixed by the management (House Journal 1903).” In both instances, these requests were honored and as a result, the school’s number of enrollment began to increase drastically. The term of sentencing also changed from 6 months-4 years to “21 years old or as determined by the court”. This change in law and policy seems to indicate that financial incentives were underlying motivating factors to create a reform school and draw juveniles into the system.

Superintendent Rawls wrote to the Board of Managers again in 1906 about low enrollment stating that the school only had twenty inmates and that “having so few inmates makes the crop come in slow; I fear we will not finish gathering the corn by January (letter December 1, 1906). In the same year (1906), Governor N.B. Broward’s wrote to the State Legislature that:

“... we get large returns at present for the hire of convicts, we should spend a reasonable sum of it to reform the Juvenile offenders. The needs of the State Reform School...be made really a reform school and not a Juvenile prison: and that such labor and work as is imposed upon its inmates be imposed with a view of their industrial training... rather than a means of revenue...”

Despite this sentiment on the part of Gov. Broward, letters from Board President Milton continued with requests for longer sentences and increasing the number of boys committed to the school along with suggestions on how the school could increase revenue (1907 letter to Hon. Broward): “If the school were to purchase a sufficient number of cattle, it could run a dairy farm to advantage, as there would be a good local demand...” Milton goes on to point out that there was already sufficient goods and farm products to meet the needs of school and that this excess could be sold for profit. In order to continue to increase the number of students at the school, the Board of Managers suggested eliminating the \$50.00 fee paid by the counties to send a child to the school. Lundrigan writes (1975:79):

“The managers are thoroughly convinced that the \$50.00 which the law requires to be paid for the maintenance of each child, committed by the county from which he is committed, works an injury to the school; and advises the repeal or amendment of this section. Our reason being that the counties have to pay \$50.00 for each child sent to the school while if such child were sent to the state prison, instead of being an expense, the counties would receive the amount paid under the State Law for the hiring out of the child as a convict, or would get the benefit of the work of the child in county during his term of commitment, thus in the desire for the elimination of county and court expenses of the child convicted is lost sight of.”

In the 1907 Biennial Report, the Board argues that if a child were sent to the State Prison, the county would benefit \$250.00, but under the current system the county was instead paying \$50 to the reform school and therefore had no incentive to commit boys to FIS rather than prison (Lundrigan 1975:79).

With the elimination of the county and court fees, the number of inmates did increase substantially. In 1907, there were 45 inmates (30 were colored) though 18 escaped (all colored). By 1908, one year later, there were 102 inmates, a more than 50% increase over the prior year (Letter from Superintendent Belch to Board of Managers, 1908). Belch further reports that at this time there were 200 acres under cultivation and that more than \$2,000.00 in profits were made from the sale of bricks, timber, cotton and the boys’ labor.

Lundrigan (1975:34) wrote about the original intention for creating the school versus the harsh reality of its practices during the first half of the century: “The intent of the lawmakers must be presumed to have been entirely honorable. Records remaining in existence, however, show that an enormous gulf existed between benignly worded intent and actual practice.” Children sent to the reform school continued to be hired out for labor in addition to working the farm and industries of the institution itself. Financially, the Convict Lease Program, which provided a vehicle for the State to rent out inmate labor to private interests was very profitable for the State of Florida. By 1913, revenues from the program were over \$3,000,000 and children as young as 10 years were hired for labor with adult prisoners to work in phosphate mines and turpentine and cotton farms (Lundrigan 1975).

Between the years 1903-1913, six legislative investigative committees were formed to investigate the school and found that children as young as five years were in irons and chains, children were hired out for labor, unjustly beaten, and without education or proper food and clothing (Lundrigan 1975). Furthermore, throughout this time, financial and administrative records were not well maintained at the school, persistent problems from inadequate medical care, a lack of educational instruction, and unsafe living conditions were written about in the repeated State investigative reports. Below are a few examples:

- 1903: “we found them in irons, just as common criminals, which in the judgment of your committee, is not the meaning of a ‘State Reform School’.... We have no hesitancy in saying under its present management it is nothing more nor less than a prison where juveniles are confined (Letter to Hon, Frank Adams, President of the Senate from legislative investigation committee, June 1, 1903).”
- 1909: The school rooms were in very poor condition and without desks; the inventory as listed in the Biennial Report was greatly falsified, the President of the Board of Managers had accrued large debts and was detaining boys past the age 18 years (up to 20 years), presumably for labor (Lundrigan 1975).
- 1911: Report of Special Joint Committee on the State Reformatory (House Journal) found that Superintendent Morgan “at times unnecessarily and brutally punished, the instrument of punishment being a leather strap fastened to a wooded paddle”. The committee further said the school was more like a convict camp, without care for the sick, poor ventilation, overcrowding, and inadequate food. They wrote, “The Negro School impressed your committee as being more in the nature of a convict camp, than anything else we can think of...”
- 1913: The health conditions were very bad and one member of the Board would not accept the Biennial report (Lundrigan 1975). Additionally, the Governor called for a medical report which subsequently came from Dr. N.A. Baltzell, a local physician who was hired to serve as the school’s physician. In an appendix to the Biennial Report of the Board of Managers of the Florida State Reform School, (1913 House Journal p. 1010), Baltzell reported that “the general health of the school for the entire has been unusual, that is, excellent. Some conditions have not changed, namely overcrowding particularly on the colored side.” Boys at this time were overcrowded and slept two to a bed, or four on bunk beds which only provided for “200 cubic inches of air space per boy, though the

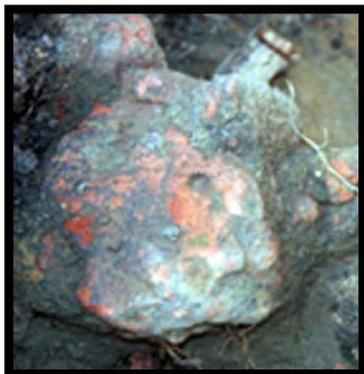
national standard called for 600 cubic inches” (Lundrigan 1975). Baltzell’s report also stated there were 170 inmates at the school (50 were white and all male except for two girls, and the rest were colored). He recommended that the “infirm and imbecile” children not be sent to the school in the future as they needed special care.

As a result of the 1913 investigation, the superintendent resigned and the State Legislature passed Chapters 6446 and 6529 which appropriated more money to the school, built a separate school for girls, and changed the institution’s name. Modifications were also made to the dormitory on the south or white school for safety in the event of a fire. It was also stated that the Board should “inaugurate and maintain simple and practical industrial training and institute a system of merits/demerits and that no one shall hire out any of the boys for any purpose.” (In Lundrigan 1975). Ethnographic interviews, casual conversations, and participant observation conducted by Lundrigan in the 1970s and by this research team between January and August 2012 revealed that, despite the mandate from the Legislature, boys did continue to be hired out for labor well after this timeframe.

Legislative reform initiated in 1913 did not end the challenges facing the boys and staff at FIS. Between 1913 and 1919, there were seven superintendents and more than 28 deaths among boys. In 1914, Superintendent Bell, a convicted bank robber, was terminated following a fire that killed that 12 people. According to Lundrigan (1975) two year prior to the fire, Bell was convicted in Federal Court for stealing \$50,000.00 from the First National Bank of Pensacola. He was 19 years old at the time and sent to serve two years at a Training School in Washington, D.C. Upon release, he was hired as the Superintendent of the Florida School for Boys. According to the final coroner’s report, the victims were boys that had been locked in “dark cells” for punishment and no keys were available to release them when the fire broke out.

Several years later, in 1921 Superintendent McClane and his assistant, Mr. Garrard, purchased hogs and land adjacent to the school using state funds, then cleared the land and began cultivating it with child labor from the school. The timber and products from the land were then sold back to the institution, presumably to aid with the fuel needs by the brick making plant. Ultimately, after the State had paid them \$9,320.33 for wood, both were terminated.

During the early years of the school’s history, several industries contributed greatly to the development and revenue of the institution—most notably, brick making and publishing. In 1906, the school built a brick-making machine that produced more than 20,000 bricks a day, enough to sell throughout the community. Captain J.W. Kehoe ran the brick making business and had been one of the original donors who gave \$50 to help bring the institution to the area. Originally, Kehoe made 60,000 soft red bricks as a “test” and found it successful. Evidence of the brick industry is evident today on the landscape where visits to the site revealed evidence of



where clay deposits were dug on the south side of the school (Figures 2-4). Quickly, the school reported earnings from selling the bricks, as well as selling the timber, cotton, and the hiring out of child labor. The school-made bricks were also used to build many of the buildings that are still on the grounds today and were recovered in some of the burial shafts excavated at the Boot Hill Cemetery.

Figure 2. School made bricks were found in several of the trenches dug in the Boot Hill Cemetery (USF 2012).



Figure 3. Overview of southern end of south school, illustrating the brick making plant in the background (#9). Image originally published in *The Light* v. 3, no. 1.



Figure 4. Bricks made by students were used to construct the buildings at the school. This building is the laundry/electoral building constructed in 1914.

The second notable industry arose when the school bought a printing press and created its first publication, a school newspaper called *The Light* (Figure 5). After the development of the printing department, nearly all paper materials for the State government in Tallahassee began to be printed at the school. The printing industry at the school quickly generated more than \$250,000.00 in revenue. In a letter from Superintendent Vanlandingham (July 1, 1926) on the issue of constructing a printing plant, he wrote that it was: “First to train boys in good trades, in order that they may leave the school prepared to earn a living; second to do all of the State’s printing at a saving to the tax payers.” The school paper later changed its name to the *Yellow Jacket* and on October 11, 1930 the first paper under the new name was published. The *Yellow Jacket* had a circulation of more than 1700 papers and was the primary paper for the region in its earliest years. Several important articles about the grave yard and school deaths were reported in the *Yellow Jacket*, though not all deaths were reported there.

Over time, the school became the subject of numerous theses and dissertations written by students from Florida State University who conducted research and ethnographic interviews with

employees at the school (i.e., Morris 1949, Edwards 1968, and Lundrigan 1975). Today, these resources have been very valuable in providing documented first-hand accounts of events that occurred as early as the 1914 fire which resulted in twelve reported deaths. These documents were created with the approval and participation of various FIS superintendents at the time (i.e., Superintendants Davidson, Dozier, and Williams). As such, the students were provided access to institutional materials and contacts well beyond what is available today. The documents, in some cases (i.e. Edwards 1968), were transformed into training materials for the institution. Edwards’ paper (1968) became the official narrative of the school and was used for many decades detailing some of the history of the institution, although it only discusses four specific boys who died at the school.

The narratives and specific details about historical events printed in these sources are the same stories repeated today and overall have consistent themes.

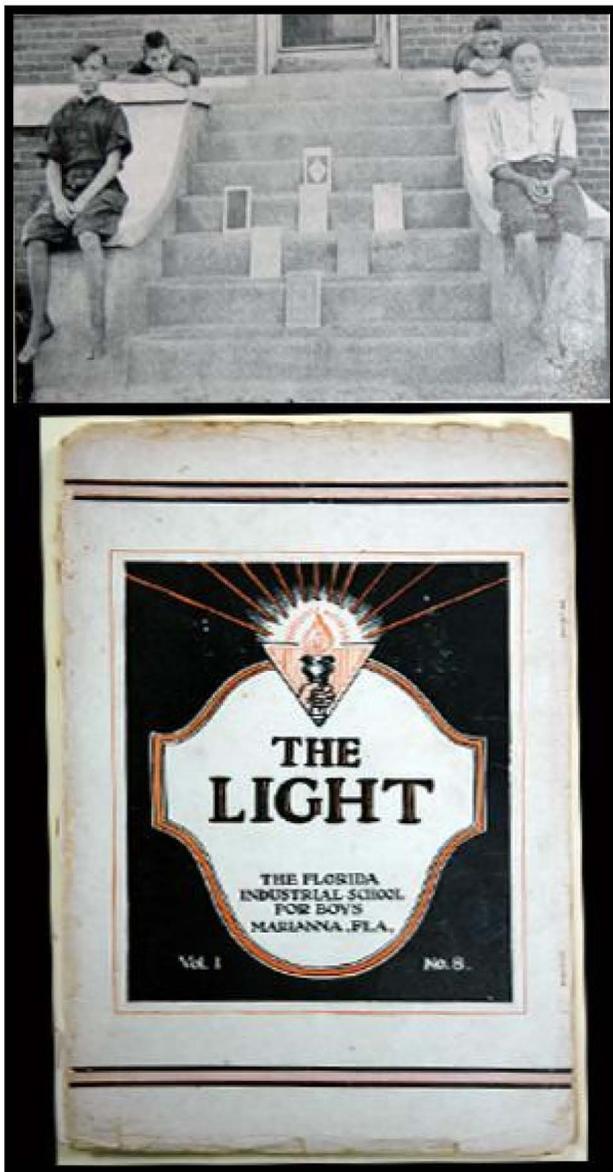


Figure 5. The printing crew called “The Light Force” (pictured left) helped create the first newspaper, *The Light*, as illustrated with some of the first editions in 1920.

For example, one consistent theme throughout these documents is that the school's early history was highly problematic but in contrast, by the 1940s and beyond, major reformations occurred and the school was finally able to live up to its original intent. Reformations included: racial desegregation and the hiring of black personnel, mental health treatment provisions, and plans/programs for helping youth integrate into the community. Lundrigan (1975:iv) wrote about the changes to the institution during 1946-1967, or what he refers to as "The Dozier Era":

Black personnel were hired as teachers and houseparents for the first time in 1947; the Kiwanis Club "Marianna Plan" to help wards in their communities began; creation of the new Division of Child training School in 1957 also provided for the Okeechobee branch school which opened in 1959; a new "treatment approach" for emotionally disturbed boys was adopted; and by 1966 racial desegregation was accomplished.

In an interview with Superintendent Arthur Dozier conducted by a graduate student from Florida State University (Morris 1949), Dozier described how the school had been transformed from a prison and labor camp into an industrial school (Figure 6). Dozier described the situation (as paraphrased in Morris 1949) as developing many of its policies and measures in reaction to runaways. He describes the lock-ups or "dark cells" used for isolation, bars on all windows and doors, and armed security guards who carried guns. There was also a school jail known as the "dark cell" where boys slept on planks without sunlight (Morris 1949:3). Dozier told Morris that these practices were abandoned and replaced with "sticks and belts" and an individual rating system which was implemented in 1931 (Morris 1949:4).

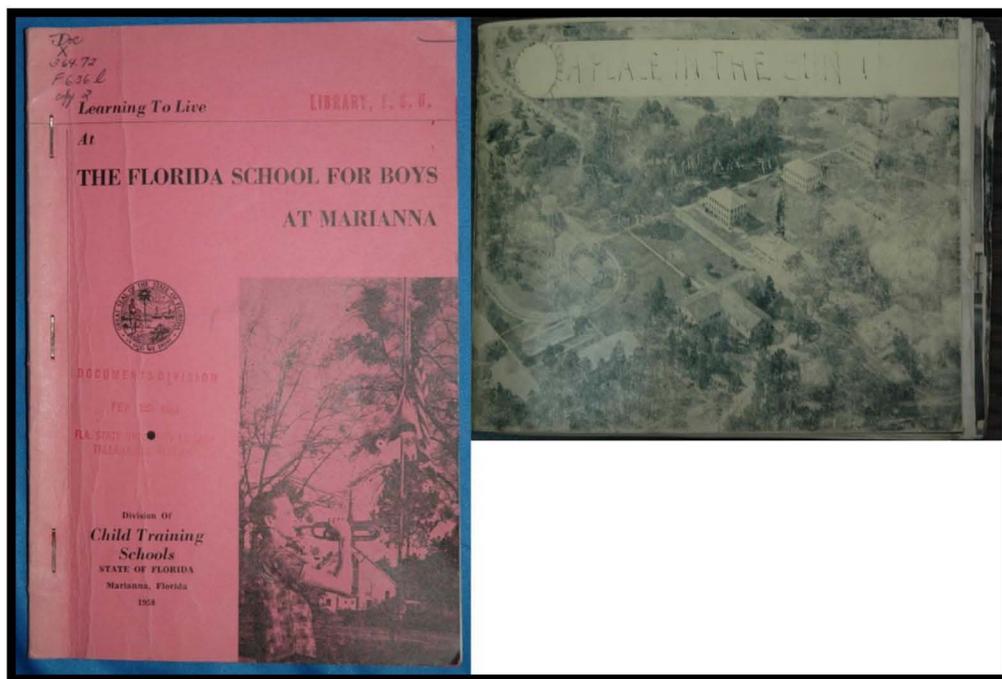


Figure 6. Training manual and scrapbook ("A place in the sun") was used for publicity materials about the achievements and reformations of the school in becoming a training center. Both found in the Florida State Archives (Florida School for Boys, 1958; Florida School for Boys, Administrative Records).

Despite the overall reforms and new educational and developmental programs that were created in the 1950-1960s, and lead to significant improvements, the school was still subject to negative reviews from state investigative committees, congressional hearings, and public opinion. Reports of brutal beatings, maltreatment, and isolation continued to surface by employees of the school, psychologists, and politicians. In 1957, Miss Addie Summers was hired as media relations specialist to help combat the negative publicity. Her scrapbook (Figures 7-8), is full of articles published throughout Florida and nationally from this time (ca. 1957-1958) and is now in the State Archives (Florida School for Boys, Newspaper Clippings). The publicity is overwhelmingly negative with headlines such as “Boys volunteer for beatings to work the day out”, “Airing Due to Beatings of Boys at Ideals School”, “Hell’s 1400 Acres”, and “Spare the Rod.”

In 2005 men who were former students of the school came together and began to publish their stories about the abuse they experienced at the school and call themselves the “White House Boys”. The information and experiences they shared prompted Governor Charlie Crist to order a special investigation by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) in 2008-2009. Subsequently, several investigative reports by the FDLE and later the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice were issued:

- 1) Investigative Summary for the “Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys Marianna, Florida”, Office of Executive Investigations (FDLE 2009, Case No. EI-73-8455). This report is an investigation into the Boot Hill Cemetery to establish who owned the property during the time the cemetery was in use, to identify individuals buried in the cemetery, and to establish whether any crimes were committed relating to the deaths of those individuals buried at this site.
- 2) Investigative Summary for the “Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys Abuse Investigation” (FDLE 2010, Case No. EI-04-0005). Office of Executive Investigations.
- 3) Investigation of the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys and the Jackson Juvenile Offender Center, Marianna, Florida. United States Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, December 1, 2011.

The current study of Boot Hill Cemetery refers to the first report (FLDE 2009, EI-71-8455), which cites some of the same sources listed here. According to the FDLE report, a record of 81 deaths occurred and 31 boys were buried at the school. Through the course of the current study, the names of additional boys who died at the school were uncovered, as were details on many of the circumstances surrounding the deaths, the history of the institution in regard to its burial practices, and the locations of some of the deceased.



Figure 7. Newspaper publicity scrapbook by Miss Addie Summers, 1956-1968, ca. from the State Archives (Florida School for Boys, Newspaper Clippings).



Figure 8. Inside example of the newspaper articles about school, 1956-1958, ca. from the State Archives (Florida School for Boys, Newspaper Clippings).

## RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The historical information and demographic data summarized here comes from a number of sources including student theses and dissertations (Morris 1949 and Lundrigan 1975), internal administrative documents such as training manuals (Edwards 1969) and personal letters, discharge and inmate record attendance ledgers, legislative notes, biennial institutional reports, newspaper articles, court documents, coroner reports, newspaper articles, ethnographic interviews, and an investigative report by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE 2009, Case No. EI-73-8455).

It is common that historical documents provide information that is inconsistent among varied sources or absent all together, and that was the case in this study. For example, it was common for the dates of death to differ by one or several days between the attendance ledgers and death certificates. Age and next of kin information also varied in some instances. In most cases, historical documents were missing or incomplete. Numerous original sources about a single event often varied, including the names and number of decedents. All efforts were made to cross-validate data through the use of multiple sources. When differences were found but could not be reconciled through a third source, official sources (i.e. death certificates) were used rather than local sources (i.e. institutional documents). In cases of major discrepancies, such as the 1914 fire and 1918 Influenza outbreak, data from each source are explained in later sections of the report. Beyond the challenges of working with historical documents, numerous incidents that resulted in deaths lead to multiple investigations by the school, coroner juries, and state officials. In many instances, each of the investigations lead to different conclusions, including the number of deaths. Moreover, the school records are often in conflict with reports to the state about the number of deaths. Consequently, the number of deaths and the circumstances surrounding each incident were difficult to quantify.

Florida Public Statute 267.12 regarding public lands and property relating to historical resources, allows the Division of Historical Resources to issue permits for excavation and surface reconnaissance on state lands to qualified institutions with archaeological expertise. We applied for a 1A-32 permit for archaeological research at the Historic Boot Hill Cemetery in Marianna, Florida. To comply with that application, we were given permission from the Department of Environmental Protection to access the state lands on which the cemetery is located.

The location of the actual interments at the school, are not known so they are treated as clandestine burials. Background research, ethnographic interviews, soil analysis, remote sensing, historic imaging, and archaeological methods were used to locate, document, and map the graves and provide an analysis of who is expected to be buried at FIS and the circumstances of their deaths. Graduate students at the University of South Florida assisted in historical research, field methods, and post processing of data and other materials, including: John W. Powell, III, B.S.; Meredith L. Tisc, M.A.; Brad I. Lanning, M.A.; Liotta Noche-Dowdy, B.S.; Ashley L. Humphries, M.A.; Melissa A Pope, M.A.; Richard Weltz, M.F.S.; Ashley Maxwell, M.A.; Beth Blankenship, B.A., and Cristina Kelbaugh, B.S. Fieldwork volunteers from the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office include Dan McGill, Jason Brando, Brannon Douglas, and Jake Becker. Several outside experts were also consulted. Three of the reports are attached in the appendices: a) Associate Medical Examiners for District 13 Dr. Laura Hair, M.D. and Dr. Leszek Chrostowski, M.D.; b) Tampa Fire Investigators Christopher Stone and Al Alcalá; and USF Integrative Biology Dr. Gordon Fox and Jamie Gluvna.

The specific methods used in this project include the following:

1. Research for possible clandestine graves or burial areas includes analyses of historical images, maps, land assessments, and soil analysis. These materials come from the United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service; the US Geological Survey (USGS); the Map Library at the University of South Florida and the University of Florida; Florida State Archives; and Google Earth©.
2. The archaeological methods include remote sensing includes ground penetrating radar (GPR) and metal detectors. The site is mapped through the use of a Trimble 5600 Series Reflectorless Laser Total Station (electronic distance measuring device). Ground-Penetrating Radar (GPR) has been shown to be an effective and non-invasive remote sensing technique for mapping and documenting buried archaeological sites, including cemeteries (Conyers 2004). GPR was used to investigate the area in and around the Boot Hill Cemetery to try to better determine the extent of the burials. The surface geology of the area made this investigation somewhat problematic. Clays and loamy clays attenuate or absorb radar energy (Connors and Goodman 1994:53) making the use of GPR problematic in areas containing extensive amounts of clay. However, in this case, the mixing of the subsurface clays with the sandy loams from the surface allowed radar energy penetration to depths that allowed the grave shafts to be clearly detected.

A Geophysical Survey Systems, Inc. (GSSI) SIR-3000 GPR system was used to collect spatial data. The GPR configuration included a 400 MHz antenna mounted in a three-wheel cart with distance calibration provided by an on-board survey wheel. Eight grids of varying sizes were used to collect the GPR data. The southwest corner of each grid was the starting point, or grid origin (0, 0). Radar data was collected at 50 cm (20 inch) intervals both diagonally and horizontally across the grid using the “Quick 3D” function built into the SIR-3000 firmware. The perimeters of the grids were staked at 1 m (3.3 feet) intervals and fiberglass survey ropes were used to establish and maintain the transect rows. A zigzag data collection strategy was used to avoid returning to a single starting point. The GPR time window for all grids was determined to be 60 nanoseconds (ns) and the GPR data was collected with the gain (electronic signal enhancement) added to the raw field data.

Fieldwork for this project was carried out over eight trips between 27 February and 16 November 2012. The crew consisted of Estabrook, Kimmerle and Wells (coauthors of this report), and the USF graduate students and volunteers from the Hillsborough County Sheriff’s office listed above. Eight grids of various sizes were established throughout the area to investigate the extent of the subsurface anomalies encountered. Grid A was 26 by 30 meters; Grid B was 6 by 14 meters; Grid C was 6 by 9 meters; Grid D was 20 by 14 meters; Grid E was 14 by 12 meters; Grids G and H were 21 by 15 meters; and Grid I was 4 by 20 meters. Area F was the designation given to the area north of Grid E; this area was not intensively investigated, so there is no “Grid F.” Individual radargrams were also collected in the area north of Grid B to further investigate anomalies discovered in this area. Grid B and the additional “Grid B Addition” radargrams were later re-collected as Grid D.

Grid location and size was dependent on the areas that were cleared. Grid direction was dependent on the locations of the anomalies encountered. The initial grid (Grid A) was offset from the grid created by the metal crosses standing in the cemetery. Prior to data collection, the metal crosses and metal fencing was tagged, removed, and their locations preserved using 2-inch diameter PVC pipes cut to length. All crosses and fencing were returned to their original locations once the data collection was completed. Grids D, E, G, H, and I were cleared of small trees and understory vegetation by the trustees at the Jackson County Correctional Facility under the direction of Chief Wayne Lipford. Larger trees were allowed to remain standing. Only a very large oak tree in the south-central portion of Grid D caused some difficulty during the data collection.

All of the GPR data grids were post-processed using GPR-Slice® software (Version 7). The GPR data were converted from their GSSI file format, regained, and processed through a low-pass (3x3) filter. These data are presented as individual time slices or as an animated sequence of time slices showing how the anomalies vary by depth. In the color ramp scheme selected, red indicates areas of greater density and blue shows areas of lower reflectivity. Yellow and green represent intermediate density grades. Red regions on the time slices represent locations that reflected more wave energy, and are therefore the strongest indicators of a subsurface anomaly.

A Trimble XH-Pro GPS device was used to document the location of certain features within or near the grids, including metal crosses, fence posts, trees, and the four corners of each of the grids themselves. Combining the GPS locations of these surface features with the subsurface GPR data can be important when analyzing and attempting to interpret results of this investigation. Digital photographs were also taken of fieldwork in progress.

3. Soil analyses were used to prospect for burial locations. By physically and chemically characterizing soils in the cemetery area, the locations of burial shafts can be determined when compared to adjacent soils. For this analysis, the following methods were used: color determination using Munsell Soil Color Charts, soil texture analysis using the gravitation method, hydrogen potential (pH) using digital electrodes, acid-extractable phosphate characterization using molybdate colorimetry, and soil organic matter using loss-on-ignition.
4. Demographic data were obtained from the attendance ledgers, death certificates, court documents located in the Jackson County Courthouse, and historical newspaper articles. Copies of the death certificates issued were obtained from FDLE and provide additional information on burial location and the cause and manner of death.

The FIS attendance ledgers (both sets) are currently housed at the Florida State Archives (.S2256, Vol. 1-7, 18-22, and 31). The years present, as referenced in this report are based on commitment dates. Ledgers are segregated for white and colored boys. The earliest entry dates for boys is 1912, though they are not systematically and fully recorded until after March 1919 at which time a roll call was taken and an inventory was made of all of the boys who were present or were known to have been discharged, paroled, or died. For many of the entries, the ledger states “Not Here 3/30/1919” and it appears that those boys’ whereabouts at that date were unknown. There were two sets of ledgers maintained, the “discharge records”

ledgers which documented the names and number of boys present daily and the “record of inmates” ledgers that provide more information about the boys admitted such as the name, dates of admittance and discharge, dates of attempted escapes, charge or reason for admittance, parents names, sentencing judge, and county of origin. The latest records we were able to access were April 1960. Anything after this date was not public record. Statistical methods were run in SPSS 20.0©.

5. Ethnographic and ethnohistorical research including, ethnographic interview, oral history, casual conversations, participant observation (such as site visits to the school and surrounding town and community), mapping, creation of a database of photographs, and archival work were carried out between January 2012 and November 2012 by USF faculty and graduate student researchers including the coauthors of this report (Kimmerle, Estabrook, Wells, and Jackson) and Brad Lanning and John Powell. The ethnohistorical methodology incorporates anthropology’s use of theory as a framework for organizing data and formulating analysis and the historic method for collecting, verifying, and organizing relevant material. The ethnographic methodology involves the direct collection of data from the field via observation or interactive participation with persons being interviewed.

Additionally, preparation of documentation that was submitted to the USF IRB Board for approval was initiated by Kimmerle and Jackson with the help of Meredith Main, a USF graduate student. IRB approval of the research protocol for conducting oral history was secured. This approval will facilitate ongoing efforts to collect oral history and conduct ethnographic interviews with persons associated with the Dozier School including persons who attended the school, worked at the school, or had other relationships with the school such as through familial or business connections.

Although the list of persons who have been formally interviewed in conjunction with this stage of the project is underway, it is still in the early phases. Preliminary findings have shed significant light on power dynamics within the school system, disparities in access to resources, job assignments, and education across race; and the overall social-cultural landscape of the Dozier school and surrounding community both historically and presently. The day to day activities, simple routines that included sleep, school, work, leisure, family visits, and meal time all ran by the clock. Interviews with former employees and residents of the school are starting to expand upon daily rituals, routines, and expectations. They also show how daily routine in the case of the Dozier School served to mask other routines and rituals such as a punishment and surveillance, which was a constant threat for all boys. Preliminary ethnographic research underscores the difficulty in recruiting and interviewing persons that have suffered severe abuse or witnessed such acts because emotions generated by the shame, guilt, fear, anger, and powerlessness of such an unsettling experience are often the primary focus of the interview.

## **STRUCTURING A FRAMEWORK FOR INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS**

This is a mixed/multi-method research study drawing upon forensic anthropology, archaeology, and cultural anthropology to document the Boot Hill Cemetery and the former Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys and associated communities. Theories and methods of archaeology of the contemporary present (Buchli and Lucas 2001), as well as theories and methods of cultural anthropology, including the ethnographic method—aimed at interpreting the present—are useful in this application. Developing interpretations at this intersection of approaches to knowing equips future generations with dynamic and expanded ways of talking about history. Jackson (2011) stresses the importance of retrieving subjugated knowledges as a critical aspect of any project focused on transcending the status quo and critiquing power in the construction of race, gender, class, and practices of criminalization and punishment for example. Although subjugated knowledges can be found within the historical record, they can also be embodied within individuals and communities that have typically been ignored or disproportionately represented as peripheral (Collins 1991; Foucault 1980). Interviewing former residents of the school and their families as well as former workers and others can expand information about people, processes, and daily activities at the school and challenge long-held characterizations and reveal untold stories that could help shed light on burial sites/practices and punishment methods that can bring closure to families and educate those in positions of authority over youth in state custody and care presently and in the future.

Methodological questions posed by archaeologists, such as those focused on what is sometimes called “the “archaeology of the contemporary past” compel scholars to uncover or make visible what has previously been left out or ignored—to address the “absent present” (see Buchli and Lucas 2001; Wilke 2001). Just as it is critical to include oral history and ethnographic interview to reinterpret the cemetery at the former Dozier School, so too is the importance of incorporating archaeological tools and methods that make available knowledge that cannot be spoken—graves, building remains, tools, bone fragments, and soil samples—but invite discussion. Going forward, the research on Boot Hill Cemetery could invite discussions aimed at extending the dialog on race and racialization to include segregation, punishment and reformation at the former Dozier School for Boys in Marianna, Florida. For example, refer to the work of Orser (2007) who uses material culture findings/excavations such as the archeology of a crowded Irish tenement in New York, to look at the concept of racialization and to show how immigrants negotiated discrimination in their new home country.

## DEFINING THE CEMETERY

One of the initial primary tasks was to determine how people used and accessed the cemetery prior to 1960. Among the boys for whom burial location was recorded in either the school ledgers or on death certificates, the locations are listed as: “Florida Industrial School”, “Industrial Cemetery”, “FIS Cemetery”, “Buried by Institution”, or “Industrial School Cemetery”. However, no cemetery name or specific location for the cemetery is provided among these sources. The first reference to the name “Boot Hill” appears in the school newspaper, *The Yellow Jacket* in a 1936 article titled, “Boot Hill: Burial Ground for Those Who Were Slow On the Draw”. This article was a story about the Boot Hill cemetery in Dodge City, Kansas, and does not reference any deaths or burials at FIS. It appears that this article may have been the basis for the cemetery on the hill of the north compound to begin to be referred to as “Boot Hill” by the boys who were committed to the school.

The name “Boot Hill” appears in *The Yellow Jacket* again in December 1947 in an obituary written for the school peacock, Suc. Edwards (1968) also writes in regards to the peacock and cites the obituary in his training manual for the school, “She lies on ‘Boot Hill’ beside the bodies of several other of Marianna’s deceased” (Edwards 1968:36). Edwards further wrote (1968:36):

Several boys have been buried at “Boot Hill” but the most exact number and the identification of them is unknown.... At the last count there was 31 graves there... When the present day superintendent, Lenox Williams, was the director of the colored campus, he had the Boy Scouts clean up and maintain Boot Hill. He was also responsible for the making of 31 cement crosses and having them placed on each grave.

Former student Johnnie Walthour (Interview May 9, 2012), who was at FIS from 1951-1952, helped dig the grave of Billey Jackson, a 13 year old African American boy who died in 1952. According to an interview with Mr. Walthour, he and Jackson had become friends in the months prior to Jackson’s death, mainly as Walthour would defend Jackson from bullies. He stated that from the dining hall on the north campus, one could look up the hill and see the cemetery placed on the hill top which he said everyone referred to as “Boot Hill”. Access to the cemetery was on a field road to the east of the dining hall, which ran North-West to the cemetery (Figures 9 and 10). According to Walthour, access to the site was a tractor pulled cart (Figure 11). The boys would pile into the back to drive around the farm or up to Boot Hill. Walthour further described the cemetery as large and situated in a wide open field. He said that none of the graves had markers but that there was a fence and gate leading into the area and depressions in the ground’s surface were observable indicating older graves.

In addition to Jackson, Walthour stated that there were two more deaths during his time at the school that resulted in burials on Boot Hill. One funeral he witnessed when he saw people at the burial ground from the dining hall and the second funeral he participated in by helping to dig the grave for a colored boy whose name he did not remember. Note that we did not find a written record of any deaths during this time other than Jackson. However, two additional deaths and burials at Boot Hill in 1951-52 were confirmed in a second interview with a former student, Woodrow Williams (Interview November 8, 2012) and may be evident in a photograph obtained from the State Archives.

Williams (Interview November 8, 2012) stated that he was at the funeral of Billy Jackson and remembered him because he was small, always getting bullied and had been missing prior to his death. Both Walthour and Williams believe that Jackson was beaten prior to being hospitalized before his death which may have contributed to his death. Further discussion of these interviews occurs later in this report with regard to Jackson's death.

A photograph (Figure 12) obtained from the Florida State Archives is noted as "ca. 1950s possible memorial". Neither Walthour nor Williams recognized anyone in the photograph nor did they remember a large crowd or photographer at Jackson's funeral. If there were additional deaths and burials at FIS in the early 1950s as described, this photo may be from one of those funerals.

What Walthour remembered most vividly he said was the box, a coffin in the back of the cart coming up the hill and the men putting it into the ground at Jackson's funeral (Interview May 9, 2012). Walthour said that there was a minister present, but did not recall Jackson's family as present and wasn't sure if he had a family since he had never discussed them with Jackson.

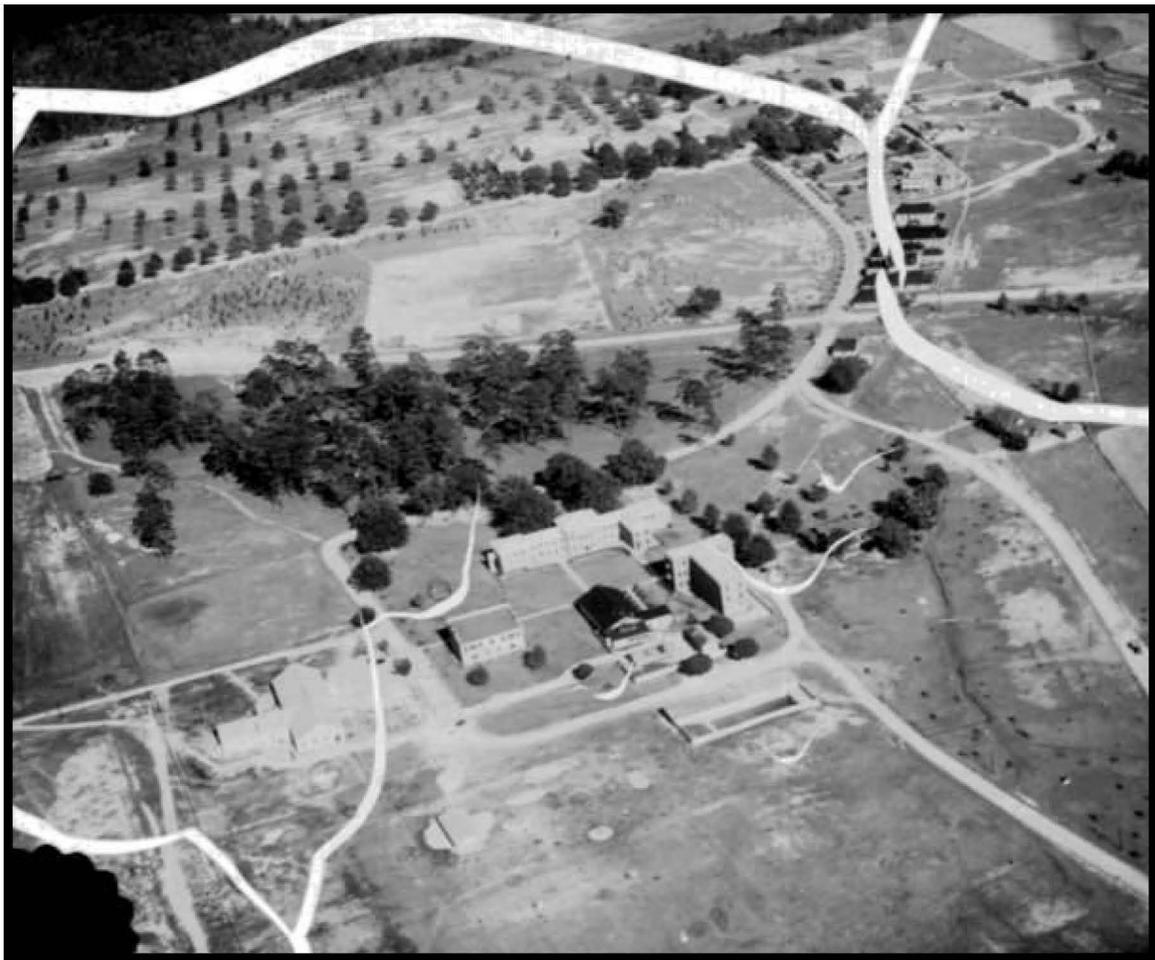


Figure 9. Picture of north department. The road going north to Boot Hill Cemetery is positioned on the East side of the dining hall. Digital image found via the Florida Memory Project, Image Number LC397, original transparency damaged.

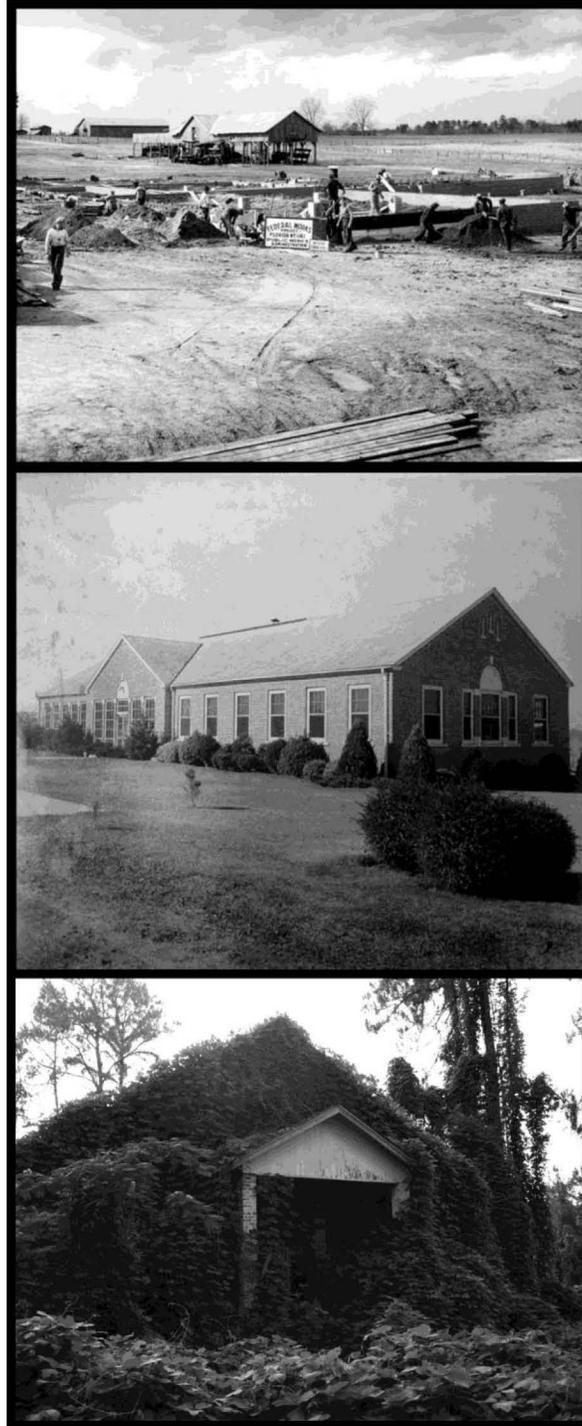


Figure 10. Dining hall on north campus from construction through modern times, dating 1936, 1950, and 2012. Note that this is the eastern side looking towards the west. The east side of the building was later modified when an addition and door was added. The road going north to the Boot Hill cemetery was just east of this end of the building, but is currently grown over with kudzu and vegetation. Images from the Florida Memory Project, Image Number Pr24649 (top); Florida State Archives (Florida School for Boys, Photographs, Box 2 FF 23) (Middle); and USF (2012).



Figure 11. “Boys riding in tractor and trailer to work in fields, ca. 1950s”, from the State Archives (Florida School for Boys, Photographs, Box 1 FF 7). Walthour described this type of tractor and trailer as the means of transport for farm work and access to Boot Hill Cemetery for Jackson’s funeral.



Figure 12. Image obtained from the Florida State Archives (Florida School for Boys, Photographs, Box 1 FF10), labeled as “ca. 1950s possible memorial or funeral service”. The two witnesses who attended Jackson’s funeral did recognize the people in this photo or remember any pictures being taken. Both men said that were two other burials at Boot Hill in 1951-52.



Figure 13 Image of Boot Hill Cemetery USF 2012.

In a witness interview with the FDLE (Investigative Report NV-16, EI-73-8453), former superintendent Lenox Williams states the first markers erected in the cemetery were white cement crosses. Williams had them constructed at the school in 1961-1962 to commemorate the burials and delineate the graveyard as a cemetery. Prior to that time, the cemetery had not been maintained and no markers existed. The school's Boy Scout Troop was charged with the task of making and erecting the crosses as well as maintaining the cemetery. According to Williams, the location and number of crosses were based on "rumors of deaths and indentations evident in ground". Williams further stated, with regard to the number of crosses, that it was "better to have too many than too few."

According to the FDLE report, in 1980-1990s, PRIDE (Prison Rehabilitative Industries and Diversified Enterprises Inc.) farmed this area and destroyed a portion of the cemetery during land clearing. In 1996, Superintendent Danny Pate ordered replacement crosses and that the cemetery be cleaned and maintained. The 1960s cement markers were then piled in a wooded area near several large trees. Thirty-one replacement metal crosses were erected in rows to again commemorate the graves. Note that these crosses were placed in rows where the 1960s crosses had been (Figure 13). The crosses implemented in 1996 by Superintendent Pate are still present



Figure 14. Image of discarded cement crosses found during an FDLE investigation. Twenty-eight crosses were recovered piled in a wooded area adjacent to where the markers are located today. These images come from the FDLE report (2009).

today (Figure 14). Their locations were based on depressions in the ground and “folklore” about the number of children buried there (FDLE 2009).

During the course of its investigation, the FDLE found two piles of discarded cement crosses (20 yards apart from each other) 30 yards north of the cemetery. These crosses were broken but could be reconstructed into a minimum of 28 crosses approximately 48 x 18 inches in size. In 2008, FDLE had the crosses removed from the site. During the course of the current investigation, additional cement cross fragments were found throughout the eastern wooded area and buried just below the ground surface. The earliest written documentation of the specific location of a cemetery on the school property that we found was a topographic map (1947) and a survey map (1952). Both of these historic maps (Figures 15) outline a cemetery (not named) on the north campus in the area of today’s Boot Hill cemetery. A small structure is evident just north of the cemetery on the 1952 map, which was located through our field investigations and is today the remnants of a water pump (Figure 16).

According to witnesses from the 1914 fire in which there were 12 reported deaths, the bodies were burned beyond recognition and buried on the school grounds. In a 1972 interview of FIS employees, Lundrigan (1972) reports that the victims of the fire were buried on top of a hill on the north side of the school, in an area known as “Cedar Hill.”

In an interview with former employee Buddy Matthis (Interview September 25, 2012), the northern burial ground was called “Cedar Hill” by employees when he went to work at the school in 1960. He recalled seeing the grounds grown over by kudzu with crosses knocked over. He helped clear the area and erect new crosses. Today, the northern cemetery is surrounded by cedar trees. The dates of the trees are unknown. Efforts were made to date the trees by USF biologists however dating was not possible, refer to the Appendix.

It is not clear if Boot Hill and Cedar Hill are the same location. There have been many reports of a second burial ground, separating white and colored boys. These reports put the burials for white boys on the south side or white school and there is a hill behind industrial buildings with planted cedar trees on the south side. This location is the only known place on the south campus with planted cedar trees. In contrast, many aspects of the farm on the north side are marked by planted cedar trees, in addition to the Boot Hill location.

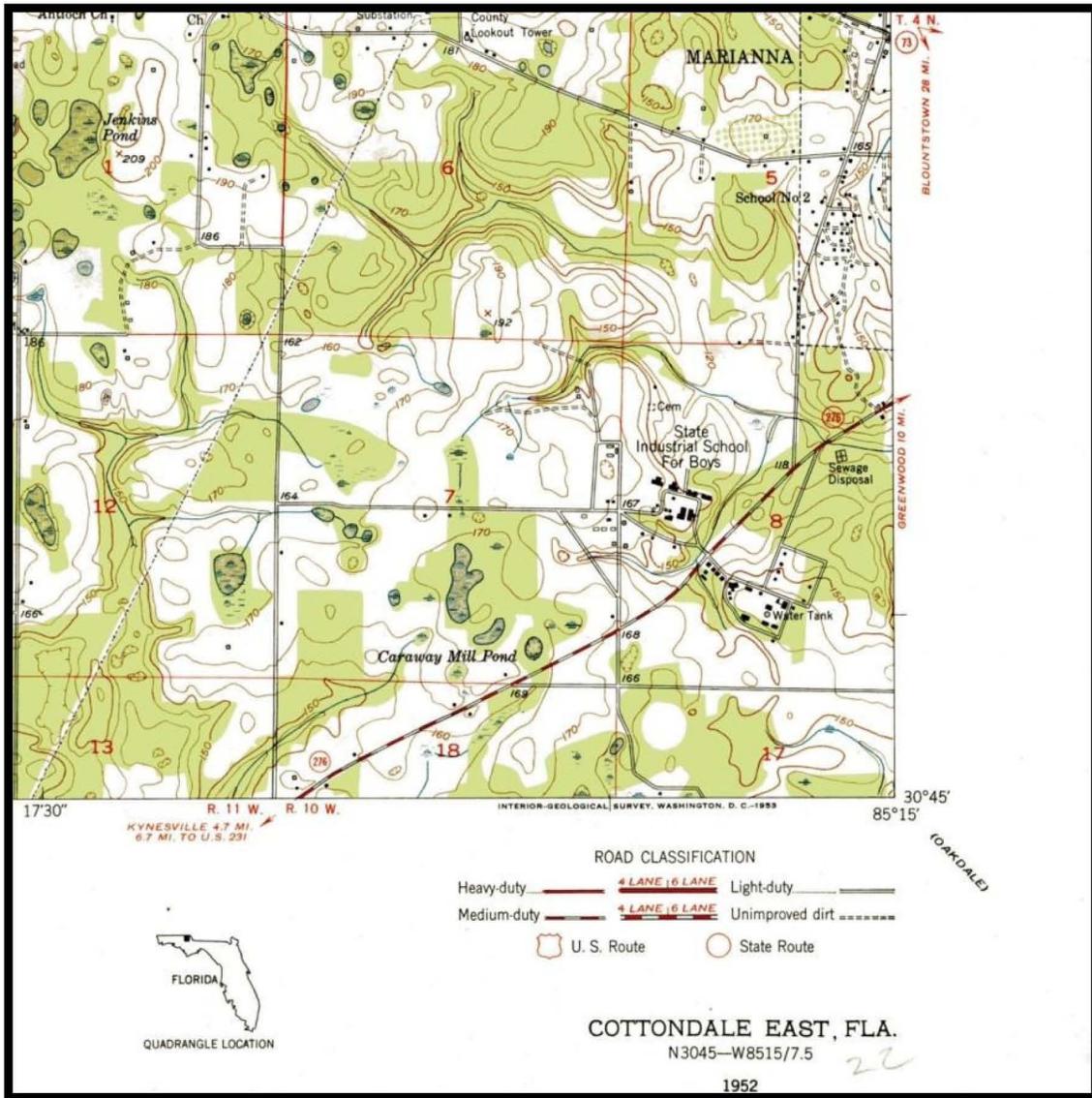


Figure 15. Topographic map of Florida Industrial School for Boys (1952) which marks the Boot Hill cemetery. Also note, the marker of small structure or building just north of the cemetery.



Figure 16. Cement slab, tiles, bricks, and plumbing confirm the presence of a water pump in an area that was once used for animals. Location is same as marked building on topographic map (1952) just north of marked cemetery (USF 2012).

### SINGLETON, MULTIPLE BURIAL AREAS

One of the research questions is whether or not there is more than one burial area at the school. During the course of this investigation, information about possible additional burial areas outside of the Boot Hill area surfaced. Evidence for more than one burial area includes eyewitness statements, oral tradition, historic imaging, and the practices and laws of segregation.

Among the additional areas reported to have burials, are locations on both the north and south schools. Among reported areas on the north is the field north of the current Boot Hill cemetery, a reported grave near the sawmill and slaughter house on the farm, an area within the agricultural fields surrounding the school, and a series of four graves behind the stall cottages. These locations are based on oral tradition shared by current Jackson County employees, Marianna residents, and former students committed to the school. The only first-hand account of a burial location is near the sawmill which is reported by a former student who states he helped dig the grave. The other locations are provided by persons who have heard stories about the additional burial areas.

Additionally, numerous areas on the south property were described as having an actual burial ground with multiple burials in rows. Eyewitness reports vary in terms of the specific location and whether or not the burials were marked by crosses. The areas of interest include a wooded area along a prior road and fence line south of the dining hall, a wooded area along the southern property just north of the swamp (Figure 17), the hilltop marked by cedars and the

bachelor cottages, behind the main entrance buildings, the open grass area behind a building called the White House, an area under the swimming pool near the gymnasium, and the southern swamp areas. This information comes from a variety of sources including eyewitness accounts by family members of boys buried at the school who were shown graves by employees, historic imaging published by a Marianna historian (Cox 2008), and former students who were committed to the school and either saw a graveyard or heard reports of boys disappearing into the swamps and fields by employees or local residents.

While conclusive evidence to definitively establish the existence and location of additional burial areas at the school other than the Boot Hill location has not yet been located, there was sufficient evidence establishing the likelihood of such areas, particularly on the southern property, to warrant searching for additional burial areas. Specifically, family members of boys buried at FIS and former inmates stated they saw burials in this location and that they were shown graves by employees dating back 1941. For example, Ovell Krell is the sister of George Owen Smith, a boy who died and was buried at FIS in January 1941. According to Ms. Krell, she along with her parents visited FIS in 1941, immediately following the discovery of Smith's body under a residence in Marianna. She said that they exited the Administration building along with Superintendent, Millard Davidson who showed them Smith's grave in small burial ground near a wooded area to the south. Ms. Krell describes this location on the south campus and states that there were two rows of graves in front of the woods. Smith's grave appeared as a fresh mound of dirt at the end of the row. The burial ground had no markers or crosses.

There was no evidence that the graves were originally marked burials, as no historic markers, plot maps or information about the specific burial locations have been found for any location including Boot Hill. In an interview with a former student the school, Philip Marchesani (Interview June 2, 2012), he recounted having seen boxes of letters from parents inquiring about their children, letters to the children themselves, and maps of the school stored in the chapel. He stated that the maps were marked with two separate burial areas. In the course of the FDLE investigation, they did obtain boxes of letters from families from the chapel however it is not known whether such maps were recovered. Subsequently these materials have been destroyed and are therefore not available for review.

In addition, aerial photographs dating from 1940-48 indicate a unique anomaly in an area on the south campus (Cox 2008). The image and area of interest provided by Cox was superimposed with an historic image of the school, the red circle was made by Cox who stated it was evidence of a burial ground and headstones prior to 1940 (Figure 17). Furthermore, it would have been common, prior to integration, for whites and coloreds to be buried in separate or segregated cemeteries.

Since these sources of information about multiple burial areas, particularly with regard to the southern grounds of the school were all independent of one another and consistent with the practice of segregation in the South, we believe it is prudent to search the additional areas for other burials. Exploration on the south campus is ongoing and falls under archaeological permit number 1213.018, which will be summarized in a subsequent report.



Figure 17. 1948 aerial photograph of the Florida Industrial School for Boys image obtained from the UF Digital Archive Library). The light rectangular area and red circle is an overlaid image obtained from Cox (2008) which highlights a marked burial area on the grounds of the south school, No. 1.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD RESULTS: GPR AND TRENCHING

Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) proved to be a useful and accurate tool to locate burial shafts at this site, as was confirmed by soil chemistry and trenching. To display the processed radar data, a series of 30 horizontal or plan view timeslices were created for each grid, which show depths from the ground surface to 2.7 m below ground surface. For all grids, each timeslice spans a depth of roughly 13-14 centimeters (cm), and the timeslices overlap each other by 4 to 5 cm. For example, the first timeslice displays the depth from 0-13 cm, and the second displays 9-23 cm. Therefore, both timeslices are approximately 13 cm thick, and their overlap is 4 cm. All timeslices are displayed in the appendix to this report.

The most informative timeslices generated for the Boot Hill Cemetery were those associated with depths of .92 to 1.24 m below ground surface. The timeslices above this level (0 to 0.9 m below surface) contained tree roots and buried debris, especially in the formerly uncleared wooded areas. Ground disturbance from agricultural plowing, discing for planting crops, and clearing vegetation was also noted in the exploratory trenches. Levels below 1.25 m below surface, especially Grids G and H, show clear indications of signal attenuation resulting from high amounts of clay and moisture in the soil.

An evaluation of the combined timeslices from the .92 to 1.24 m levels included the grids designated as IB 11, 12, and 13. These timeslices were used to identify subsurface anomalies that the ground-truthing in the exploratory trenches has shown to be probable grave shafts or possible grave shafts. As shown in Figure 18, these data indicate the presence of 35 probable grave shafts and 15 possible grave shafts within the proposed cemetery boundaries (Table 1). There are several large anomalies along the western proposed cemetery boundary. Although these anomalies have fairly large and reflective signatures, an exploratory trench (Trench C) excavated in this area failed to identify any evidence of grave shafts or possible grave shafts associated with these signatures. Rather, it is likely that those anomalies are associated with the historical road that provided access to the site, an observation supported by the current existence of fence posts and barbed wire marking that linear area.

The cemetery appears to be roughly 23 m (75 feet) east/west by 30 m (100 ft) north/south (Figure 19). The cemetery is oriented north-south with the graves oriented west-east. The cemetery appears to have established rows, with some evidence for lanes or separations between rows of graves. There is no indication of racial segregation or separation of the graves into different areas, suggesting that the cemetery is not segregated by race/ethnicity. Figure 19 shows the area north of the crosses as it is beginning to be cleared and afterwards. The red flags represent the areas GPR imaging shows anomalies consistent with burial shafts as detected in the field.

Table 1. Minimum Number of Burials Estimated through GPR Analysis and Trench Data

Probable Grave Shafts	n=35
Possible Grave Shafts	n=15
<b>Minimum Number of Grave Shafts</b>	<b>n=50</b>

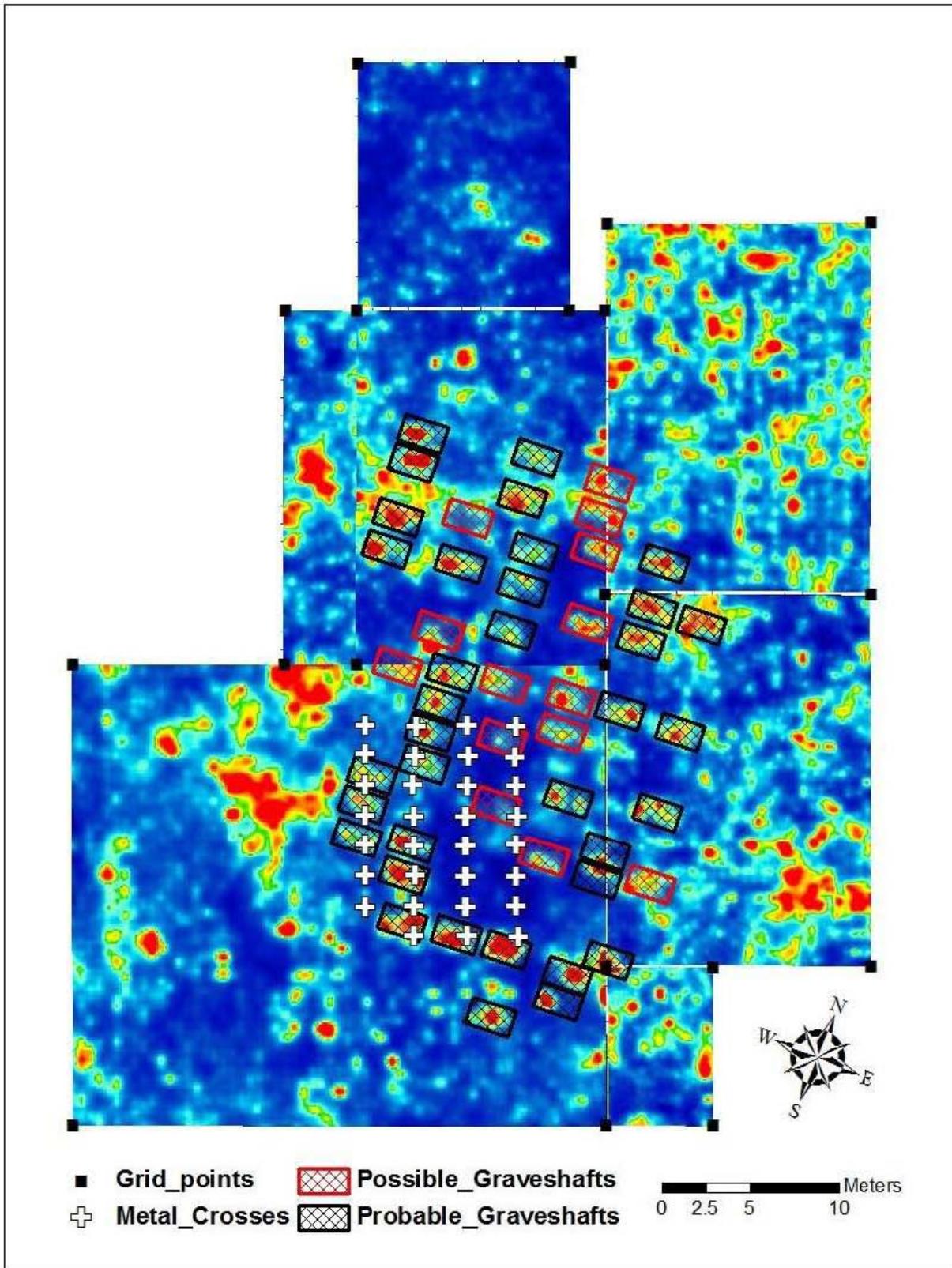


Figure 14 GPR plot of Boot Hill Cemetery



Figure 19. Top: Wooded area north of marked cemetery, area beginning to be cleared to search for burials. Bottom: Flags mark areas of anomalies noted with GPR, probable grave shafts (USF 2012).

The existing fencing and metal crosses do delineate the southwest corner of the proposed cemetery boundaries. This area contained some of the most well-defined GPR reflections and the most pronounced disturbed exploratory trench soil profiles, especially those identified in Trench A. This suggests that the southern portion of the cemetery is the most recent, and likely the area most commonly associated with burials when the original concrete crosses were installed in the 1960s.

To evaluate the subsurface anomalies detected through GPR, six test trenches were excavated (Figure 20). Each trench was 0.5 m wide and 0.5 m deep. Trench F was only 0.25 m deep. The length of the trenches varied between 2-9 m in the N-S direction. This method allowed for the visualization of soil stratigraphy and soil sampling for chemical analysis. Additional soil probing and metal detectors were also used. The trenches were placed in grids A, B, and G. The trenches were lettered sequentially A-F (Table 2). Trench F indicated the presence of one burial shaft, while trenches A-B and D-E indicated the presence of two or more burial shafts. Trench C did not show any burial shafts. The soil in Trench C was very dense and compact, and was placed 4 m from the western edge of the fence along the current cemetery. All of the burial shafts uncovered were orientated in the west-east direction, and were relatively evenly spaced apart.

Several artifacts were found within the trenches, including a fragmented glass cola bottle, fragmented cement crosses from the original 1960s crosses, iron nail fragments, and red bricks (Figures 23-24). The glass and cement cross fragments were found in Trench A, approximately 0.5 m deep. “Cola” bottle fragments found in Trench A, Horizon B date from ca. 1917 to the early 1940s (Ellis and Wiseman, pers. comm). Along the northern edges of the burial shafts in Trenches B and D, fragmented red bricks were found stacked in rows. Trenches B and D also yielded nails approximately 0.5 m below the surface. A list of the recovered and collected artifacts is provided in Table 3. Fragments of the crosses were left in the field. Also the items pictured in Figures 25 and 26 were left buried in situ.

Table 2. List of Identified Burial Shafts per Trench

Trench	Dimension	Grid	Number of Burial Shafts Observed in Soil Profiles
A	0.5m x 2m	A	3
B	0.5m x 5m	B/D	3
C	0.5m x 4m	A	0
D	0.5m x 9m	B/D	4
E	0.5m x 2m	G	2
F	0.5m x 2m	F	1
G	0.5m x 2m	Outside Grid A	1

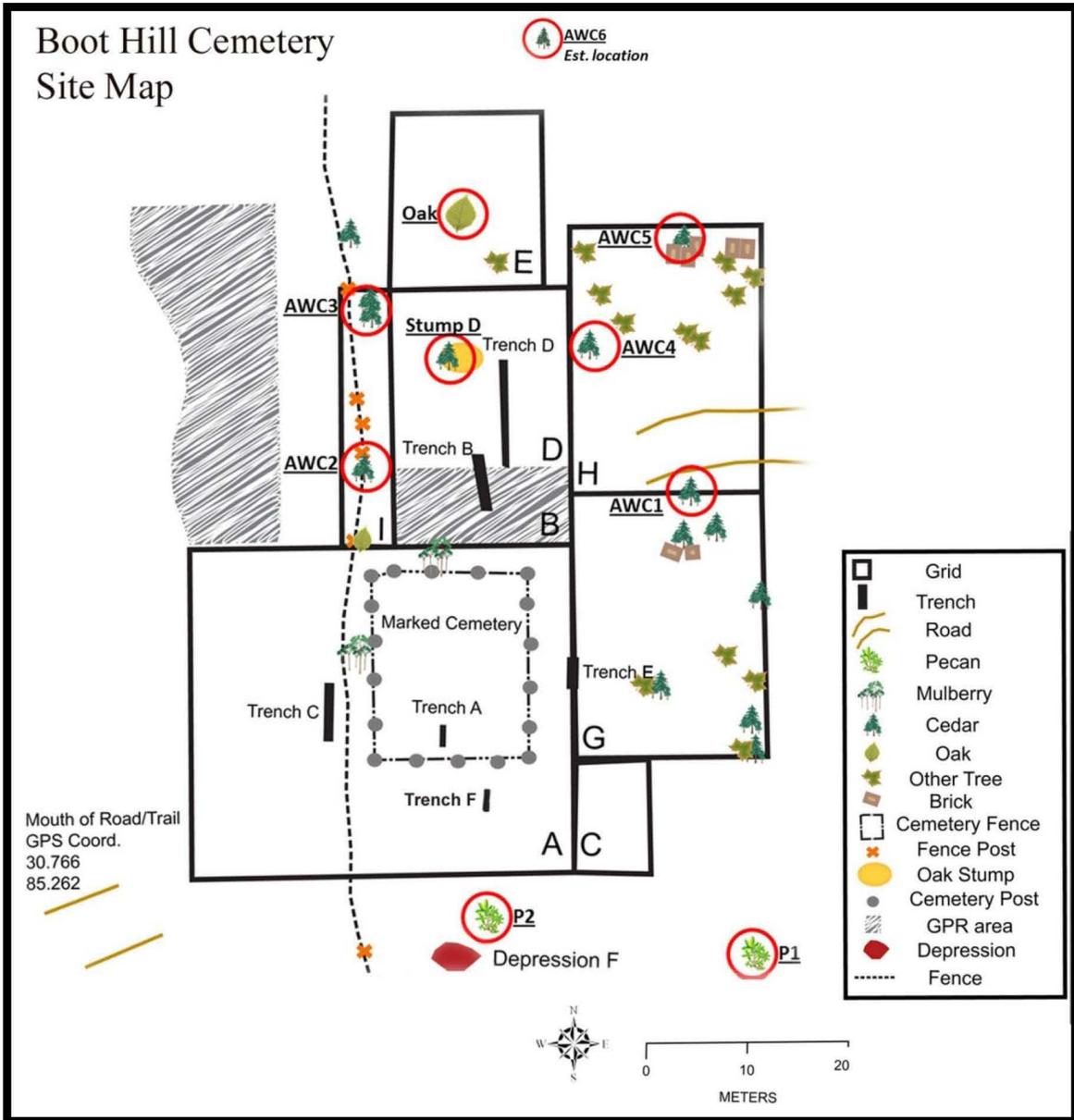


Figure 20 | Map of field area surrounding Boot Hill Cemetery, including points of reference, recovered artifacts, tree core samples indicated by the red circles around trees, and current markers.



Figure 21. Excavated Trench A, differences in soil color and stratigraphy confirm GPR anomalies as burial shafts.



Figure 22. Bricks stacked next to burial shaft in Trench D.



Figure 23. Close up photograph of brick fragments in burial shaft, Trench D.



Figure 24. Trench F illustrating soil profile of burial shaft and brick fragments just below plow zone, approximately 20 cm deep.



Figure 25. “Cola” bottle fragments found in Trench A, Horizon B. Glass bottles date ca. 1917-early1940s (Ellis and Wiseman, pers. comm).



Figure 26. Cement cross fragment found in Trench A, Horizon B.

Table 3. List of Artifacts Retained for Further Study

<b>Item Number</b>	<b>Type of Item</b>	<b>Location</b>
1	Ceramic rim sherd	Trench B
2	Nail U-shaped	Trench B
3	Wood stick 30 cm long, possible fence	Top 10 cm topsoil, Trench C
4	Glass clear, sharp edges, 3 x 3cm	Top 15cm of topsoil, Trench C
5	Brick fragment	Trench B, 149cm from South wall, 15cm from West wall, 25cm below surface
6	White, glazed pot sherd	Trench B, 35cm from West wall, 139cm from South wall, 22cm depth from surface
7	White, glazed pot sherd iron stone	Trench B, 11cm from West wall, 173cm from South wall, 31cm from surface level
8	Charcoal	Trench B, 67cm from South wall, 10cm from West wall, 28cm down between clay and topsoil
9	Charcoal	Trench D, 110cm (S-N) East wall, 43cm deep
10	Charcoal	Trench D, 160cm (S-N) East wall, 39cm deep and on floor
11	Small brick fragment	Trench D, 140cm (S-N) on floor of East wall
12	Brick area/row	Trench D, extending from West to East wall at 4m, 18cm deep below surface
13	Small brick fragment	Trench D, on north wall
14	Glass	Trench D, on the floor below north wall, 15cm (E-W)
15	Brick fragments and nails, less than 7 brick fragments and 3 bent nails	Trench D
16	Brick and cement	Ground surface of north woods under large oak
17	Cement brick	Pump house

■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■

A variety of physical and chemical analyses were conducted on soil samples from the cemetery to determine the extent to which observations made in the field regarding variations in the soil profile reflect actual compositional differences among soils. Specifically, the soil profile revealed a mollic epipedon with a defined A-B horizon sequence beneath Cross 7 and Cross 8. However, between the crosses, the horizonation is not evident, suggesting some form of disturbance (Figure 27). This observation was evaluated through analysis of six soil samples collected from areas directly beneath metal crosses (n=4) as well as between them (n=2). Analyses included color determination, soil texture analysis, hydrogen potential (pH), acid-extractable phosphate characterization, and soil organic matter. If the disturbed soil from between the crosses is compositionally distinct from those directly beneath the crosses, then there should be slight differences in color and pH between the disturbed and undisturbed contexts, higher clay percent in the disturbed soils, elevated phosphates in the disturbed soils, and higher soil organic matter in the disturbed soils. These expectations are based on the premise that the disturbed soil between the crosses reflects mixing of A and B horizons.

Approximately 100 g of soil were collected from defined A (.15 m below ground surface) and B (.40 m below ground surface) horizons under Cross 7 and Cross 8. In the area between the crosses (a mottled B horizon), where there was no definable horizonation apart from a thin, poorly developed A horizon, samples were collected at .25 m below ground surface from mottled soils. All samples were collected with a stainless steel trowel, cleaned with water between sample collections. Samples were placed directly into sterilized, phosphate-free plastic bags (Whirlpak), and transported to the Laboratory for Archaeological Soils Research in the Department of Anthropology at the University of South Florida, Tampa. The bags were left open for 24 hours to air dry, and then sieved through a .002 m stainless steel mesh screen to remove rocks and organics.

Soil color was determined with the use of Munsell Soil Color Charts, observed in wet (1 g / 1 ml) conditions. Soil texture was determined using the gravitation method, where sediments were mixed with deionized water in specialized gravitation tubes and the separates (sand, silt, and clay) were allowed to settle at different rates. Hydrogen potential (pH) was determined on a 5.00 mg soil / 10 ml DI H<sub>2</sub>O solution using a calibrated, digital pH meter (with automatic buffer recognition and temperature compensation).

Phosphates (PO<sub>4</sub>, P, and P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>) were determined using molybdate colorimetry. For this analysis, a 2.0 g portion was selected from each sample and mixed with 20 ml of dilute Mehlich II acid. Samples were placed in test tubes and mixed on an orbital benchtop shaker at 200 rpm for five minutes. The sediment grains were then filtered out of solution and into a sterilized glass scintillation vial using quantitative-grade ashless (0.007 percent) filter paper and an acetone-rinsed glass funnel. The contents of a Phos Ver 3 powder pillow were added to the solution and agitated until it dissolved (approximately one minute), and then allowed to stand for two minutes. A DR/890 colorimeter was used to quantify the concentration of phosphates in solution. Soil organic matter was determined using the loss-on-ignition method. For this analysis, 10.00 g of the sample was placed into a porcelain crucible, dried in an oven at 100°C for 2 hours to drive off extant moisture, and then ashed in a muffle furnace for 1 hour at 550°C to incinerate the organic matter. Weights of the sample before and after the process were compared to determine the percentage of organic matter in the sample.



Figure 27. Soil profile as exposed by the north-to-south trench, showing horization beneath Cross 7 and mottled soils adjacent to it (A = loam, B = silt loam, mottled soils = sandy loam).

The results of these analyses appear in Table 4 and Figures 28-31. The results show slight color and pH differences between the disturbed (“shaft”) and undisturbed soils (“cross”), although these are not statistically significant (Mann-Whitney,  $p = .36$  for pH). However, from Figure 18, it is clear that the undisturbed soils have a much greater range of variability in pH compared to the disturbed soils. This is understandable given that pH in this plot reflects both A and B horizons for undisturbed soils. Soil texture does not appear to vary (Mann-Whitney,  $p = .64$ [sand],  $1.0$ [silt],  $.62$ [clay]), and phosphates are only slightly higher in the disturbed soils (Mann-Whitney,  $p = 1.0$ [ $PO_4$ ],  $.81$ [P],  $1.0$ [ $P_2O_5$ ]). Again, these findings are expected, given the mixed nature of the disturbed soils, which retain the characteristics of both A and B horizons. Finally, soil organic matter is nearly significantly different between the disturbed and undisturbed contexts (Mann-Whitney,  $p = 0.06$ ).

Based on the results of these analyses, it is hypothesized that the disturbance between crosses 7 and 8 likely represents the burial shaft of a gravesite. If this hypothesis is supported for other areas of the cemetery through future investigations, then it would suggest that the crosses do not mark individual gravesites, and that the gravesites are adjacent to the marked locations.

Table 4. Soil Analysis Results

Sample	Notes	Horizon	Depth (cm bgs)	Color	Sand (%)	Silt (%)	Clay (%)	Texture	pH	$PO_4$ (ppm)	P (ppm)	$P_2O_5$ (ppm)	SOM (%)
BHC-01	Cross 8	A	15.00	7.5YR 3/2	46.67	46.67	6.67	loam	6.16	378.25	123.25	282.63	2.68
BHC-02	Cross 8	B	40.00	7.5 YR 5/8	43.33	56.67	0.00	silt loam	6.36	584.38	191.25	437.75	4.07
BHC-03	mottled	B	25.00	7.5YR 3/4	53.33	33.33	13.33	sandy loam	6.27	507.88	165.75	380.38	1.76
BHC-04	Cross 7	A	15.00	7.5YR 3/2	56.67	43.33	0.00	sandy loam	6.45	248.63	80.75	187.00	4.13
BHC-05	Cross 7	B	40.00	7.5 YR 5/8	46.67	46.67	6.67	loam	6.46	178.50	57.38	131.75	3.42
BHC-06	mottled	B	25.00	7.5YR 3/4	40.00	60.00	0.00	silt loam	6.29	244.38	80.75	182.75	2.46

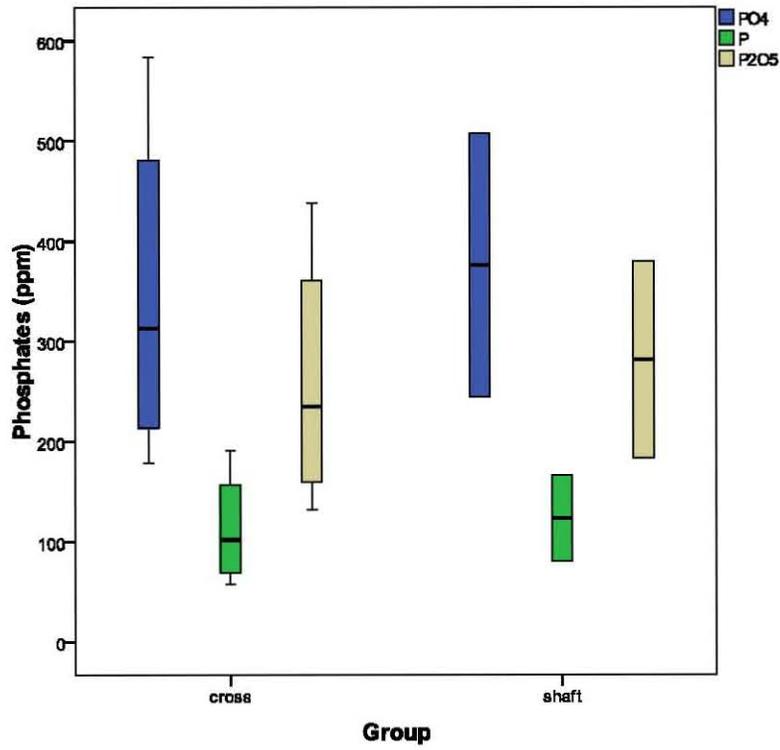


Figure 28. Boxplot comparing texture (soil separates) between cross and shaft soils.

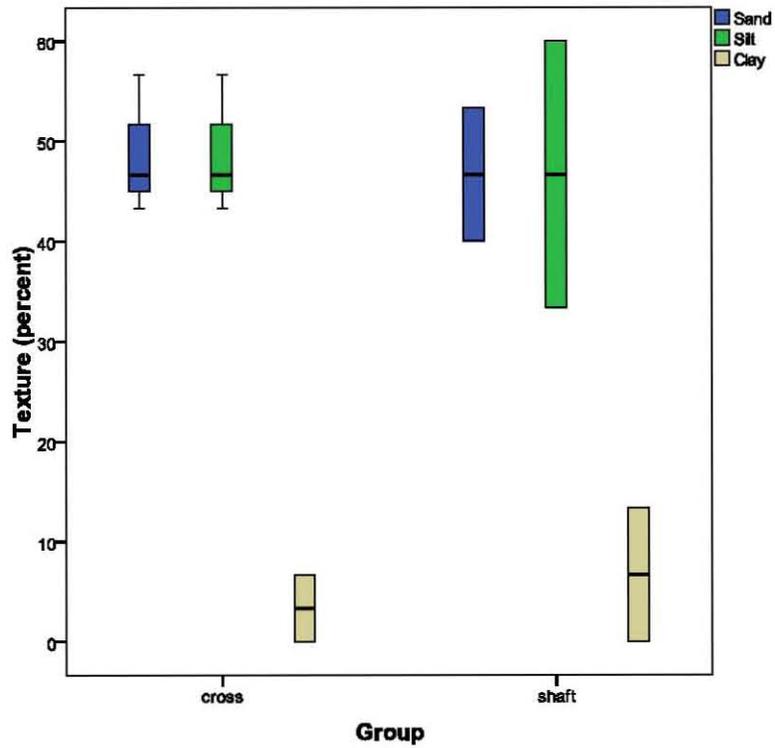


Figure 29. Boxplot comparing phosphates between cross and shaft soils

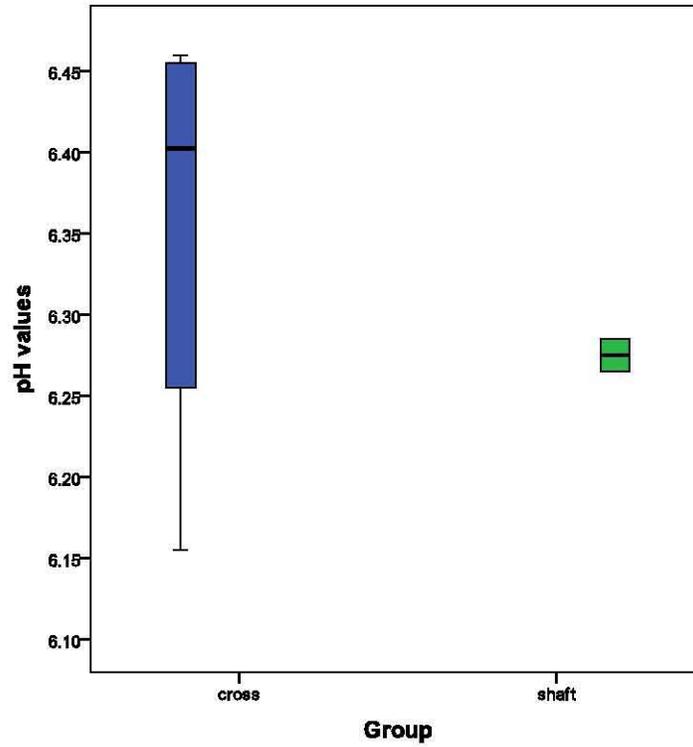


Figure 30. Boxplot comparing hydrogen potential (pH) between cross and shaft soils.

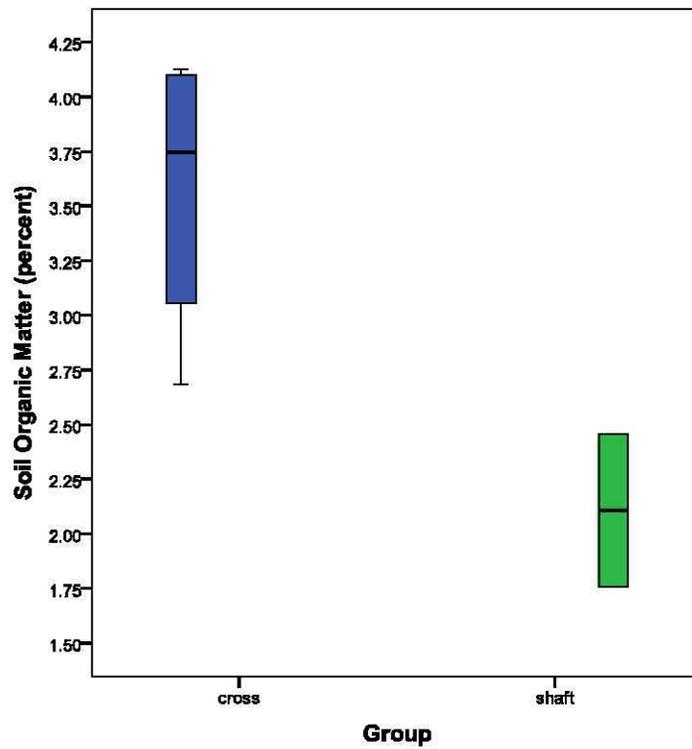


Figure 31. Boxplot comparing soil organic matter between cross and shaft soils.

## ESTIMATING THE NUMBER OF DEATHS AND EXPECTED BURIALS

Considering all sources of information, it is estimated that there are a minimum of 98 documented deaths dating from 1911-1973 and reviewed here. Compiling a list of boys who died at the school is not straight forward. Throughout the school's history there were often multiple reports about various events that resulted in different conclusions and records are incomplete. Information on the burial locations were recorded for 65 of these individuals (34 burials at the school and 31 bodies shipped away) leaving the disposition of 22 cases unknown.

Within the school ledgers, there is a record of only 49 deaths occurring at the school including eight burials at the school; 17 cases where bodies were shipped home after death; and 24 boys without a listed burial location (Table 5). Additional sources of information on the names and circumstances of boys who died include death certificates, biennial reports, newspaper articles, letters of correspondence and legislative notes. Discrepancies were further observed between what was written in the school ledgers and the official reports provided by the school to the State about the health and deaths of boys. Differences in the various sources of information occurs in the majority of the reports and records that were recovered, including those records related to the fire in 1914, the Influenza outbreak of 1918, and biennial reports reviewed from the 1920-50s.

There are at least 12 deaths that are discussed in reports to the State but the reports do not list the boys' names. The reports, including legislative documents and biennial reports, list the death of an unknown "colored boy" in 1911 (cause of death unknown) and 11 "colored boys" who died in November 1918 from Influenza and were buried at the school. Since the reported death from 1911 is also a case where the name of the deceased is unknown but it is cited in the FDLE (2009) report, we included it as well as the 1918 influenza cases in this analysis for consistency, particularly because the burials are also described as located at the school.

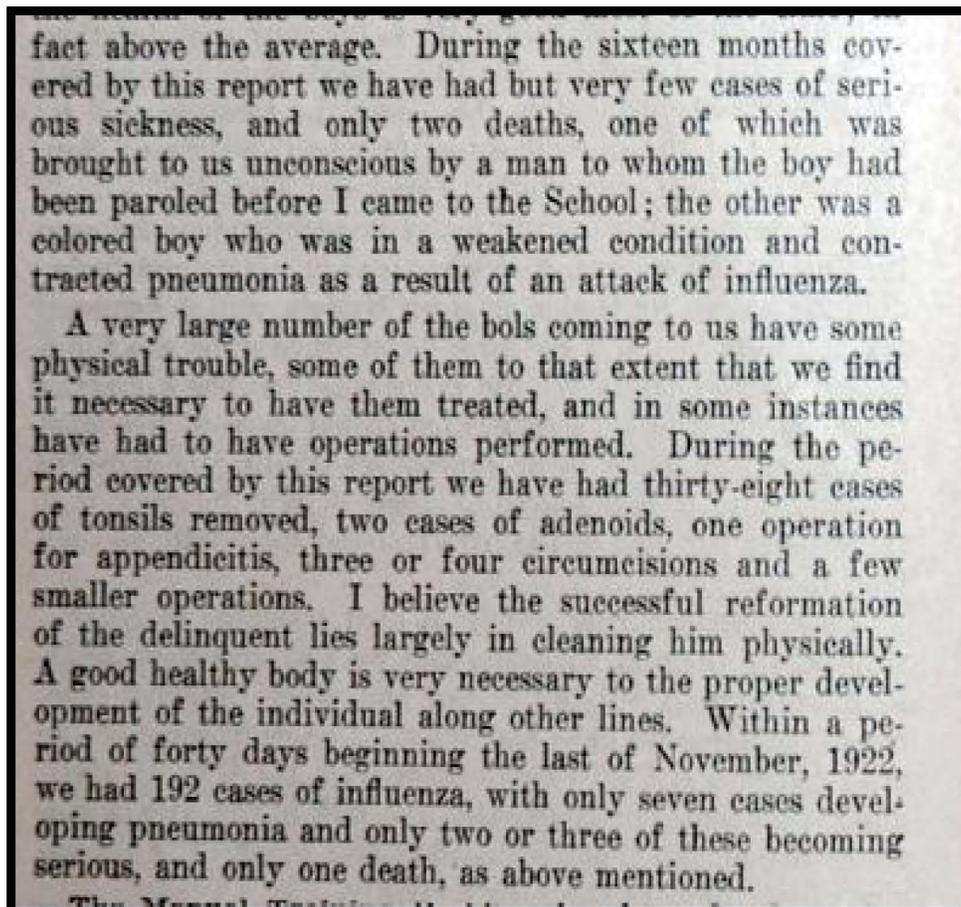
The death of an "Unknown Colored Boy" in 1911 is the earliest reported date of death among the documents recovered. No school document discusses this boy's name, cause of death, or burial location. Subsequent Biennial reports often listed fewer deaths than what is listed in the school ledgers. For example, in the 1921-1923 report by Superintendent Knight, six deaths were reported in the summary tables. Only one of those deaths was discussed in the narrative of the report (as opposed to appearing only in the table within the demographic tables in the appendix) and was attributed to the Flu/Pneumonia epidemic that struck the colored campus in November 1921 (Figure 32). However, according to the school ledgers, seven deaths occurred in 1921, two of which were attributed to pneumonia in March and April of that year, and both of those boys were white (Table 6). Note also the discrepancies among boys who were issued DC and those for whom deaths were certified by a physician.

Table 5. Summary Data for Number of Graves at FIS by Ancestry and Date According to Historic Records (n=98)

<b>Ancestry</b>	<b>Buried at School (n)</b>	<b>Dates of Burials at School (years)</b>	<b>Body Shipped (n)</b>	<b>Unknown Burial Location (n)</b>
White	16	1914-1941	15	6
Colored	18	1915-1952	16	16
Colored 1918*	11	1918 Influenza	0	0
Total	45	1914-1952	31	22

\*Records indicate the 11 colored boys who died during this outbreak were buried at the school.

In a second example of conflict between the deaths reported in the school's Biennial reports and the school's ledgers, the report from Superintendent Vanlandingham to the Board of Commissioners dated July 1, 1926 records a total of four deaths: two colored boys who died in 1925 and two more colored boys who died in 1926. However, according to school attendance ledgers, six boys died during this time frame (Table 7) including four colored and two white boys. Note that the deaths of the two white boys were not included in the Biennial report. Thomas Curry was one of these boys whose death was not included in the report. Curry was a white boy who died in 1925 after having escaped from the school. He died of blunt trauma. Curry was not listed in the report by Vanlandingham, nor does he appear in the FDLE report (2009). The ledgers with his name and death certificate appear in Figures (33-34). Curry was issued a death certificate (DC) by the Coroner from Chattahoochee, L.H. Sanders, which was certified by physician B.F. Barnes. The cause of death on the DC states, "Verdict of coroner's jury: came to his death from a wound on forehead: skull crushed from an unknown cause". The next of kin is listed as "unknown" but the body was shipped to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania for burial.



fact above the average. During the sixteen months covered by this report we have had but very few cases of serious sickness, and only two deaths, one of which was brought to us unconscious by a man to whom the boy had been paroled before I came to the School; the other was a colored boy who was in a weakened condition and contracted pneumonia as a result of an attack of influenza.

A very large number of the boys coming to us have some physical trouble, some of them to that extent that we find it necessary to have them treated, and in some instances have had to have operations performed. During the period covered by this report we have had thirty-eight cases of tonsils removed, two cases of adenoids, one operation for appendicitis, three or four circumcisions and a few smaller operations. I believe the successful reformation of the delinquent lies largely in cleaning him physically. A good healthy body is very necessary to the proper development of the individual along other lines. Within a period of forty days beginning the last of November, 1922, we had 192 cases of influenza, with only seven cases developing pneumonia and only two or three of these becoming serious, and only one death, as above mentioned.

Figure 32. Excerpt from the 1921-1922 Biennial Report by Superintendent Knight to the Board of Commissions (page 4) discussing the health and death of boys during this time.

Table 6. List of Deaths in 1921-1922 as Indicated in FIS ledgers

Year	Name	Ancestry	Age	Circumstances	Date of Death
1921	Arthur Williams*	Colored	12	Unknown	2/26/1921
1921	Wallace Ward	White	16	Pneumonia	3/2/1921
1921	Guy Hudson	White	16	Drowning	8/14/1921
1921	Sam Morgan*	White	--	Unknown	1921
1921	John Williams*	Colored	15	"Accident"	7/9/1921
1922	Schley Hunter**	White	16	Pneumonia/Influenza	4/15/1922
1922	Calvin Williams*	Colored	15	Unknown	12/31/1922

\*No death certificate issued. \*\*Death certified by Dr. Baltzell.

Table 7. List of Deaths in 1925-1926 as Indicated in FIS Ledgers

Year	Name	Ancestry	Age	Circumstances	Date of Death
1925	Edward Fonders	Colored	18	Drowning	05/16/1925
1925	Thomas E. Curry	White	15	Blunt Trauma	12/11/1925
1925	Walter Askew	Colored	12	Unknown	12/18/1925
1926	Nollie Davis	White	15	Pneumonia	01/30/1926
1926	Willie Sherman	Colored	15	Pneumonia	04/18/1926
1926	George Johnson	Colored	10	Pneumonia	08/03/1926

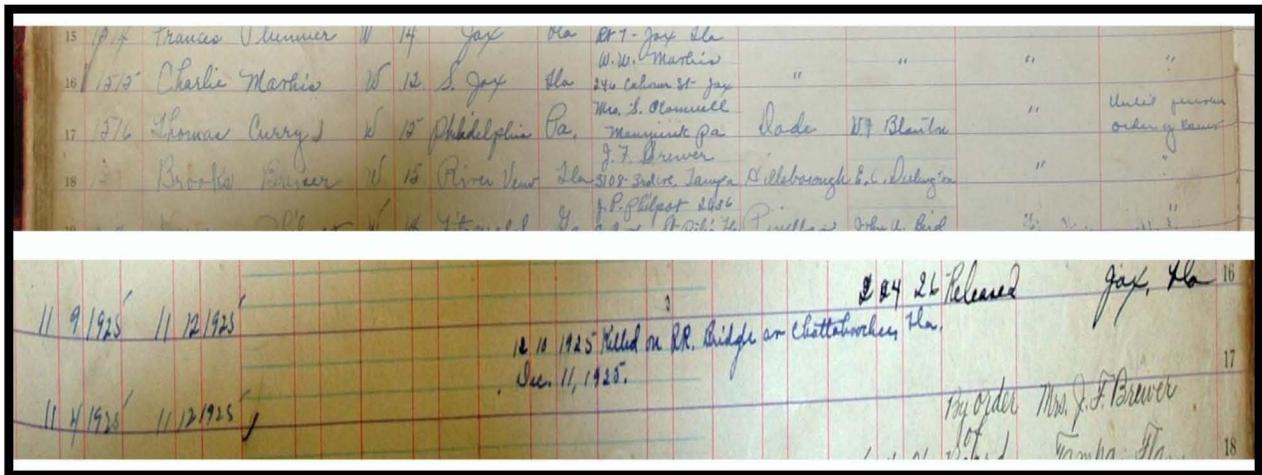


Figure 33. Record ledger entries, now in the State Archives, for Thomas Curry Note the date of death is in the “escaped” column of the ledger and the note afterwards indicates he died away from the institution (Florida School for Boys, Student Ledgers).

**FLORIDA STATE BOARD OF HEALTH  
BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS**

**CERTIFICATE OF DEATH**

1 PLACE OF DEATH  
County Gadsden District No. 1604 State File No. 17448  
Precinct (Write name, not number) \_\_\_\_\_ Precinct No. \_\_\_\_\_  
or Inc. Town River Junction City or Town No. 16553 Registered No. 473  
City \_\_\_\_\_ (In \_\_\_\_\_ St. \_\_\_\_\_) Ward: 3  
2 FULL NAME Thomas E. Curry (If death occurred in a hospital or institution, give the NAME (instead of street and number))

(a) Residence No. \_\_\_\_\_ (Usual place of abode) \_\_\_\_\_  
Length of residence in city or town where death occurred about 30 minutes (If nonresident give city or town and State) \_\_\_\_\_  
How long in U. S., if of foreign birth? \_\_\_\_\_

PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS			MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH	
1 SEX <u>Male</u>	4 COLOR OR RACE <u>White</u>	3 Single Married <u>Unknown</u> Widowed or Divorced <u>never was</u>	18 DATE OF DEATH (Month, day and year) <u>December 11 1925</u>	
6a If married, widowed, or divorced HUSBAND of _____ (or) WIFE of <u>Unknown</u>			17 I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended deceased from _____ 19____ to _____ 19____ that I last saw him alive on _____ 19____ and that death occurred, on the date stated above, at <u>10a</u> The CAUSE OF DEATH was as follows: <u>Verdict of Coroners jury: Cause to his death from a wound to forehead; skull crushed from an unknown blow.</u>	
4 DATE OF BIRTH (Month) _____ (Day) _____ (Year) _____	7 AGE <u>About 18</u> yrs. mos. _____		19 Where was disease contracted? If not at place of death? _____ Did an operation precede death? _____ Date of _____ Was there an autopsy? _____ What test confirmed diagnosis? (Signed) <u>A. H. Sanders</u> Coroner <u>12-18-1925</u> (Address) <u>Chattahoochee, Fla.</u>	
5 OCCUPATION OF DECEASED (a) Trade, profession, or particular kind of work <u>Unknown</u> (b) General nature of industry, business, or establishment in which employed (or employer): (c) Name of employer			20 Place of burial (Name of cemetery or removal) _____ Date of Burial _____ <u>Philadelphia, Pa</u> <u>12/26/25</u>	
8 BIRTHPLACE (city or town) _____ (State or country) <u>Unknown</u>	9 NAME OF FATHER (City or Town) _____ (State or country) <u>Unknown</u>		20a US DEATH RECORD ADDRESS <u>P. L. Heing, Chattahoochee, Fla</u>	
10 BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER (State or country) <u>Unknown</u>	11 MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER (City or Town) _____ (State or country) <u>Unknown</u>			
12 BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER (State or country) <u>Unknown</u>				
14 Informant (Address) <u>B. F. Barnes, M. D., Chattahoochee, Florida</u>				
15 <u>12-17-1925 B. F. Barnes M.D.</u> Registrar				

Figure 34. Image of death certificate for Thomas Curry.

Summary of boys buried at school, shipped home or with unknown grave locations:

- White boys/staff buried at the school: twelve (12) burials documented in various sources as having died in the 1914 fire. The remaining four (4) white boys died later in 1922 (Administration of Superintendent Knight) and in 1934-1935, 1941 (Administration of Superintendent Davidson).
- Colored boys buried at the school: eighteen (18) documented as buried at the school, dating 1919-1952 and an additional eleven (11) boys were buried at the school following the 1918 Influenza outbreak. Note that records of burial locations within the ledgers were documented beginning earlier in time (1915) for white boys than for colored boys even though there were more colored boys at the school.
- Bodies shipped away from school: records indicate 31 bodies were shipped home to families including fifteen (15) white and sixteen (16) colored boys, dating 1915-1973.
- Unknown burial locations: twenty-two (22) unknown burial locations including six (6) white and sixteen (16) colored boys who died between the years 1911-1935. A number of these boys died during the recorded influenza outbreaks and may have been buried with the others who died at these times on school grounds.

Among the boys for whom burial location was recorded in either the school ledgers or on death certificates, the locations are listed as “Florida Industrial School”, “Industrial Cemetery”, “FIS Cemetery”, “Buried by Institution”, or “Industrial School Cemetery”. In one case the death certificate just states buried in “Marianna, Florida” though the family was not in Marianna. No specific cemetery name(s) or locations are provided nor is there a record of whether the school used one or more burial areas during segregation. Interestingly, the burial location was unspecified for nearly three times more colored than white boys though all unspecified burial locations occurred prior to 1935. Furthermore, among the sample whose burial locations were unspecified, only three (3) were issued death certificates in 1932. The three boys for whom there was a certificate issued all died of Influenza and these deaths were certified by Dr. N. Baltzell, the school physician. The causes of death for the remaining nineteen (19) boys are undocumented. The specific names, ages, and circumstances of death by burial location for the boys in our sample are summarized in the following tables (Tables 8-10).

Table 8. List of individuals documented as buried at school (n=34 named, n=45 total)

Date of Death	Name	Age	Ancestry	DC	Circumstances
11/18/1914	Bennett Evans	Adult	White	No	Fire
11/18/1914	Charles Evans	Adult	White	No	Fire
11/18/1914	Louis Haffin	-	White	No	Fire
11/18/1914	Joseph Wethersby	17	White	No	Fire
11/18/1914	Walter Fisher	-	White	No	Fire
11/18/1914	Clarence Parrot	-	White	No	Fire
11/18/1914	Lois Fernandez	-	White	No	Fire
11/18/1914	Harry Wells	-	White	No	Fire
11/18/1914	Earl E. Morris	-	White	No	Fire
11/18/1914	Waldo Drew	-	White	No	Fire
11/18/1914	Clifford Jeffords	15	White	No	Fire
11/18/1914	S. Barnett	-	White	No	Fire
5/9/1919*	Leonard Simmons	13	Colored	No	Unknown
12/12/1920	Nathaniel Sawyer	12	Colored	No	Unknown
2/26/1921	Arthur Williams	12	Colored	No	Unknown
4/15/1922	Schley Hunter	16	White	Yes	Pneumonia/Influenza
12/31/1922	Calvin Williams	15	Colored	No	Unknown
8/19/1924	Charlie Overstreet	15	Colored	Yes	Anesthesia Tonsillectomy
5/16/1925	Edward Fonders	18	Colored	Yes	Drowning
12/18/1925	Walter Askew	12	Colored	No	Unknown
1/30/1926	Nollie Davis	15	Colored	Yes	Lobar Pneumonia
4/8/1929	Robert Rhoden	15	Colored	Yes	Pneumonia
10/15/1929	Samuel Bethel	16	Colored	Yes	Pulmonary Tuberculosis
1/5/1932	Lec Smith	17	Colored	Yes	Traumatic Rupture of Lung
5/9/1932	Joc Stephens	15	Colored	Yes	Influenza
10/26/1934	Thomas Varnadoe	13	White	Yes	Lobar Pneumonia
2/23/1935	Richard Nelson	12	Colored	Yes	Lobar Pneumonia/Influenza
2/24/1935	Robert Cato	12	Colored	Yes	Lobar Pneumonia/Influenza
3/4/1935	Grady Huff	17	White	Yes	Acute Nephritis/Hernia
4/30/1936	James Hammond	14	Colored	Yes	Pulmonary Tuberculosis
7/15/1937	Robert Scinous	15	Colored	Yes	Knife Wounds
1/24/1941	George Owen Smith	14	White	No	Escaped/Unknown
8/31/1944	Earl Wilson	12	Colored	Yes	Blunt Trauma to Head
10/7/1952	Billey Jackson	13	Colored	Yes	Pyelonephritis

\*1918 records indicate eleven (11) colored boys died of Influenza and were buried at the school.

Table 9. List of individuals who have documented burials in locations other than the school (n=31).

<b>Date of Death</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Ancestry</b>	<b>DC</b>	<b>Circumstances</b>
1915	Scott Martin	-	Colored	No	Unknown
1915	Granville Rogers	-	Colored	No	Unknown
1915	Willie Fisher	-	Colored	No	Unknown
7/19/1915	William McKinley	-	Colored	No	Unknown
11/25/1920	Alton Long	16	White	Yes	Pncumonia
7/2/1920	Henry Murphy	16	Colored	No	Sick/Died at Home
3/2/1921	Wallace Ward	16	White	Yes	Pneumonia
8/14/1921	Guy Hudson	16	White	Yes	Drowning
10/25/1923	George Chancey Jr.	6	White	Yes	Malaria
12/11/1925	Thomas E. Curry	18	White	Yes	Escaped/Blunt Trauma
8/3/1926	George Johnson	10	Colored	Yes	Pncumonia
4/18/1926	Willie Sherman	15	Colored	Yes	Lobar Pneumonia
5/23/1927	Ernest Mobley	15	Colored	No	Unknown
10/14/1928	Moses Roberts	15	Colored	Yes	Malaria
10/19/1929	James C. Ansley	15	White	Yes	Fire
11/7/1932	Oscar E. Murphy	15	White	Yes	Escaped/Run over by Automobile
2/11/1932	Lonnie Harrell	14	White	Yes	Ancsthesia Hernia
4/13/1932	Willie Heading	15	Colored	Yes	Lobar Pneumonia/Influenza
4/14/1932	Sam Nipper	12	Colored	Yes	Lobar Pneumonia/Influenza
4/16/1932	Jesse D. Denson	10	Colored	Yes	Lobar Pncumonia/Influenza
5/16/1932	Dary Pender	13	Colored	Yes	Lobar Pneumonia/Influenza
5/4/1949	Eddie Albert Black	13	White	Yes	Blunt Trauma to Head
11/3/1954	Clarence Cunningham	12	Colored	Yes	Hemorrhaging Endothelioma
1/25/1957	George Fordom Jr.	15	Colored	Yes	Endothelioma Sarcoma
4/4/1960	Robert J. Hewett	16	White	Yes	Escaped/Gunshot Wounds to Chest
9/15/1961	Raymond Phillips	17	White	Yes	Escaped/Gunshot to the Head
7/10/1961	Edgar T. Elton	16	White	Yes	Dilatation Heart
1965	James Lee Frederic	-	White	Yes	Escaped/Auto Accident
1966	Alphonse Glover	-	White	Yes	Drowning
3/15/1966	Michael Smelley	17	White	Yes	Carcinoma/Died at Home
1973	Martin Williams	-	Colored	Yes	Drowning

Table 10. List of boys for whom burial location is unknown (n=22 total, 1 is unnamed).

<b>Date of Death</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Ancestry</b>	<b>DC</b>	<b>Circumstances</b>
1911	Unknown Name	-	Colored	No	Unknown
2/28/1916	Sim Williams	18	Colored	No	Unknown
5/25/1916	Tillman Mohind	17	Colored	No	Unknown
1916	James Joshua	-	Colored	No	Unknown
4/16/1918	Thomas Adkins	12	Colored	No	Unknown
10/6/1918	Lee Gaalsby	13	White	No	Escape/Unknown
10/23/1918	George Grissam	6	Colored	No	Paroled/Unconscious
10/25/1918	Willie Adkins	13	Colored	No	Unknown
11/4/1918*	Llyod Dutton	14	White	No	Unknown
11/6/1918*	Ralph Whiddon	16	White	No	Unknown
11/6/1918*	Hilton Finley	16	White	No	Unknown
11/8/1918*	Puner Warner	16	White	No	Unknown
ca. 1918*	Wilber Smith	10	Colored	No	"Reported Died of Flu"
2/12/1919	Joe Anderson	17	Colored	No	Unknown
1921	Sam Morgan	-	White	No	Unknown
7/9/1921	John H. Williams	15	Colored	No	"Met Death by Accident"
12/4/1924	Clifford Miller	15	Colored	No	Unknown
4/22/1932	Archie J. Shaw Jr.	12	Colored	No	Influenza
4/21/1932	Lee Underwood	16	Colored	Yes	Lobar Pneumonia/Influenza
4/22/1932	Fred Sams	15	Colored	Yes	Lobar Pneumonia/Influenza
4/10/1932	James Brinson	12	Colored	Yes	Lobar Pneumonia/Influenza
3/16/1935	Joshua Backey	14	Colored	No	Blood Poison

\*1918 records indicate eleven (11) colored boys died of Influenza in November and were buried at the school. The other Flu related deaths at this time may be buried at the school as well.

It is unknown why the burial locations for twenty-two (22) boys are undocumented between 1911-1934. Since school records prior to 1919 were incomplete as discussed elsewhere in this report, it is unknown whether there were more deaths that occurred prior to this time. However, based on the mortality structure of the sample and the number of boys that died in the subsequent years, it is highly unlikely that there were not additional deaths prior to 1919.

By January 1919, there was a record of 28 deaths within the school records or 16 if the fire victims are excluded as that was a single mass fatality incident and not indicative of the average mortality rate. During the subsequent nineteen year period, 1919-1936, there were 44 more deaths indicating the death rate rose 2.7 times.

To account for differences in the size of the student population, given the increasing number of students at the institution, the mortality rate was calculated (enrollment statistics are provided in Lundrigan 1975). On January 3, 1920 there were 102 white boys and 211 colored boys at the school. Up to this date, there had been a total of n=427 white boys and n=705 colored boys committed to the School (n=1,132). By 1960, these numbers rose significantly. By January 6, 1960, there was a total n=336 white boys and n=326 colored boys at the School, though many more had already passed through the institution: white boys (n=3,531), colored boys (n=11,743), or a total of n=15,274 had been committed to date. Note the difference between the number of white and colored boys.

In 1919, the percentage of deaths was 2.5% (28/1132) or slightly less if the fire victims were excluded (1.4% 16/1132). However, the total frequency of deaths among the student population by 1960 was 0.62% (77/15274), which suggests that even as the student body grew in size the rate of death did not and therefore, the rate of death increase observed between 1919 and 1936 may be an artifact of under-reported deaths prior to 1919.

Interestingly, several administrations had a higher number of deaths occur and also had the highest numbers of unknown burial locations which may be indicative of changing operational practices or administrative policies over time. During the administrations of Superintendents McClane, Boone, and Davidson there was a combined total of 41 deaths, 19, or 46.3%, of which did not have recorded burial locations.

Superintendent M.S. Knight was elected to the position by the Board of Commissioners August 18, 1921 and served in that position until April 8, 1926. He had been employed at the Florida State Hospital (formally the Florida State Hospital for the Insane, which opened in 1876) in Chattahoochee. His daughter (Ola Robinson) and son-in-law (George Robinson) worked at FIS before and after Knight's tenure. Robinson was a farmer and supervisor and is listed on some of the death certificates as "undertaker" though he held different jobs and was briefly the Superintendent as well, following Knight. Note that there are several names which appear on the death certificates as informant or undertaker. Those listed as informants tended to be administrators and the undertakers, when it is listed as FIS, tend to be other employees who worked the grounds or in farming such as Charles Mayo or George Robinson.

During Knight's tenure as Superintendent, nine (9) boys died. Six were buried at FIS (one white boy and five colored boys), two were shipped home and one was not documented. In 1922, Schley Hunter, a 16 year old white boy died and was buried at FIS. This is the first recorded burial at FIS since the 1914 fire and occurred under Knight's leadership of the school.

As a point of comparison, the State Hospital which Knight worked at prior to FIS also had a large cemetery and its own mortuary. The State Hospital has a 27 acre burial ground divided into five cemeteries which is further organized into divisions, rows and plot numbers. The divisions are segregated by sex and ancestry and are contemporaneous but segregated for

white women, colored women, white men, and colored men (Hunt 2012). The divisions were often delineated by roads and fences, although today many have been disturbed by development. In a St. Petersburg Times story (AUGUST 16, 1976) titled, *Florida State Hospital cemetery: efficient, anonymous*, the burial practices of the State Hospital are outlined which is a useful comparison for the practices at FIS:

**CHATTAHOOCHEE** - Florida State Hospital has enough need for an undertaker to hire one fulltime. The hospital has its own mortuary, fulltime funeral director, mortician and grave yard. The coffins are made on the hospital grounds. So are the tombstones. The graves are dug by inmates from the nearby River Junction state work camp. There are about 6,000 graves at the cemetery - 27 acres on a hilltop a couple of miles from the city. There is no sign, no official name and the gate is usually locked. The graves are of Chattahoochee patients who died over the past 45 years. Most of the tombstones carry no names, but a number that has meaning only to the few hospital officials with access to confidential patient files. The stigma associated with mental illness led to the confidentiality and numbers - not names - on the tombstones. The coffins are made from medium- grade pine in the hospital carpentry shop, lined with white muslin stapled to the inside walls and painted battleship gray. Hospital officials have become highly efficient in disposing of their dead. One or two graves are always ready - even though there may be no body that particular day for them. When one grave is filled, another is dug a foot away. There are 6,000 graves at the cemetery - 27 acres on a hilltop. There is no sign, no official name and the gate is usually locked. Several dozen tombstones are neatly stacked in a work shed. Families of the patients can arrange burial or leave it to the state, says funeral director Leonard Herring. There is no charge to the family, although it can voluntarily pay about \$170. Last year, 216 patients died at the hospital. So far this year, 105 have died. About one third of them are buried in the hospital cemetery. There is a small chapel at the hospital morgue. Services can be arranged if the families want it. "We do it however they want," Herring said. "We just try to please the family. Most people seem real pleased. We get lots of letters." Funerals are held on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays because that works out best for the prison labor, he said. The chaplain calls shortly after 8 a.m. on each of the days to see if there are to be any funerals.

Given the practice of segregation at the time and the standard operating practices of the State Mental Hospital from which Knight came, it seems unlikely that Knight would have buried Hunter (a white boy) among rows of colored boys. In 1924, Clifford Miller, a 15 year old colored boy, died of an unknown cause. Miller was also one out of nine boys that died during Superintendent Knight's administration. His death is the only one during this time that does not have a record of where he was buried, nor was a death certificate issued. Two other colored boys (Williams and Askew) also died under Knight's tenure from unknown causes of death and were not issued death certificates. In all of the other six cases, either Dr. Baltzell or the coroner, L. H. Sanders, provided a cause of death and issued death certificates. This includes Thomas Curry who died of blunt trauma after escaping.

The only other documented cases of white boys buried at FIS occur later during the administration of Superintendent Davidson in the years 1934-1935 (**Thomas Varnadoc** and **Grady Huff**) and in 1941 (**George Owen Smith**). In two of the three cases, the family members of Smith and Varnadoc have provided interviews through this research project and both stated

they were shown burial areas outside of the Boot Hill Cemetery. In 1941, Superintendent Davidson personally showed the Smith family a grave on the South side of white school (refer to discussion on possible multiple burial areas), thereby demonstrating that the burials were not integrated and that multiple burial locations existed.

## **Burial Information**

Information on the burial location of boys who died at the school comes from several sources: the two types of ledgers, death certificates, both school and national newspaper articles, Biennial reports, letters of correspondence and legislative minutes. Within these sources data most often occurs in one location or another, but rarely in multiple sources. For example, in only two cases were burial locations known from both death certificates and ledgers (note these cases overlap in the summary tables). The school records should be the primary source of this type of data however entries or notes that a death occurred is not present in all cases, just as not even the names of all the boys who died is known.

The State of Florida did not require that death certificates (DC) be issued until 1917 and in the years following 1917, certificates were still not always issued. The first DC related to a boy at the school occurs in 1920, though in the years following 1920 it is varied as to when DC were issued. Discrepancies even occur in years where more than one death occurs. In total, we found death certificates for 47 boys. Among these, burial location is provided for 38 individuals and indicates 15 were buried at FIS and 24 were shipped. It is not entirely clear from the data why only some death certificates were issued after 1920 though it varies as to when the DC informant was school personnel rather than family. The role of school administrators as informants also varies. Additionally, information about the undertaker, burial location, certification of the death by a school employed doctor (i.e., Dr. N.A. Baltzell or Dr. C. Whitaker), and the cause and manner of death are provided in most cases when death certificates are issued. However, death certificate information is not always complete.

The first death certificate that was issued in 1920 was certified by Dr. N.A. Baltzell, a local physician also employed by the school. After 1920, DC were not issued in 12 cases, including 2 white boys and 10 colored boys ranging from the years 1920-1941. Among boys for whom DC were not issued after 1920, only 4 have a cause of death listed in the ledgers, including fire, flu, trauma and blood poison (Table 7).

Not a lot of information is known about the notification process to families or the participation of families in funerals held at the school. There are only a few entries in the ledger notes that comment on family notification. For example, the 1919 entry for Leonard Simmons states, "Message and Letter Returned, See May Letter File 1919". He was buried May 9, the same day he died which would imply that he was buried before the family would have been notified. The only reference we found for a delayed burial was when the flu epidemic struck and there were so many deaths in a short time, that the bodies had to be refrigerated until the coffins were made (Lundrigan 1975). Notations in the ledgers that indicate bodies were taken to a family by school officials or families came to transport remains are rare but there are some references in the ledgers about bodies taken home for families, such as Alton Long in 1920, "Body delivered to mother at Mayo, FL by C.E. Landhouser". For example

- Wallace Ward was a 16 year old white boy who was admitted to the school on 1/24/1921 and died less than two month later 3/2/1921 due to Pneumonia. The school ledger states "Body taken by parents Mr. and Mrs. Brady Ward home for burial same day, March 2, 1920". Note the date error in the ledger, which should have been 1921.

Among the burials at the school, we found that most of the deceased were buried either the day of death or the following day. The Smith family had a similar experience in 1941 after the body of George Owen Smith was found under a house in Marianna, Florida (Figure 35).

- **George Owen Smith** was 14 years old when he was sentenced to FIS for “auto theft” on 9/20/1940. According to his sister, Ms. Ovell Krell (Interview 2012), George escaped from the school and was caught and returned. In a letter he sent his family he said that as a result “he got what he had coming”. Subsequently, on November 23, 1940 (Florida School for Boys, Student Ledgers: Vol. 4) he ran away again. On 1/24/1941, his remains were found under a house in Marianna. A coroner’s inquest and the sheriff’s office responded. The cause and manner of death are unknown. There was no autopsy nor a death certificate issued. According to school authorities at the time, Smith was not autopsied because his remains were too decomposed.

Superintendent Davidson, school employee Arthur Dozier, school physician Dr. Whitaker, the coroner, and sheriff’s deputies examined the body. Identification of Smith’s remains was based on dental records, the school uniform he was wearing, and the visual recognition of his hair by Mr. Dozier who stated that the hair found on the corpse looked like Smith (Jackson Courier 1941).



The family went to Marianna to obtain George’s remains – it had been their intention to bring Smith’s remains home for burial according to his sister Ovell Krell (Interview 2012). Instead, they were shown his grave. Shortly after their visit, the family received a letter (Figures 36-38) stating that a funeral had taken place at the school for Smith. Subsequently, in an article titled, “Youth Body Found, Burial Here Friday” by the Jackson Courier (Vol. XIV, No. 3, 1941) about Smith’s death, it stated that the costs of transporting the Smith’s remains were significant and that due to the decomposition of remains, transport was nearly impossible by local undertakers.

Figure 35. George Owen Smith playing harmonic, ca. 1940.



**FLORIDA INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL FOR BOYS**  
MILLARD DAVIDSON, SUPERINTENDENT  
MARIANNA, FLORIDA

January 1, 1941

Mrs. George W. Smith  
Auburndale, Florida

Dear Mrs. Smith:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of recent date written with regard to your son, George Owen, and to advise that so far we have been unable to get any information concerning his whereabouts.

We will be glad to get in touch with you just as soon as we are able to locate George and in the meantime we will appreciate your notifying us immediately if you receive any word from or concerning him.

Very sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Millard Davidson", followed by a horizontal line.

Millard Davidson  
Superintendent

Figure 36. Letter to Smith family about George O. Smith having gone missing from the school. The letter is signed by Superintendent Millard Davidson.

**St. Luke's Episcopal Church**

Ven. V. G. Lowery, Rector

MARIANNA, FLORIDA

January 25th, 1941.

RECTORY

212 West Lafayette Street

Mrs. George W. Smith,  
Auburndale, Florida.

My dear Mrs. Smith:-

Knowing well the love and devotion of a mother's heart, I would like so much to be able to send you some word of comfort and consolation in this hour of your great sorrow. The sorrow in itself is hard enough, but to have to be so far away from your boy and leave everything to the care and arrangement of strangers, makes it doubly hard.

For that very reason I am anxious to send you this word of assurance that Mr. Millard Davidson did all in his power to provide a suitable and Christian burial for your son George. Mr. Davidson and all those in authority at the Florida Industrial School for Boys feel this most unfortunate happening very deeply, and it never would have occurred had it been in their power to prevent it.

First, I would like to tell you that Mr. Davidson, the Superintendent of the Boy's School, is an officer in the Episcopal Church in Marianna, and gives much interest and work in carrying on this Christian influence both here and also throughout the State.

Second, that while he was waiting for your local Presbyterian Minister to talk with you and Mr. Smith about this tragedy and to report back to him, he called me out to the School, told me how troubled he was about this untimely end to George's life, how sorry he felt for you all, and that he wouldn't have had it happen for anything. All sorts of investigations were carried on, and all day he kept trying to figure out just how it could have happen i. Every now and then he would refer to George's parents and how hard a blow it must be to you all. His kindest thoughts and concern have certainly been for you in the loss of your boy.

Being Mr. Davidson's Pastor, and also having a fairly good knowledge of the School and the fine work they are doing for so many of the boys in our State, I readily agreed to conduct a burial service for George. At about 3:30 o'clock Friday afternoon, the 24th, I conducted the burial service for George, in the presence of Mr. Davidson and members of the staff. It was in the Burial Plot of the School, that is kept nicely cleaned and cared for, and will be looked after in the years to come. So please know your son's last rites were tenderly and considerately performed.

I trust this letter may bring you some measure of comfort, for I can assure you, you have the sincere sympathy of the members of the staff at the School and our best citizens here in Marianna.

May God bless, help and comfort you in my sincere prayer for you and yours.

Faithfully yours,



Rector.

Figure 37. Letter to the Smith family from the rector at St. Luke's Episcopal Church regarding the burial of their son at the school. The letter was sent to the family after they attempted to claim his remains.

Upon arrival the funeral home advised they had not received my brother's body and knew nothing about the situation. My parents and I went out to the school and went into Mr. Davidson's office. He told us he did not receive any call from the minister and so my brother had been buried the afternoon before our arrival. Oddly, it was the SAME day he was found dead. He was buried at 3:30p.m. within hours of his being found.

We learned that he had not even been embalmed-no casket NOTHING. We were shown a fresh pile of dirt in a cemetery and were told that was where my brother was buried. Unfortunately, my parents did not have the means to have the body excavated and moved to our home town, so we had to leave him buried there.

I would like to say here that we talked to a boy in Mr. Davidson's presence who told us he and my brother escaped one night and were walking towards town when they saw lights behind them and knew their absence had been discovered. The boy said he stopped and waited to be picked up but that my brother ran out across an open field. He said the last thing he heard or saw were two or three guards shooting at my brother. I have always felt that he was shot and killed that night and had been buried to cover up that fact. Had my mother not been so persistent in finding out what had happened to my

Figure 38. Excerpt from the letter sent by Ms. Krell to the FDLE in 2008 about her brother's (George Owen Smith) death and what she was told occurred the night he ran away from the school.

**DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS**

Table 8-10 provide a list of all the boys who were committed to the school or were in the custody of the institution at the time of their deaths, the two adults who perished in the fire of 1914 and were buried on the school grounds, and the names of boys who were at the school and transferred home or to a hospital due to illness and subsequently died. The majority of boys who died were on the school grounds of the institution, however some died at home or in the hospital having been sick and paroled or admitted for treatment. In seven (7) cases boys died after having escaped from the school, and in two cases boys were paroled locally and brought back to the institution very ill and died within a day of returning. The school's newspaper, *The Yellow Jacket*, has numerous articles about staff that died at the school over the years due to illness, however they were buried at other locations and are therefore not included in this analysis. The two staff members who died in the 1914 fire are discussed because they are reported as having been buried on the school grounds, however they are not included in demographic analyses of the boys who were in custody (Figure 39).

Among student deaths, ages were obtained for 58 individuals who ranged from 6-18 years old with a mean age of 14 years old (Figure 40). Among these, 27 (42%) were white and 30 (57%) were colored boys. Throughout its history, the majority of boys at the institution were African American. The high percentage of white deaths is skewed by the fire of 1914 as during that single event, up to 11 white boys were killed. If this event is removed from the pool, then the percentages of death among white boys (21%) vs. colored boys (75%) is more consistent with what is expected given the overall demographic structure of the school which was predominately African American throughout the school's history. Overall there were more African American boys who died and among those, they tended to be younger in age.

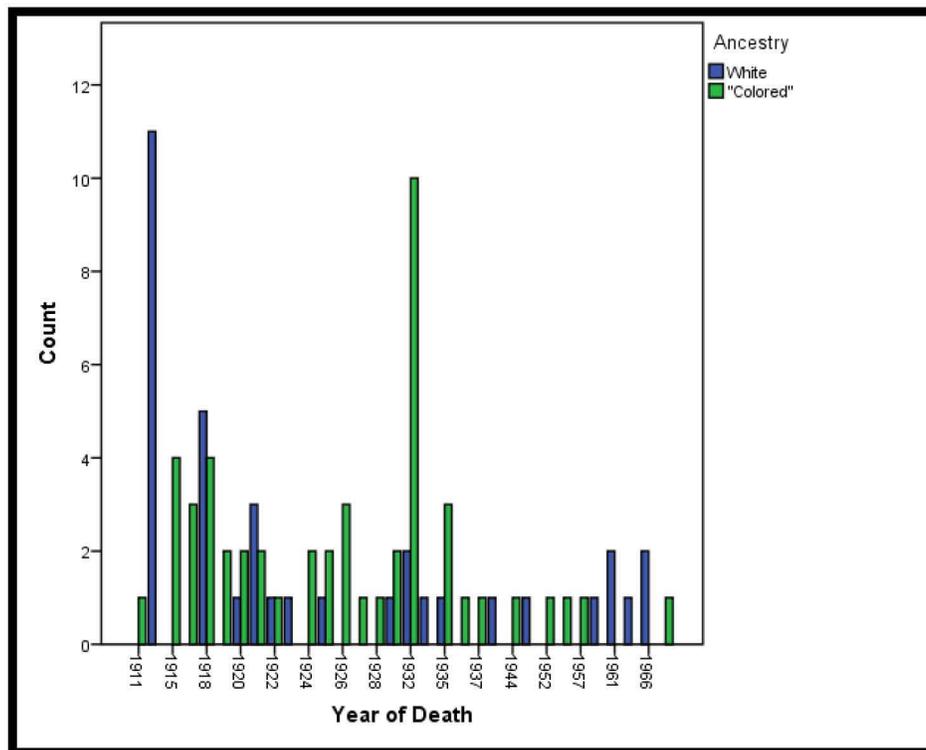


Figure 39. Year of death comparisons among white and colored boys.

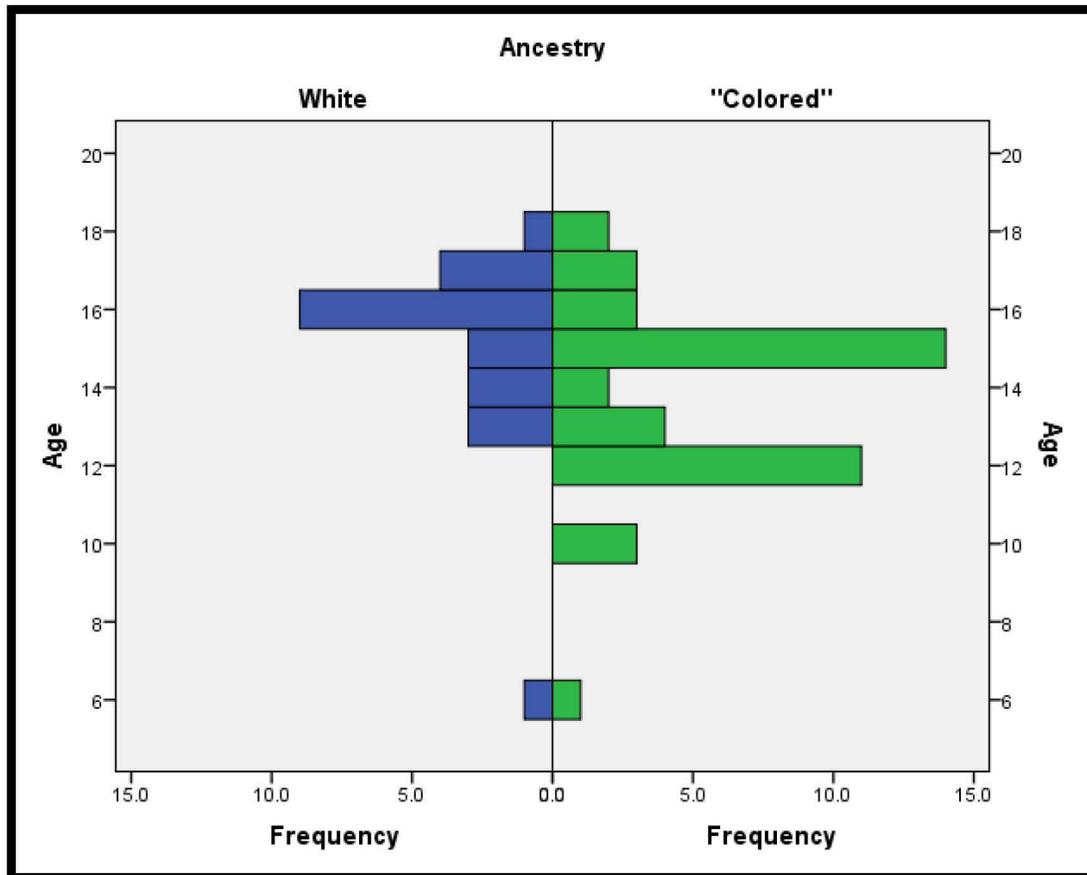


Figure 44. Age at death distributions

The two youngest boys who died were both six years old. George Grissam (died 10/23/1918) and George W. Chancey, Jr. (died 10/25/1923). Interestingly, given their ages, one was admitted for delinquency and one as a dependent. Chancey died 23 days after arriving at the school. His death highlights a trend among those who died in that the mortality risk was high when boys first entered the school. Table 11 illustrates this pattern and summarizes that the twenty (20) cases where boys died within three months of entering the school. Additionally, both Schley Hunter and George Grissam had been paroled to local men when they became ill and were returned to the school for medical treatment, although it was too late in these cases and both boys died.

- George Grissam entered FIS on February 12, 1917 with his eight year old brother Ernst. They were African American boys and despite their ages, both were charged with Delinquency from Washington County and sentenced to FIS "Until 21 Years Old." According to the Biennial Report (January 1, 1921, through January 1, 1923, Biennial Report of the Florida Industrial School for Boys written to the Board of Commissioners of State Institutions), the boys were paroled locally and on October 23, 16 months after arriving at FIS, George was brought back to the school unconscious. His burial location is unknown. There is no record of what happened to his brother Ernst, other than the ledger entry several months later which reads, "Not Here 3/30/1919."

- **George W. Chancey, Jr.** was a six year old white boy who entered FIS on 10/25/1922 for Dependency from Polk County. His sentence was "Until further order of the court." Twenty-three days after arriving at FIS, he died of Malaria. The ledger states "casket shipped home to his father, George, Sr." Chancey had been sentenced and arrived at FIS along with Abraham Hays a 15 year old white boy also from Polk County whose charge was also for Dependency. Hays was paroled about a year later on November 28, 1914 to his sister Inez James of Tampa, FL. Any further connection between the boys is unknown.
- **Schley Hunter** was admitted when 11 years old on 6/12/1916 and died over 5.5 years later on 04/15/1922. Hunter was charged with Delinquency and sentenced to FIS until "21 years old" from Lafayette County. He was paroled on 8/31/1921 and later "Returned 4/14/1922, very ill, fever 104", and subsequently died the next day. The death certificate was certified by Dr. N. A. Baltzell, the FIS physician who stated Pneumonia was the cause of death. Hunter was buried at the school cemetery.

These examples further illustrate that boys who died were both convicted of crimes and dependents. During this period of time, children were often paroled for labor or indentured servitude, which may be why they were paroled to local individuals who returned them to the school when they became ill. The most common charges for which boys in this sample were sent to the reform school include "Delinquency" (n=21), "Larceny" (n=24), "Breaking and Entering" (n=5), "Incorrigibility" (n=3), "Manslaughter" (n=2), and "Running away from home" (n=2). Additionally, there were charges of assault, auto theft, concealed weapon, dependency, "illness and crime", "malicious trespassing", and "misdemeanor". For twenty-one (21) boys, no data was present for the charge or sentence. The general trends appear the same for white and colored boys, as delinquency, larceny, and breaking and entering were the highest categories. However, the cases of incorrigibility and running away (non criminal charges) were more frequently assigned to colored boys.

Like George Chancey, a high number of boys died a relatively short time after arriving at FIS (Table 11). Data on the date of admission was present for 64 cases, among whom, 20 or 31.2% died less than 90 days after arriving (20/64). Among these, 8 actually died within the first 30 days (nearly 40.0% of this group). Within this group, all but five were issued death certificates and two were autopsied. According to the death certificates: 7 boys died of infectious disease (pneumonia, tuberculosis, or malaria); 4 boys died of the result of trauma including gunfire and blunt trauma; one boy died following surgery, two from drowning, and one from pylonephritis. Without death certificates, the causes of death for the remaining children are unknown. Note that originally the law stipulated incarceration between 6 months and 4 years but, as discussed earlier, this was changed after school leaders lobbied for ways to increase the number of boys sent to the school. Three boys died after four years of incarceration at the school (>1460 days) including Bethel (1929), Hunter (1922), and Morgan (1921). Bethel and Hunter died of infectious diseases; the cause of Morgan's death is unknown. Figures 41-42 illustrate the trends of mortality upon entering the school.

Table 11. Boys that Died Less than 90 Days after Arriving at FIS (n=20).

Name	Age	Number of Days	Date of Death	DC Issued	Circumstances
Thomas Aikins	12	44	4/16/1918	No	Unknown
Leonard Simmons	13	29	5/09/1919	No	Unknown
Wallace Ward	16	9	3/2/1921	Yes	Pneumonia
Guy Hudson	16	30	8/14/1921	Yes	Drowning
Calvin Williams	15	41	12/31/1922	Yes	Unknown
George Chancey	6	23	10/25/1923	Yes	Malaria
Thomas E. Curry	18	25	12/11/1925	Yes	Escape/Blunt trauma
Walter Askew	12	23	12/18/1925	No	Unknown
Willie Sherman	15	20	4/18/1926	Yes	Pneumonia
Dary Pender	13	38	5/16/1932	Yes	Lobar pneumonia/influenza
Lonnie Harrell	14	24	2/11/1932	Yes	Following anesthesia for a surgical operation
Lee Smith	17	68	1/05/1932	Yes	Traumatic rupture of lung after falling of a mule
Thomas Varnadoe	13	34	10/26/1934	Yes	Lobar pneumonia/anemia
Robert Cato	12	31	2/24/1935	Yes	Lobar pneumonia/influenza
James Hammond	14	43	4/30/1936	Yes	Pulmonary tuberculosis
George Owen Smith	14	64	1/24/1941	No	Escape/Unknown
Earl Wilson	12	72	8/31/1944	Yes	Head injury, blows to the head
Billey Jackson	13	63	10/07/1952	Yes	Pylonephritis
Robert Jerald Hewett	16	13	4/4/1960	Yes	Escape/ "Gunshot wounds in chest inflicted by person or persons unknown"
Alphonse Glover	--	10		--	Possible Drowning

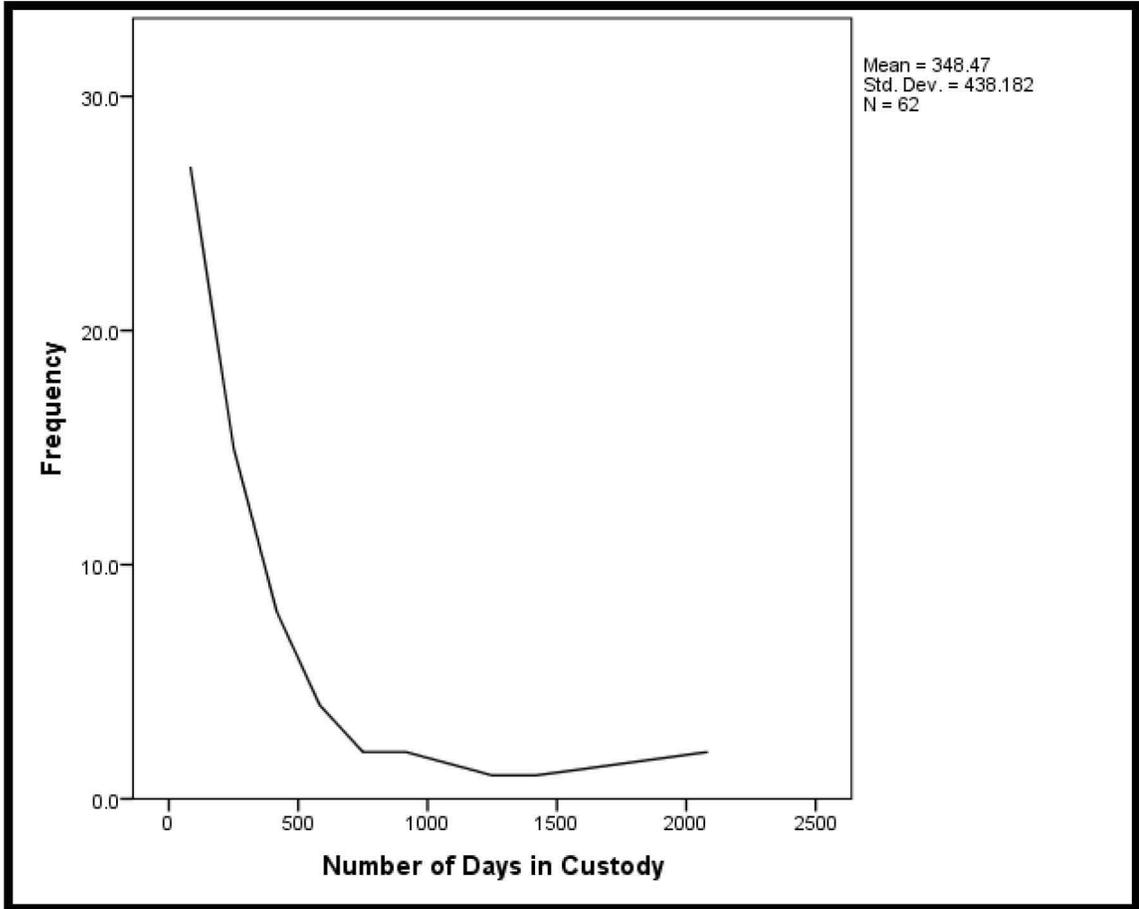


Figure 41. Frequency of days in custody from date of admittance to death.

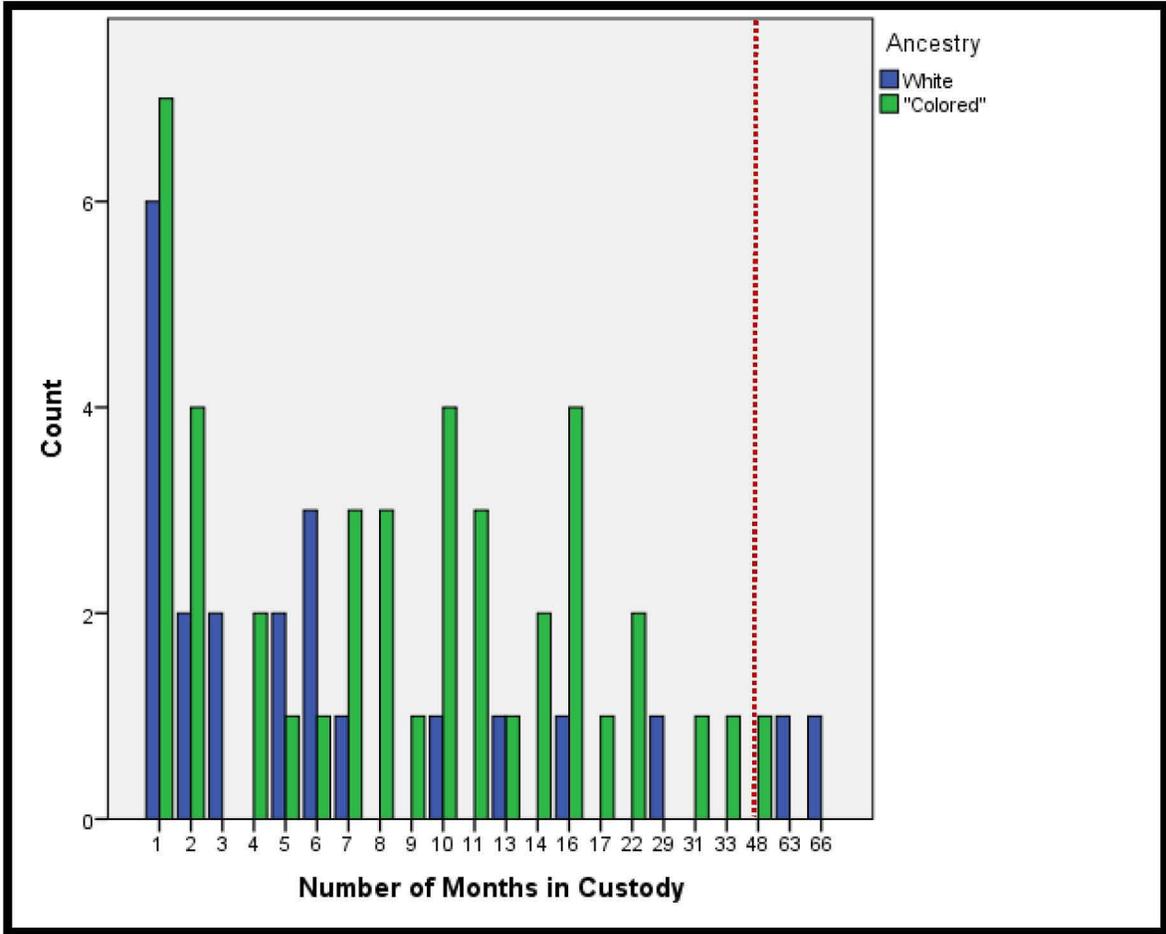


Figure 42. Number of months in custody from the date of admittance to death by school group. The dashed red line is the 48 month mark which was the original maximum term set by the legislature for sentencing that was later changed to 21 years old, or the discretion of the Board of Managers.

Other examples of boys who died shortly after arriving at the school include:

- **Guy Hudson** was a 16 year old white boy who was committed to the school on 7/15/1921 and subsequently ran away three times: July 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>, and 27<sup>th</sup> (caught the same day). Each time, he was caught and returned to the school. On the third attempt, Hudson appears to have run away with three other boys. One escaped and there is no record of him being caught or returning to FIS. The other two boys were paroled a year later. Hudson drowned 18 days after returning to the school, only 30 days after first arriving to FIS. His body was shipped home to his father for burial, according to his death certificate.
- **Alphonse Glover** died 10 days after arriving at FIS. Very little is known about Glover as his death occurred in 1966 and the school and death records for him are not public record. In the school training manual, Edwards wrote (1968;46), “On August 13, 1966 student Alphonse Glover’s body was found at the bottom of the swimming pool. He had been at the school only 10 days at the time of death. No one ever found out what had happened.” It is unknown at this time if he was autopsied or presumed drowned. The cause and manner of his death are unknown.
- **Thomas Varnadoe** at age 13 years was admitted to FIS along with his older brother, Hubert from Brooksville, Florida (Figure 43). They were charged with “malicious trespassing”. Thomas died 34 days later on 10/26/1934. According to the death certificate, he died of pneumonia with a possible contributing cause anemia. Varnadoe’s death was written about in the school newspaper, *The Yellow Jacket* (“Thomas Varnadoe Claimed by Death” *The Yellow Jacket*, November 3, 1934, Vol. V, No. 3). The article states that he was in poor health for many years prior to his death and that the funeral was well attended by a large number of administrators and boys from the school. The family of Thomas Varnadoe, including their surviving brother (Joseph Richard Varnadoe) and nephew (Glen Richard Varnadoe), who is Hubert’s son, were both interviewed through



the course of this project (Interview September 4, 2012). The Varnadoe family disagrees with the account written in the school’s *Yellow Jacket*. They state that Thomas was a healthy child and that his death came as a devastating shock to the family who was notified a week after the funeral about his death. Hubert, who was still incarcerated at the time, later told his mother that a minister, a grave digger, and himself were the only people at the funeral. He further told his brother Richard that Thomas was buried near a large tree on the school grounds.

Figure 43. Image of Hubert and Thomas Varnadoe (age 3 years).

According to the school newspaper, Dr. C.B. Toombs, Pastor of 1st Presbyterian Church of Marianna officiated the funeral. Over the years, various members of the Varnadoe family attempted to contact administrators about Thomas' death and visited the institution on different occasions in order to visit Thomas' grave, though administrators could not actually show them his grave as the graves were not marked. On one visit, a school employee showed Glen Varnadoe the Boot Hill cemetery along with a second location and told him that based on time when his uncle died he was likely buried in a different location than the main burial grounds.

Figure 44 shows the average yearly number of boys incarcerated plotted against the number of runaways. Data on the number of students and runaways comes from Lundrigan (1975) and begins in 1914 though school opened in 1900. Overall the trend for substantial inmate growth at the institution is evident. Many of the dips in the number of inmates follow events that also resulted in higher mortality rates. For example the population size decreases in 1915, 1921, 1927, early 1930s, and 1968-69. These dates are also notable because they follow the fire of 1914, several infectious disease outbreaks, and the end of segregation and corporal punishment (late 1960s).

It is documented in legislative notes for periods that followed such events, and at times when the institution was over capacity and had more boys than resources to care for them, measures were taken to drastically reduce the number of boys such as releasing mass numbers of boys home to their parents, paroling boys for labor at nearby farms and businesses, or transferring them to other institutions. Legislative documents at different times from 1918 through the 1950s state boys were released in mass because the school lacked resources to care for the sick or was too over-crowded. However, several examples are provided where the Board attempted to release a significant number of boys at various times, upwards of 80-100 boys at once but families could not be located as the boys were dependents.

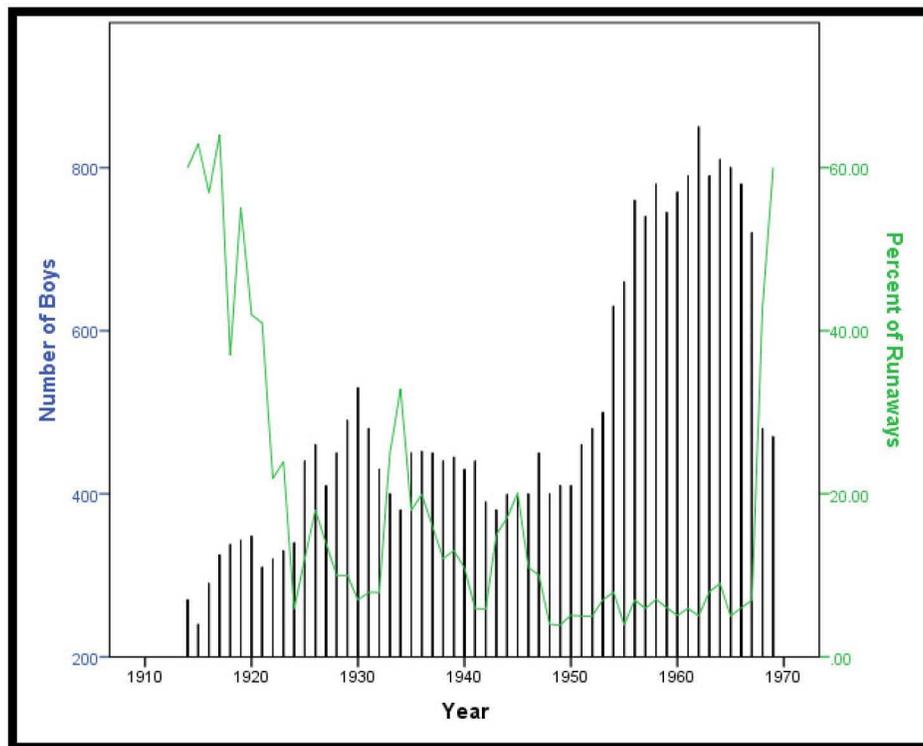


Figure 44. Number of total students over time plotted against the frequency of escapes.

Table 10. List of Boys that Died Following Escape (n=7).

Name	Age	Date of Death	DC	Circumstances	Superintendent
Lee Gaalsby	13	10/6/1918	No	Unknown	Fulford
Thomas E. Curry	15	12/11/1925	Yes	Blunt Trauma	Knight
Oscar Elvis Murphy	15	10/7/1932	Yes	Hit by Car	Davidson
George Owen Smith	14	1/24/1941	No	Unknown	Davidson
Robert Jerald Hewett	16	4/4/1960	Yes	Gunshot Wounds	Dozier
Raymond A. Phillips	17	9/15/1961	Yes	Gunshot Wound	Dozier
James Lee Frederic	--	1966	--	Auto Accident	Williams

Following the Influenza outbreak in 1918, there are numerous ledger entries that state “Mother Carried Him Home”. Whether or not these boys survived their illness once they were home is not known. There is one ledger entry later in time (1920) that does indicate Henry Murphy died after being furloughed home due to illness however his exact illness and the specific circumstances are not known, no death certificate was issued and the assumption is that he was buried at home by his family.

- **Henry Murphy** was a 16 year old colored boy who was admitted to the school on 10/23/1919. Murphy was sentenced for incorrigibility for a term of one year. Almost immediately after arriving at the school he ran away on 11/1/1919 and then returned twenty-eight days later. The circumstances of his escape are not known. The ledger states “Died at home, furloughed to mother because sick”. His home was Palm Beach and according to school records he died on 7/2/1920, less than a year after first being committed to FIS.

The discharge ledgers provide a detailed accounting of boys on a daily basis with a head count, including who was “received” or admitted to the school, “runaway”, “returned”, “paroled”, “furloughed”, “discharged”, or “died”. The record ledgers also list dates of escapes and returns to the school. Based on the record ledgers, data for runaways was surveyed but was so prevalent it was beyond the scope of this analysis to summarize. However, seven cases were found in which boys escaped and died (Table 12). Records indicate that among our sample, 17 or 26.5% had escaped at least once. Five of these boys had escaped more than once and were returned to the school. Within these cases, ten (10) boys are white and six (6) boys are colored. In addition to Smith who was discussed previously, these boys also died after running away:

- **Lee Gaalsby** was a 13 year old white boy who was committed to the school for delinquency on 4/26/1918 from Hillsborough County. Gaalsby ran away on 10/6/1918 and died that day from an unknown cause. The ledger only stated that he escaped and died. There is no record of the cause of death or location of burial.
- **Thomas Curry** was a 15 year old white boy who died on December 11, 1925. According the school ledger, Curry was admitted to FIS on 11/12/1925, twenty-nine days prior to his death. He had been sentenced to FIS for Delinquency from Dade County, “Until Further Notice by Court”. He ran away from the school on December 10. The ledger entry states, “Killed on RR Bridge Chattahoochee, Fla.” His death certificate

states the cause of death resulted from blunt trauma, "...verdict of coroner [L. H. Sanders, Coroner]: came to his death from a wound to the forehead, skull crushed from unknown cause". The time listed between injury and death, according to the death certificate is 30 minutes, and is certified by Dr. B.F. Barnes from Chattahoochee, FL. His location of death was River Junction, Gadsden County. His body was shipped to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania for burial by an undertaker in Chattahoochee.

- **Oscar Elvis Murphy** was a 15 year old white boy who died November 7, 1932. Murphy died after escaping from the school. This was Murphy's third attempt to run away, the first time he returned by his own accord. However, the third escape shows no return date. The ledger states, "deceased died 10/7/1932 as result of auto accident". Murphy had been committed to the school for incorrigibility on 6/10/1932 for a period of "Until legally discharged". According to the death certificate, Murphy is buried in Oak Grove cemetery outside Wauchula in Hardee County. He was accidentally hit by a car which fractured his right hip, the duration of the illness as listed on the DC states 2 days. He died in the Wauchula Infirmary.
- **Raymond Alex Phillips** was a 17 year old white boy who was committed to the school 4/17/1961 for larceny from Alachua County until "legally discharged". Phillips died on 9/15/1961 after his second attempt to run away. Phillips first ran away 8/14/61 and was returned on 9/9/61. Phillips again escaped on 9/14/61 and died the next day due to a gunshot wound to the head. An Alachua County Sheriff's deputy shot Phillips who was apparently running away from him during his escape. It is reported that the deputy tried to fire warning shots over Phillips' head when he was struck.
- **Robert Jerald Hewett** was a 16 year old white boy who entered FIS on 3/22/1960 (Figure 45-47). The FIS ledgers confirm that Hewett was admitted and then on March 25 was temporarily released to the Jackson Hospital. He returned to FIS the following day on March 26 and then on April 2, he ran away. The ledger and death certificate indicate he died two days later on April 4. All of this information comes from the daily ledger, as the record ledgers for this time are not public record. Hewett's death certificate states the manner of death is "unknown" and the cause of death is "gunshot wounds in chest inflicted by person or persons unknown". Hewett was buried in Cypress Baptist Church next to his mother who had died two years prior. Witness accounts about the circumstances surrounding Hewett's death report that he was found shot with a 12 gauge shotgun. According to witnesses at the time, authorities believed Hewett committed suicide but did not perform an autopsy or investigate the death. However, his family believed that he was shot by someone who came looking for him following his escape. No other information including a coroner's report, court records or police incident reports could be located through this investigation.

In a report obtained through this study from forensic pathologists (Hair and Chrostowski 2012) who reviewed Hewett's case, they stated the following (refer to appendix for full letter:

Hewett's death certificate is incorrect by today's standards: once a person dies due to gunshot wound(s) inflicted by another person, his manner of death is classified as homicide, i.e. "death from hands of other person, regardless of intent". Such classifications do not indicate "murder", "manslaughter" or other variations, which are of interest to the judicial system rather than medical examiner. Examination of R.J. Hewett's remains is recommended because if there was skeletal trauma, it would be possible to learn about the projectile trajectory, shedding a light on possible circumstances of the incident.

3	30	60	James Lee Palmer	3651A	Reid	Hillboro	379
3	30	60	Michael Bunting	3652A	Reid	Hillboro	380
3	30	60	Steve Clyde Johnson	3653A	Reid	Hillboro	381
3	30	60	Theo Edenfield	3654A	Reid	Hillboro	382
3	31	60	Lamel Edward McDonald	3655A	Reid	Marion	383
3	31	60	Clayton Ellerbee		Runaway		382
3	31	60	John White		Runaway		381
3	31	60	Claude Simmons		Runaway		380
4	1	60	James Lee Palmer	3656A	Reid	Hillboro	381
4	2	60	Robert Hewett		Runaway		380
4	4	60	Robert J. Hewett		Deceased off campus		380
4	4	60	Jesse James Hall		Term Release		379
4	5	60	Hughie David Koney	3657A	Reid	Paoli	380
4	5	60	Chas. Ronald Tomlinson	3658A	Reid	Paoli	381

Figure 45. Discharge ledger, now located in the State Archives, showing entries for Robert Hewett who ran away and died in April 1960 (Florida School for Boys, Student Ledgers: Vol. 22).

STATE BOARD OF HEALTH BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS		CERTIFICATE OF DEATH FLORIDA		STATE FILE NO. <b>'60-038965</b>
1. PLACE OF DEATH 2. COUNTY <b>Jackson</b>		3. CODE NO. <b>42 XX</b>	4. USUAL RESIDENCE (If not usual, residence) 5. STATE <b>Florida</b> 6. COUNTY <b>Jackson</b>	
7. IS ROAD OF DEATH INDEX CITY LIMITED YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		8. CITY, TOWN, OR LOCATION <b>Cypress</b>		9. IS RESIDENCE INDEX CITY LIMITED YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
10. NAME OF HOSPITAL OR INSTITUTION <b>Route 1</b>		11. LENGTH OF STAY IN IS <b>Life</b>		12. STREET ADDR. <b>Route 1</b>
13. NAME OF DECEASED (Type of name) <b>Robert Jerald Hewett</b>		14. DATE OF DEATH <b>April 4, 1960</b>		15. SEX <b>Male</b>
16. COLOR OR RACE <b>White</b>		17. MARRIED <input type="checkbox"/> NEVER MARRIED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		18. DATE OF BIRTH <b>June 19, 1943</b>
19. SOCIAL OCCUPATION (One given, one done during year of reporting, one if followed) <b>Student</b>		20. KIND OF BUSINESS OR INDUSTRY <b>Florida School for Boys</b>		21. BIRTHPLACE (State or foreign country) <b>Florida</b>
22. FATHER'S NAME <b>Roy Hewett</b>		23. MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME <b>Lois V. Crawford</b>		24. CITIZEN OF WHAT COUNTRY? <b>USA</b>
25. WAS DECEASED EVER IN U.S. ARMED FORCES? (If yes, see date of service) <b>no</b>		26. SOCIAL SECURITY NO. <b>none</b>		27. INFORMANT'S SIGNATURE <b>Roy Hewett</b> Address <b>Grand Ridge, Fla. Rt. 1</b>
28. CAUSE OF DEATH (Enter only one cause per line for (a), (b), and (c).) PART I. DEATH WAS CAUSED BY: IMMEDIATE CAUSE (a) <b>Gun shot wounds in Chest. Inflicted by person or persons unknown.</b> Conditions, if any, which gave rise to above cause (b) _____ DUE TO (c) _____ PART II. OTHER SIGNIFICANT CONDITIONS CONTRIBUTING TO DEATH BUT NOT RELATED TO THE TERMINAL DISMAL CONDITION GIVEN IN PART I (a) _____				29. INTERVAL BETWEEN ONSET AND DEATH <b>no</b>
30a. INJURY UNKNOWN 30b. DESCRIBE HOW INJURY OCCURRED: (Enter nature of injury in Part I for Part II if items II.) <b>Unknown</b>		31. TIME OF DEATH <b>12:00 P.M.</b>		
32. INJURY OCCURRED WHILE AT WORK <input type="checkbox"/> NOT WHILE AT WORK <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		33. PLACE OF INJURY (e.g., in or about home, farm, factory, street, office, etc.) <b>Cypress, Jackson, Fla.</b>		
34. I certify that the deceased died on <b>April 4, 1960</b> at <b>12:00 P.M.</b> on the date stated above, and to the best of my knowledge, from the causes stated.		35. SIGNATURE <b>Carole M. Mearns</b>		
36. FURNAL DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE <b>D. F. Neal</b>		37. DATE RECEIVED BY LOCAL REG. <b>10/11/60</b>		38. REGISTRAR'S SIGNATURE <b>Shirley C. Hunt, Deputy</b>

Figure 46. Image of Robert J. Hewett's death certificate.



Figure 47. Hewett was buried next to his mother who preceded him in death. He was buried by his father who had a death certificate issued.

Billey Jackson and Michael Smelley are not listed with the boys who died while running away from the school as no record of escape was listed in the school ledgers however the circumstances surrounding their deaths were reported by witnesses. People who knew these two boys have reported that they had run away from the school and were caught and returned to the school. In both instances, witnesses state they believe the attempts for escape contributed to the boy's deaths. While there is a significant amount of data in the ledgers regarding escapes, it was not always recorded. For example, the first attempt of Smith to escape was not listed in the ledgers however correspondence between him and his parents, as well as information given to local newspapers following his death by school administrators, stated he had in fact escaped twice.

- **Michael Smelley** was a 17 year old white boy who died 3/15/1966. His death certificate indicates he died of "carcinoma of the spine and lungs" about a year after his second incarceration at the school. Witnesses allege he was beaten severely following an attempted escape and that immediately afterwards he was unable to walk (Montgomery 2009). Several days later he was admitted to the Raiford prison hospital and later transferred to the Health Center at the University of Florida. Smelley had a history of "carcinoma" and prior to entering FIS in 1965 had a tumor removed from his spine. In spite of this, and the fact he was slightly mentally disabled, he was again sentenced to the school after allegedly stealing comic books and candy (Montgomery 2009). During Michael's first commitment when he was 12 years old, there is no record of escape. The files for his second commitment at the school are not public record and therefore not available for this study.

Following Michael's death, his family obtained counsel who tried to investigate whether the alleged beating contributed to Smelley's death. In Montgomery's 2009 investigation, he posed the question as to "...whether a blow or multiple blows to a spinal tumor could aggravate the tumor or cause paralysis or even accelerate the spread of the cancer and lead to early death?" (Montgomery 2009). Based on the questions and search for answers by the family and the fact we included other boys who died off the school grounds due to attempted escapes, furloughs or transfers, we included Smelley in this study and review of Smelley's case by forensic pathologists Hair and Chrostowski (2012, refer to Appendix for the full review):

The acceleration of the spread of a neoplasm by beating is not likely and very speculative. The hospital records available from the University of Florida does not indicate trauma. Our conclusion is that Smelley died a natural death, due to malignant neoplasm. This of course does not exclude a possibility of being beaten; however, if a beating occurred, it cannot be linked with this person's cause of death.

- **Billey Jackson** was a 13 year old colored boy who was admitted to the school on 8/8/1952 for theft and running away from home. Billey was charged and sentenced to the school with 16 year old Oscar Dixon. The boys were sentenced to “12 months or until legally discharged”. The ledger entries stated “Deceased” for Jackson and discharged to mother on 4/21/1952 for Dixon. Jackson died about two months after arriving at the school on 10/07/1952 at the Jackson County Hospital (Figure 48). His death certificate states he died of “Pylonephritis” and the onset equaled 10 days. An autopsy was performed by Dr. Whitaker, the school’s physician, although no copy of it could be located during this study. According to forensic pathologists who reviewed this case (Hair and Chrostowski 2012, refer to attached report in Appendix):

Pyelonephritis is a form of ascending urinary tract infection, which may affect one or both kidneys. It is usually associated with urine retention, and can indeed be fatal. The obstruction of flow initiating the pathology may result from a congenital condition, e.g. inadequate valve mechanism at the junction of the ureters and the bladder, or obstruction of the ureter(s) due to urolithiasis, i.e. kidney stones, or trauma.

Two witnesses (Johnnie Walthour Interview May 9, 2012 and Woodrow Williams Interview November 8, 2012) stated that Jackson was “beat real bad” and “punched in the stomach” about two weeks prior to his death after attempting to escape from the school for the second time. According to Walthour, Jackson escaped from the school twice and both times was caught and punished. Several days later, his stomach was distended and when Walthour asked Jackson what was wrong, he stated that they had “beat him real bad this time”. Several days passed but Walthour had not seen Jackson and so inquired as to his whereabouts. Walthour was told that Jackson was in the hospital. About two weeks later, he learned Jackson died and that he would help dig his grave. Walthour and several fellow students piled into the back of a tractor drawn cart and rode up to “Boot Hill” where they proceeded to dig Jackson’s grave. He stated that Jackson was buried in a coffin and that a minister and the few boys who helped dig the grave were present. Walthour did not remember family present at the funeral.

In a second and entirely separate interview, Woodrow Williams also described Jackson and his funeral. Williams stated that a number of boys were present at Jackson’s funeral which was located up on Boot Hill. He said that the burial ground was a large open field alongside a wooded area and that likely 30-40 depressions could be seen in the ground from prior burials. Williams said that he knew Jackson had run away and believed that his beating caused his death. Williams stated that at the time people did not openly talk about the death or what happened but that they knew he had been missing before he died. Also consistent with Walthour, Williams stated that there were several funerals in the years 1951-52 but the reason Jackson stood out was that he was so small and always had been picked on combined with the fact he had been missing. Neither Williams nor Walthour recognized the photo obtained from the state archives of a funeral ca. 1950s. If there was more than one burial in the early 1950s it could be possible this represents a funeral other than Jackson’s.

CERTIFICATE OF DEATH				STATE FILE NO. 24002	
FLORIDA				REGISTRATION NO.	
1. PLACE OF DEATH a. COUNTY Jackson		CODE NO. 42-13	2. USUAL RESIDENCE a. STATE Florida		
b. CITY OR TOWN Marianna		c. LENGTH OF STAY (in months or weeks) 1 week	b. CITY OR TOWN MARIANNA		
d. FULL NAME OF HOSPITAL OR INSTITUTION Jackson Co. Hospital		d. STREET ADDRESS Fla. Industrial School			
3. NAME OF DECEASED a. (First) Billy		b. (Middle) JACKSON		c. (Last) JACKSON	
4. SEX Male		5. DATE OF BIRTH Feb. 15, 1939		6. DATE OF DEATH Oct 7, 1952	
7. MARRIED, NEVER MARRIED, WIDOWED, DIVORCED, <del>NEVER MARRIED</del>		8. AGE (in years, if under 1 year, give birth date) 13		9. AGE (in years, if under 1 year, give birth date) 13	
10a. USUAL OCCUPATION Student		10b. KIND OF BUSINESS OR INDUSTRY		11. BIRTHPLACE (State or foreign country) Fla.	
12. FATHER'S NAME B. J. JACKSON		13. MOTHER'S MARRIED NAME Suzie Jackson			
14. WAS DECEASED EVER IN U. S. ARMED SERVICES? No		15. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER None		16. INFORMANT'S SIGNATURE J. H. Lykes	
17. CAUSE OF DEATH		MEDICAL CERTIFICATION		INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATE	
17a. DISEASE OR CONDITION DIRECTLY LEADING TO DEATH Pyle nephritis		17b. ANTECEDENT CAUSES		17c. OTHER SIGNIFICANT CONDITIONS	
17d. DATE OF OPERATION		17e. NATURE/FINISH OF OPERATION		18. AUTOPSY? YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
19. PLACE OF INJURY		20. CITY OR TOWN		21. COUNTY	
22. TIME OF INJURY		23. INJURY OCCURRED		24. HOW DID INJURY OCCUR?	
25. I hereby certify that I attended the deceased from Oct 4, 1952 until Oct 7, 1952 that I last saw the deceased on Oct 7, 1952 and that death occurred at 2:55 P.M. from the causes and on the date stated above.					
26. SIGNATURE (Physician) [Signature]		27. ADDRESS Marianna, Fla.		28. DATE SIGNED Oct 10, 1952	
29. PERMITAL, CREMA. NO. DATE		30. NAME OF CEMETERY OR CREMATORY		31. LOCATION (City, State, or precinct) LOCAL	
32. REMOVAL (Date) Oct. 11, 1952		33. Fla. Industrial School Cemetery, MARIANNA		34. LOCAL REGISTRAR'S SIGNATURE	
35. LOCAL REGISTRAR'S SIGNATURE		36. STATE REGISTRAR'S SIGNATURE		37. ADDRESS	
38. LOCAL REGISTRAR'S SIGNATURE		39. STATE REGISTRAR'S SIGNATURE		40. ADDRESS	

Figure 48. Image of death certificate for Billy Jackson.

## The 1914 Fire

The most significant events that resulted in a high number of fatalities include the fire of 1914 and several outbreaks of infectious diseases in 1918 and 1934. The first record of any burial at the Florida Industrial School are newspaper articles and a telegram regarding the 1914 fire in which the dormitory on the south campus burned down (Figure 49). During the early morning hours of November 18, 1914, a fatal fire broke out in the dormitory on the south campus. Three investigations followed, each of which shifted the cause of the fire and blame for the deaths. Even the number of children who perished differs among the reports. Through ethnographic research in the 1970s, several interviews with people who had been present at the fire were compiled which recount the events in more detail. The summary findings of these reports are described here. Moreover, an expert opinion as to the cause and circumstances of the fire as it may possibly relate to the fatalities was provided by Tampa Fire Investigators Christopher Stone and Al Alcalá and their findings are attached in Appendix A.

### The Structure

The summary information, historical background on the details of the structure come from ethnographic interviews conducted by Lundrigan (1975) describe the fire and events following it with regard to the deaths and burials of the fire victims and Edwards (1969). In 1887, when the Florida legislature passed a law to create F.I.S., outlined the structure of the new institution. The following year, three companies submitted bids to construct two dormitories, which were to be identical in size and structure. The school was to be segregated and separate campuses were used to house the boys. A total of \$10,000 was allocated for the construction of the two buildings. The accepted bid came from S.S. Leonard Company of Jacksonville for \$13,000. The additional sum needed for construction was appropriated and state funds raised through the Convict Lease system were used. An additional \$5,000 was allotted, though construction was delayed due to problems with subcontractors who were described as "embarrassed in their operation."

The buildings were identical when constructed and located on the hilltops of each campus, a mile apart, per the law's requirement for segregation. Each dorm was 150 feet long and 50 feet wide. The dormitory on the south campus, faced north. Each building was three stories high, constructed of red brick and built to house sixty-four boys and administrators. It is described as being constructed with a "deep foundation, strong walls, and three floors." Inside the building, all the walls, doors, stairs and internal features were wood. Each floor had a hallway to the main staircase. The 1<sup>st</sup> floor consisted of the kitchen and dining room and the east end included an assembly room, washrooms, and offices. The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor consisted of three dormitories for sleeping 64 boys. At the time of the fire, 93 boys were sleeping there. The first dormitory (referred to No. 1) was smaller in size and housed the youngest children, typically 6-10 years old. Several small rooms were also present to house the men who worked at the school. According to Edwards (1969), the fatality count (n=7) was as follows: Dorm No. 1 = youngest boys and 1 death; Dorm No. 2 = no deaths; and Dorm No. 3 = 6 deaths.

Note that different accounts of the fire list different numbers of fatalities, ranging from 6-12 boys and staff killed. The 3<sup>rd</sup> floor consisted of the superintendent's living quarters, hospital rooms, and several "dark rooms" which were used for discipline and solitary confinement. It was here on the third floor where boys were locked in rooms and unable to escape the fire according to the investigative reports at the time and interviews in the 1970s by Lundrigan.

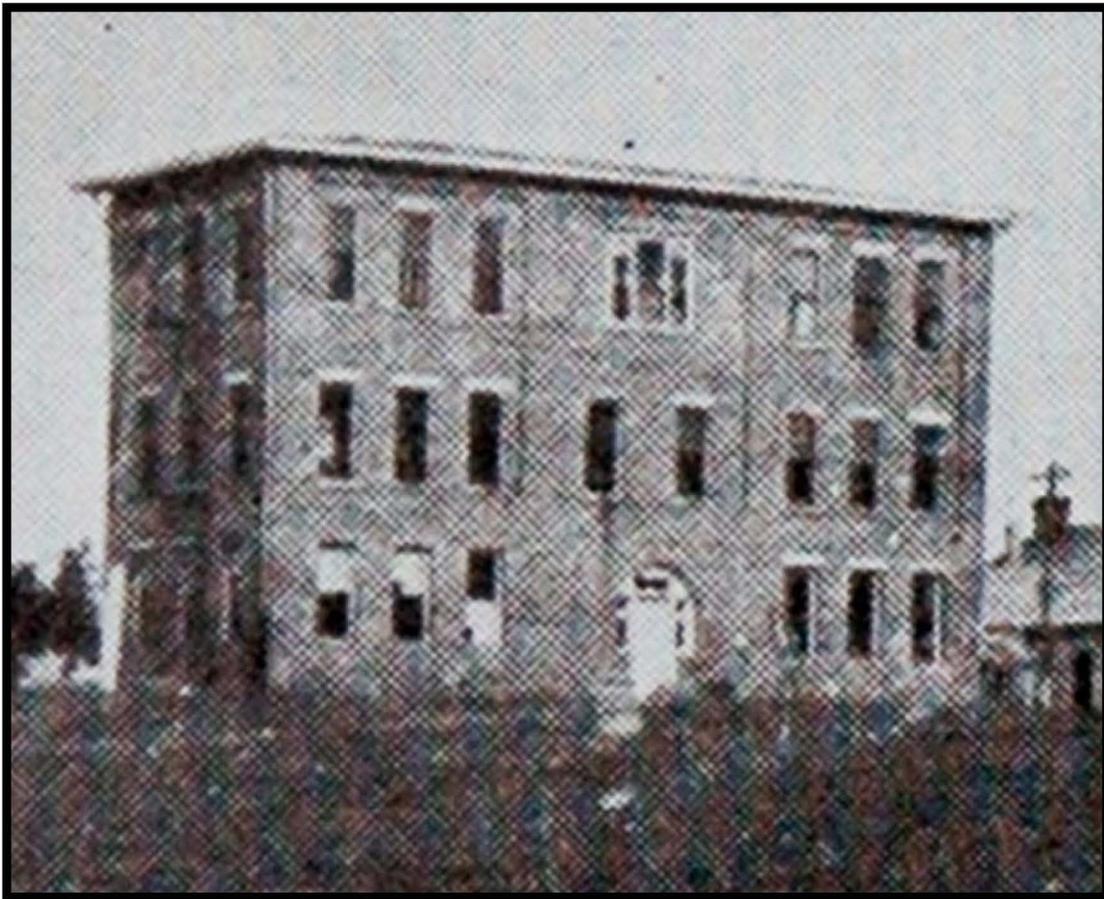


Figure 49. Dormitory identical to the one that burned in 1914, located on the North School (photograph comes from *The Light* 1921, Florida State Archives).

### **Fire Investigation**

In 1913, the 6<sup>th</sup> legislative investigative committee since 1901 reported on the state of the institution and treatment of the children detained there (Lundrigan 1975). They reported that all of the windows were heavily barred and that one doorway led from the hallway to the stair rail. They further warned that if there was a fire, there would be no way for people to escape the second or third floors of the building or to survive. Their report called for the addition of fire escapes, additional doors and to end the practice of chaining children for restraint. These recommendations were signed into law June 5, 1913.

Following this, two additions were constructed on the building, each two stories high and located on the south side of the building according to the Board of Managers who issued a report following the fire. Note that these modifications were made to the dormitory on the south campus for the white boys, but no safety modifications were made to the housing for colored boys located on the north campus. The identical building to the one burned (prior to its 1913 modifications) is shown in Figure 49, obtained from the Florida State Archives (*The Light* 1921, Florida State Archives). The two additional wings had fire escape doors though they were

always kept locked. Following the fire, boys stated all the doors were locked and they had to break the locks to get out of the building.

The fire was first discovered by an employee who was sleeping on the second floor and heard a noise, "a loud roar". He discovered the fire near the main stairwell and sounded the alarm. The boys in all three dormitories were awakened and taken to the western stairwell where they were able to exit the building. According to the report issued by the Board, the majority of people were able to safely exit the building. They stated that boys did not encounter smoke and that there were no injuries, except for the fatalities.

Details regarding why fatalities occurred and the circumstances surrounding the fire are less clear. Depending on the source, the number of casualties, the names of the victims, and specific circumstances about how death occurred varies. The investigative reports are summarized in the following discussion. According to the Lundrigan (1975), the fire killed 8 boys and 2 employees. Lundrigan's data comes from the coroner's jury, an internal FIS report (Edwards, 1969), and ethnographic interviews. In his report, Lundrigan also details the FIS Board of Managers' report.

The Board of Managers issued a report the same day as the coroner's report was made public stating that per the legislative act in 1913, they had added two fire escape doors on the south campus dormitory first floor. The doors were kept locked but the keys were kept in the main office on the first floor, and all staff knew about the keys. After midnight, O.G. Marston heard a roaring noise and discovered the first floor ablaze. Boys were sleeping on the second floor and were taken to the second stairwell on the west end of the building. No one went downstairs for keys. They realized some boys were on the third floor, but by that time the fire spread throughout the interior and they were not able to retrieve the keys. To exit, several boys knocked the lock off the fire escape to get out. The fire was believed to have started from a wood stove which had a broken leg and although unstable, was set on a wood floor and that fire combined with kerosene lamps hanging on the walls. The fire was made worse, according to the Board, by strong winds blowing in a northerly direction into the front of the building. They state that 93 boys and 10 employees lived in the building at the time of the fire.

The Board's report, issued by its President W.H. Miller, provided an opinion about the men and boys that died and the circumstances surrounding the events, including the following. Messer Evans and his son, both employees of FIS, died after returning to the building to look for each other and in their search, perished. They are described as "heroes." Several boys are also described as heroes for assisting with the rescue: Severina Vinterrez (Tampa), ToTo Walter Tucker (Bowling Green), and Perry Jones (West Palm Beach).

Among the child fatalities, 8 boys were noted as missing including Earl Morris, who the Board claimed witnesses saw him outside the building following the fire, after which he ran away. The Board's report officially states that six died, including a boy who was "demented" and was taken to safety, but allegedly re-entered the school to get a blanket and did not make it out alive. Joe Weatherby was a 17 year old who also allegedly re-entered the school to go to the third floor because he thought Superintendent Bell was inside sleeping and therefore was described as a hero who died in search of Mr. Bell. The telegram to Weatherby's mother is one of the surviving documents from this incident. It is also worth noting that the ledgers do not list any of the boys who perished as the current books do not have systematic records prior to 1919.

Edwards' report (1969) describes the duties of administrators and the superintendent, including restraining boys when confinement was necessary. Edwards states that three of the four men who were responsible for the boys were in town when the fire occurred. The

implication is that they had locked or chained the boys on the third floor and had the only keys with them off the school grounds when the fire broke out.

The Florida Legislative Committee conducted an investigation and found that the fire escapes were all locked, there had been no fire drills or preventative measures for safety, and no watchmen on duty. The administrators, including the superintendent and several staff members, were away from the school. Boy's stated that all the doors had been locked, including the fire escapes. An additional witness, Mrs. McBride who lived near the school at the time of the fire told state investigators in 1974 that Superintendent Bell had the only set of keys when he left the school and went to town (Lundrigan 1975). As a result of their investigation, Superintendent Bell was terminated.

The Jackson County Coroner also conducted a coroner's jury and issued a report the same day as the Board of Managers. Notably, this report lists a different set of names among the casualties (Table 12). Further, it lists John Milton, Jr. as one of the Jurors.

According to witness accounts and ethnographic interviews conducted by Lundrigan (1975) Mrs. Vivian Stubbs (age 2 years) was a child at the FLS as her father worked there and he was present during the fire. Stubbs told Lundrigan that the windows all had bars on them and that the children were trapped in the school. She said that the wood floors inside collapsed and the doomed boys were hurtled to their deaths. She also noted that her father always said he would never forget the boys' screams as they fell to their deaths.

W.S. Bowles was also present at the school in the early morning after the fire with his father, who worked there, and spoke about the incident to Lundrigan (1975). Bowles said that in the early morning following the fire, only charred unidentified trunks of bodies containing unburned hearts were recovered and that one of the workers killed was identified by a blue patch of material from his clothing, a workers uniform. George Robinson, an employee at the time of fire and son-in-law to Superintendent Knight is alleged to have attempted to free boys by climbing onto the roof to cut a hole in it and drop a set of keys down to the boys who were locked inside. This information came from Bowles in his interview. In 1929, George Robinson was working at the school as the farm manager and throughout the years is listed on DC as an undertaker. Interestingly, one of the newspaper articles (the Miami Herald pictured in Figure 30) describes how boys had to climb through skylights to reach safety. The existence of skylights was not discussed in any of the other records and so it is unknown whether this occurred or may be a reference to holes cut into the roof in an attempt to rescue boys.

November 21, 1914  
Miami Herald, p. 4.

#### FIX THE RESPONSIBILITY

Two instances of how the lamentable fire at the boys' school at Marianna affect the families and friends of those who lost their lives in that deplorable accident, are told in the Tampa Tribune:

Clifford Jeffords, 15 years old, was the son of a widow at Clearwater, and no other charge than playing truant from school was lodged against him when he was sent to the reform school.

"Mrs. Fred Wetherbee, care Probation Officer: Dormitories of industrial school burned last night. Ten lives lost. Among the dead was your son, Joe Wetherbee. Bodies charred beyond identification. Will be buried here. Greatest sympathy to family.

"W. H. BELL, Acting Superintendent."

Immediately upon receiving the information Mr. Lanier located Mr. Wetherbee, who is employed at the shops of the Seaboard Air Line railroad. The sad news was told to the father and Mr. Lanier went personally to the home of the family on Day street to offer words of sympathy to the family. The boy's mother was frantic with grief when she learned the terrible news.

For playing truant from school a boy is placed within the care of the state, under the law. The state houses him in a building where there is insufficient fire protection. It neglects to see that a competent watchman is employed to guard the premises at night. It permits the use of an oil lamp at night. It sends the boys to the third story of the building, and, to make matters certain for the inevitable horror, locks them in so that they have to climb through a skylight to obtain safety.

Some of them had not the time to save their lives, and eight boys perished.

It is certain that the parents of those boys will suffer all the sorrows at the horrible fate of their children than they would had their sons lost their lives in some college in the north.

It is said that the state can do no wrong. The people of Florida would be glad to know that the state is not responsible for the death of those eight boys who lost their lives in the Marianna fire. Furthermore, they want to be assured that the investigation into the accident is thorough and that the responsibility for the accident will be fixed.

Figure 50. Newspaper article listing casualties in 1914 fire, reprinted from the FDLE investigative report (2009).

November 19, 1914  
Idaho Statesman (ID), p. 1.

# REFORM SCHOOL BURNS; INMATES LOSE LIVES

Ten Persons Perish in Destruction of Florida State Institution at Marianna.

ESCAPE DOORS LOCKED

Hundred Get Away Through Skylights and Down Sides on Fire Escapes.

MARIANNA, Fla. — Ten persons were burned to death here Wednesday when fire destroyed the main building of the Florida reform school. Nearly a hundred boys escaped by climbing through a skylight and down the sides of the three-story building on fire escapes. The dead are:

BENNETT EVANS, instructor in carpentry.  
CHARLES EVANS, guard.  
EARL MORRIS.  
JOSEPH WEATHERS.  
CLIFFORD GLEFFORDS.  
LOUIS HAPPIN.  
LOUIS FERNANDEZ.  
WALTER FISHER.  
WALDRO DREW.  
CLARENCE PARROTT, inmates of institution.

According to a statement telegraphed to Governor Trammell Wednesday night by Acting Superintendent William Bell, all fire escape doors in the section where deaths occurred were locked when the fire was discovered. Governor Trammell has telegraphed President W. H. Miller of the board of directors of the school, asking for an investigation.

The fire is thought to have been caused by an explosion of an oil lamp on the first floor.

Figure 51. Newspaper article listing casualties in 1914 fire, reprinted from the FDLE investigative report (2009).

## Possible Origin of Fire

Several possible explanations were offered as to the cause of the fire in the numerous investigations that were carried out. At first, arson was suspected. According to the *Pensacola Journal*, prior attempts to burn down the dormitory had been made several months earlier. Then, on the day of the fire, George Coldwell, of Laurel Hill, Florida, was named as the possible arsonist. His son was in custody at FIS and had run away from the school. Mr. Coldwell had tried to release his son several days prior to the fire and allegedly threatened to blow up the building if his son wasn't released. The Board of Managers tried to make a case for arson but a grand jury later exonerated Coldwell. Following the fire, his son was released. Other possible causes of the fire include:

### 1. Paint, Oily Rags and Dynamite

The interior of the building was constructed of wood and a portion of it had been freshly painted. Apparently the paint was not dry and may have contributed to the rapid acceleration of the fire. Greasy oil rags were also left behind as a result of the painting. In addition, dynamite was stored in a locker under the stairwell which may have ignited by spontaneous combustion.

### 2. Dilapidated Stove

An old, broken wood burning stove had been brought into the building. Reportedly it had three legs and in place of the fourth leg, the stove was held up with bricks. Despite the condition of the stove, apparently it was used to help heat the dorm on a cold night. A fire had been burning in the stove when the staff went to bed. The stove was on top of a wood floor and may have started the floor on fire. In addition, kerosene oil lamps hung in the stairwell and halls for light.

For a greater discussion of the possible origin of the fire and the more likely scenarios, refer to report provided by Stone and Alcalá (2012) in the Appendix. There was a continuous problem with fires and barns burning down in the years leading up to 1914. The reason for these fires ranged from arson by disgruntled employees to natural fires. To combat this problem, in 1906 a cypress water tank was built. In a 1972 interview, the Marianna Fire Department reported that in 1914 they had a horse drawn Model A Ford with a booster pump with which they responded to the fire, however they arrived too late (Lundrigan 1975). At the time of the interview in 1974, Lundrigan reports the Marianna Fire Department did not have any records of the fire.

## Fire Fatalities

According to witnesses, the structure of the building was demolished the morning after the fire (Lundrigan 1975). In terms of human remains, the newspaper and the only surviving telegram to families states the bodies were burned beyond recognition and buried on the school grounds. In a 1972 interview of FIS employees, Lundrigan reports that the victims of the fire were buried on top of a hill in an area known as "Cedar Hill". The surviving 84 white boys were "marched to the colored campus and crowded into the dorms" where they stayed until a new dormitory was built (Lundrigan 1975:106). Note that prior to the fire, the 1913 Legislative report states 93 white boys were present at the school. According to Lundrigan (1975), there were 84 white boys at the school following the fire, which is a difference of nine (9) boys. Nine

boys are listed as victims of the fire in the Idaho Statesman (1914, pictured in Figure 5) and is in contrast to the six (n=6) reported deaths by the Board of Managers, the seven (n=7) reported deaths in the state legislative report, and the eight (n=8) deaths reported by the coroner. The coroner's report lists 2 staff and 8 boys as deceased, including S. Barnett, whose name does not appear in the cited newspaper report. The names of fire victims differ among the various reports. The coroner's report does not list Parrot or Haffin as decedents, but Haffin's name does appear in the Idaho Statesman as a casualty of the 1914 fire. Likewise, FDLE does not list Haffin or Barnett though they cite the Idaho Statesman where Haffin's name does appear (Table 12).

Table 12. List of Possible 1914 Fire Casualties and Source (n=12)

Name	Source and Comments
Bennett Evans*	Coroner Report (1914)
Charles Evans *	Idaho Statesman (1914)
	FDLE (2009)
Clifford Jeffords	Coroner Report (1914)
	Idaho Statesman (1914)
	FDLE (2009)
Earl E. Morris**	Coroner Report (1914)
	Idaho Statesman (1914)
	FDLE (2009)
Harry Wells	Coroner Report (1914)
	FDLE (2009)
Joseph Wethersby	Coroner Report (1914)
	Idaho Statesman (1914)
	Telegram sent to Mrs. Fred Wethersby
	FDLE (2009)
Louis Fernandez	Coroner Report (1914)
	Idaho Statesman (1914)
	FDLE (2009)
Waldo Drew	Coroner Report (1914)
	Idaho Statesman (1914)
	FDLE (2009)
Walter Fisher	Coroner Report (1914)
	Idaho Statesman (1914)
	FDLE (2009)
Louis Haffin	Idaho Statesman (1914)
Clarence Parrot	Idaho Statesmen (1914)
	FDLE (2009)
S. Barnett	Coroner Report (1914)

\* Both are adults (father & son employees of school).

\*\* The Board of Manager report states Morris ran away.

## INFLUENZA AND PNEUMONIA OUTBREAKS 1918 AND 1932

The Influenza outbreak throughout the region in 1918 was devastating and the school was especially affected. The conditions of the school from this time were described in several accounts. Dr. G.W. Klock a state physician who assisted with caring for the sick boys issued a report about the condition of the school which prompted a state investigation and a response from the school's physician, Dr. N.A. Baltzell at the request of the Board.

According to Edwards (1969), in October of 1918 Dr. Brevis was an attending physician and stated that, "he had found conditions bad, that all boys in the Negro quarters except 21 were sick, that they had no assistance in two days and that he was the only physician... the hospital had been set up in the Dining hall". It was noted that the white students had escaped the epidemic as they had been quarantined. The dire conditions, large number of boys who were ill, and the lack of school administrators and staff to care for them led to the state investigation. In an interview with Rhyne (1968, In Lundrigan 1975:110), Lundrigan wrote:

Dr. Baltzell...made hurried trips to the Reform School late one night to 'see about the boys,' after spending a long and tiring day caring for the influenza victims in town. At School No. 2 he found sick colored inmates... lying about on the floor in total darkness.

According to Lundrigan, the adult staff of the school abandoned School No. 2 and the colored boys for fear of contracting the illness which left them without electricity or care for days at a time. The State Board of Health sent Dr. G.W. Klock to assist at the school. Klock reported the dire situation he found which was later recounted in the Tampa Tribune (November 2, 1918 in Lundrigan 1975:111):

...conditions at the school are very bad; sewerage imperfect; no sanitary rules at all; screens broken; fleas by the thousands. There were thirty five cases of pneumonia and lack of medicine and lack of proper nourishment, no linen, boys lying under wool blankets, naked. With dirty husk mattresses on the cement floor...The condition was one of filth, body lice, improper food and no bathing... The Superintendent has not seen a boy in four weeks according to attendants. The dinner of the well colored boys ... was hoe cake and bacon grease thickened with flour. The dinner of the white boys was rice and bacon grease gravy. One boy said he was flogged for refusing to cook peas full of worms and that meat sent to the boys was kept until spoiled and then fed them and they all were sick.

Lundrigan (1975:112) cites the *Report of Committee of Physicians on Conditions Growing Out of Influenza Epidemic* (1918:422), which states that "on the colored campus, out of 264 cases of influenza among the boys, there were only 11 deaths. These were Negro boys and although 68 out of 69 white pupils were afflicted with the malady, none died as a result."

On November 6, 1918, the *Daily Democrat* published a press release from Dr. Baltzell, "Reform School Not Quite So Bad as Represented". This press release was sent to various newspapers in response to the claims made in Dr. Klock's report about the poor conditions of the school. Through this letter, the timeline and list of fatalities of both white and colored students

are confirmed. Baltzell states that the outbreak began about three weeks prior to November 6, 1918. In total he says that there were 264 cases of inmates who were sick including both white and colored boys in addition to the staff. One female staff member died and the entire operations of the school were rendered incapacitated as a result of the outbreak. In response to the specific details in Klock's report, Baltzell states that the sanitary conditions of the school were always in poor condition and generally lacking, the screen doors were in need of repair (although he never noted any fleas) and found that most boys came to the school in need of medical care. He too reported that the students were in great need of clothing, sanitation, and bed linens.

Both reports by Klock and Baltzell are in stark contrast to the data listed in the school's ledgers, which indicate only four colored boys died of either non-flu related causes or from unknown causes and four white boys died of unknown causes between November 4-8. Of the eight documented deaths that occurred in 1918 according to the school ledgers (Table 13), one death was in April, not October-November when the epidemic struck and one additional name appears to be among those who died in the 1918 outbreak, although the death was not recorded until a year later and no specific date of death is given.

**Wilbur Smith** appears in the 1919 roll call of the record ledger which states, "Reported to have died with Flu", however no year or date is given. Smith likely came to school in 1915 based on the placement of his name in the ledger which is generally chronological, but no date for admission or death is recorded, nor is the location of his burial listed. **Thomas Aikins** was a colored boy who died in April of 1918. The other deaths occurred in late October and early November. **Willie Adkins**, another colored boy, died October 25, several weeks ahead of the four (4) white boys who all died within four days. The separation of dates among colored and white students affected may have been the result of segregation between the dormitories. Based on the dates four deaths occurred within one week, November 4-8, which is consistent with a flu outbreak. Additionally, three (3) deaths occurred after Baltzell reported a total of six (6) deaths for a minimum of nine (9) fatalities. The Biennial report states the entire "colored" campus was ill with subsequent problems with sanitation, although all of the deaths in November were white boys. It may be that the flu spread from the colored to white side of the campus, during this time. However based on the description of the conditions on the colored campus, one would have expected a higher number of deaths among colored than white students. It is also not known if the deaths were the result of the flu or other illnesses associated with the subsequent sanitation problems.

In an interview with Donald Vickery of Marianna, Florida (July 12, 1972), Lundrigan reports that Vickery's father was the head of the Colored Department during the 1918 epidemic and that the "bodies of the dead Negro boys were stored in the Reformatory's ice house while waiting for coffins to be built for them in the school's carpentry shop" (Lundrigan 1975:112). According to this interview, the eleven colored boys who died were buried at the "Boot Hill" burial ground (Lundrigan 1975:113). Figure 52 is an image of the school's carpentry shop ca. 1950s (Florida School for Boys, Photographs, Box 2 FF 15).

To cope with the situation, boys were immediately paroled home and no new boys were accepted. The Board tried to parole 100 boys to relieve overcrowding but the children did not have known families and were dependents of the State and thus had nowhere to go. It is also around this time that ledger entries such as "Mother carried him home" occur indicating some boys were paroled home ill, though the specific circumstances of these cases are not known.



Figure 52. Carpentry shop at school No. 1, ca. 1950s, from the State Archives (Florida School for Boys, Photographs, Box 2 FF 15).

Tables 13. Deaths Listed as Occurring in School Ledgers for 1918

Name	Age	Ancestry	Date of Death	Runaway	Circumstances
Thomas Aikins	12	Colored	4/16/1918	No	Unknown
Lee Gaalsby	13	White	10/6/1918	Runaway, Died	Unknown
George Grissam	6	Colored	10/23/1918	On Parole	Chronic Gastritis
Willie Adkins	13	Colored	10/25/1918	No	Unknown/Likely Flu
Llyod Dutton	14	White	11/4/1918	No	Unknown/Likely Flu
Hilton Finley	16	White	11/6/1918	No	Unknown/Likely Flu
Ralph Whiddon	16	White	11/6/1918	No	Unknown/Likely Flu
Puner Warner	16	White	11/8/1918	No	Unknown/Likely Flu
Wilbur Smith	10	Colored	Unknown*	No	“Reported Flu”

\*Smith’s name appears in 1919 with a reference to having died of flu, however no date is provided. The cases marked as “likely flu” is based on the dates of death and corresponding description of fatalities in physician’s reports, but no actual cause of deaths are recorded.

Of the eight documented deaths in 1918, according to school ledgers none have a listed cause of death other than Grissam who was a six year old boy. Grissam, along with his eight year old brother were paroled, but then returned to the school gravely ill. The information about Grissam's cause of death is described in the FIS Biennial report (January 1, 1921, through January 1, 1923, Biennial Report of the Florida Industrial School for Boys written to the Board of Commissioners of State Institutions) but not in the ledgers which only states "Died" (refer to the earlier discussion of Grissam's death). The date and circumstances of his parole are unknown although he had been at the school sixteen months prior to his death. Based on the timing, general circumstances and descriptions in the physician's reports, it is presumed that **Adkins, Dutton, Finley, Whiddon, Warner** and **Smith** all died of the flu or infectious diseases associated with the outbreak and its consequences.

- **Puner Warner** was sentenced and admitted to the school with two other boys, all three ran away together (Jas McKnight and Lenox Grayson) and were returned to the school. McKnight later went into the Army and Grayson was paroled a year later. There is no information as to Warner's cause of death, but based on the timing it is likely related to the Influenza outbreak.

A second catastrophic outbreak of Influenza occurred in 1932, during that year there were a total of 12 deaths (nine of which were attributed to Influenza and subsequent Pneumonia). Three other boys also died in 1932 but for other causes (Table 14). Death certificates were issued for 11 of the 12 boys that died. No death certificate was issued for Archie Shaw. Death certificates for nine of the boys list Influenza, with a contributing cause of lobar pneumonia and the duration of the illness ranged from 4-9 days. The circumstances surrounding the other deaths during this year include accidentally killed by a mule (Figure 53), anesthesia during a hernia operation, and run over by an automobile after running away from the school.

- **Archie J. Shaw Jr.** was a 12 year old colored boy who was committed to the school for larceny on 8/2/31 along with three other boys from Hillsborough County. Approximately eight months later he died on April 22, 1932 during that week there were several other Flu related deaths. Shaw was not issued a death certificate and his death was not certified, but the entry in the school ledger states his death was related to the flu epidemic. His burial location is unknown. The other three boys were paroled back to Tampa about a year later.

Table 14. Deaths Related to Influenza, Pneumonia, and Other Causes in 1932

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Ancestry</b>	<b>Date of Death</b>	<b>Circumstances</b>
Lee Smith	17	Colored	01/05/1932	“Accidentally killed, mule ran away” Death certificate states died of ruptured lung.
Lonnie Harrell	14	White	2/11/1932	Hernia, died in surgery
James Brinson	12	Colored	4/10/1932	Influenza, lobar pneumonia
Willie Heading	15	Colored	4/13/1932	Influenza, lobar pneumonia
Sam Nipper	12	Colored	4/14/1932	Influenza, lobar pneumonia
Jesse D Denson	10	Colored	4/16/1932	Influenza, lobar pneumonia
Lee Underwood	16	Colored	4/21/1932	Influenza, lobar pneumonia
Archie J. Shaw Jr.*	12	Colored	4/22/1932	Presumed Influenza
Fred Sams	15	Colored	4/22/1932	Influenza, lobar pneumonia
Joc Stephens	15	Colored	5/09/1932	Influenza, lobar pneumonia
Dary Pender	13	Colored	5/16/1932	Influenza, lobar pneumonia
Oscar Elvis Murphy	15	White	10/7/1932	Escape/death certificate states he was run over by an automobile.

\*Cause of death is presumed based on timing of death, however Shaw was not issued DC nor was his death certified, as the other cases were at this time.

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## Lee Smith, Colored Boy, Loses Life In Accident On Farm

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A sad occurrence of Tuesday, January 5, was the death of Lee Smith, fifteen year old colored boy, which came about through an accident while the boys were making their way from the field during the dinner hour. The boy was riding on one of two mules hitched together when he slipped off between them, catching his foot in the trace chain where he was unable to get loose before the mule gave a lurch which broke the bridle, and further exciting it into running.

With the bridle off it was a hard job to stop the mule which made a straight course for a gate estimated to be about four hundred yards away, here stopping of its own free will. The boy was picked up and carried to the Baltzell hospital where he died from internal injuries.

This marks the first serious accident in the school in many years and is regretted very much.

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Figure 53. The institutional newspaper, *The Yellow Jacket* (January 16, 1932, Vol. II, No. 8) contained this article about the work related death of Lee Smith.

## TRENDS IN MORBIDITY & MORTALITY

The very general mortality patterns as discerned from the records are discussed. Among the student deaths, only 44 were issued death certificates (26/60 colored boys and 18/35 white boys). Even when a cause of death (COD) is listed on the death certificate, such as “gunshot wounds in chest” the manner may be “unknown” and the description of the cause and mechanisms of death do not meet the legal definitions used by today’s standards. Therefore, general categories of death are used to describe the prevalence of diseases, trauma and other causes of death, which in some cases are more descriptive of the circumstances of death, than the actual medical-legal cause of death. In this discussion, COD refers to the cause and/or circumstances of death as described in the historical documents.

Based on information from available death certificates, six (6) boys were autopsied. Four of the boys were autopsied by Dr. C. Whitaker, the school physician. Dr. Whitaker was also present with the coroner and a sheriff’s deputy at the home where George Owen Smith’s body had been discovered. According to local newspapers, Dr. Whitaker believed the body was too decomposed for autopsy and therefore no coroner’s jury was established. Dr. Whitaker was employed at the school during the time Robert Hewett died (1960), although it unknown why no autopsy was performed. The two other boys who were autopsied outside of Jackson County died after running away and therefore were autopsied in the counties that the deaths occurred (Table 15).

The cause and circumstance of deaths are completely unknown in about 34.5% (29/84) of cases. Approximately 20.0% of deaths among white boys are unknown, whereas nearly 44.8% of deaths among colored boys are unknown. Different trends for the categories of death are noted for white and colored boys (Figure 54). The fire deaths, from 2 different incidents involved only white boys. In addition to the fire of 1914, one boy died as a result of toxemia due to 35% of his body being burned during a work related accident (James Cecil Ansley died 1929). Several of the other deaths can also be attributed to working on the farm or industry related deaths as indicated on their death certificates or newspaper accounts printed by the school (Lee Smith died in 1932). There were more traumatic deaths among white (n=7) than colored boys (n=4). In part, this is explained by the deaths that occurred following escape (n=4), in which four (4) cases involved traumatic injuries. The number of infectious disease cases are much higher among colored boys (79.2% or n=19/24).

Table 15. Autopsied Cases (n=6)

Year	Superintendent	Decedent Name	Autopsy Physician	Ruling
1944	Davidson	Earl Wilson	C.D. Whitaker, M.D.	Homicide
1949	Dozier	Eddie Albert Black	C.D. Whitaker, M.D.	Homicide
1952	Dozier	Billey Jackson	C.D. Whitaker, M.D.	Natural
1954	Dozier	Clarence Cunningham	W.J. Hutchinson, M.D.	Accident
1957	Dozier	George Fordom Jr.	S.A. Shaffer M.D.	Natural
1961	Dozier	Edgar Thomas Elton	C.D. Whitaker, M.D.	Natural

There were two deaths related to medical treatment, both resulting from anesthesia during surgery for a hernia and tonsillectomy. For example:

- **Tommie Harrell Davidson** was a 14 year old colored boy who was admitted to the school on 1/18/1932. Twenty-four days later, he died during a hernia operation on 2/11/1932. A death certificate was issued and certified by Dr. N.A. Baltzell, M.D. who had performed the surgery and was the school physician.
- **Charlie Overstreet** was a 15 year old white boy who entered the school on 4/25/1923. He died several months later on August 19, from anesthesia for a tonsillectomy. A death certificate was issued and certified by Dr. N.A. Baltzell, M.D. who had performed the surgery and was the school physician.

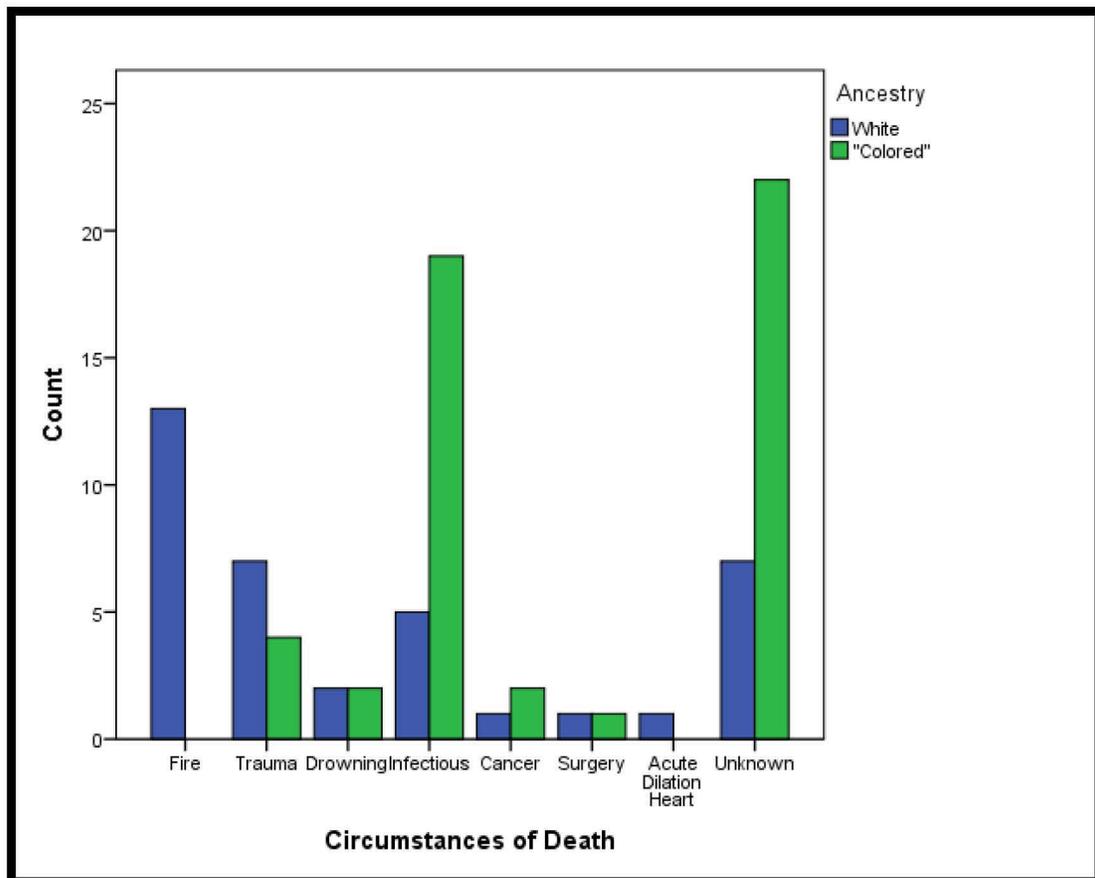


Figure 54. Frequency of different categories of death. For the majority of individuals, there is no known cause of death.

## **CONVICTED CASES OF HOMICIDE**

Among cases with traumatic related deaths, three are documented homicides in which boys were killed by fellow school boys. In all three cases, the offenders were prosecuted. Some of the original grand jury documents were obtained from the Jackson County Courthouse. Two cases were appealed and the subsequent court documents detail more about the events, autopsy findings and testimony of Dr. Whitaker, and other evidence presented at the trials.

### **Robert Seinous "Stephens"**

Robert Seinous "Stephens" was a 14 year old white boy committed to the school on 9/3/1936 for breaking and entering. He was sentenced to two years or until legally discharged. Approximately ten months later, just after his 15<sup>th</sup> birthday, Seinous was found dead on July 15, 1937. A death certificate was issued and certified by school physician Dr. Baltzell. It is unknown if an autopsy was performed as this information is left blank on the death certificate. According to the ledgers, Seinous was admitted with 16 year old John Bryant from Quincy and although Bryant was sentenced to a minimum of three years he was paroled to a guardian on September 2, 1937. According to the ledger, Robert's last name was "Stephens" and he was 16 years old when committed. The name Stephens also appears on the court documents, however his death certificate states "Seinous". The informant for the death certificate was C.M. Mayo (a yardman and nurse) employed at the school. Mayo's name appears on many death certificates from this time as the "undertaker". The only burial location on the death certificate states "Marianna, Florida". Since his mother was from Quincy, it is likely Robert was buried at the school cemetery, although this is not documented. The ledger further states that Robert was "Stabbed to death by another inmate Leroy Taylor". Robert's death certificate states the cause of death was "Knife wound following hemorrhage". According to records at the county clerk's office in Jackson County, Leroy Taylor was indicted of First Degree Murder but plead guilty to Second Degree Murder on November 30, 1937. The indictment listed Robert's name as "Robert Stephens".

### **Eddie Black**

Eddie Black was a 13 year old white boy committed to the school 4/1/1948 for Larceny for a term "Until legally discharged". Approximately a year later Black was found dead on May 4, 1949. Black was autopsied by school physician Dr. C. Whitaker whose official cause of death was "Death by strangling, severe contusions of forehead." Black's body was shipped home to his family for burial in Pensacola. Frank Murphy and Avelardo Quevedo were convicted of the second degree murder of Black. According to a signed confession by Frank Murphy, he:

... got a knife from Avelardo and told Black to come with me. We went down under there, under the culvert at the laundry across the highway from the laundry and I grabbed him. I choked him down, and I stabbed him two times and left him....I choked him down and then hit his head on the concrete.

According to Quevedo's signed confession (June 2, 1949), Murphy told him that he had killed Black with Quevedo's knife in the following manner:

Frank Murphy told me that Eddie Albert Black had caught him smoking and was going to tell on him and for that reason he was going to kill him. When Frank came back he showed me my knife and there was blood on the blade and he said he had killed Black and told me how he did it. He said he choked him with his hands and when he was almost dead he stabbed him twice back of the ear.

Note that the signed confessions and death certificate do not state the same cause of death. The death certificate states the following: "death by strangulation, severe contusions to forehead". An autopsy was performed by school physician Dr. Whitaker but makes no mention of any knife wounds or sharp trauma. On March 20, 1965, Frank Murphy filed a motion to "vacate and set aside judgment of conviction and sentence in case No. 863 upon the grounds they are void ab initio and in toto as is allowed and authorized under criminal procedure rule one." In Murphy's hand written letter to the court he stated that he and the victim had engaged in a fist fight which ended when both boys were exhausted. Later, Murphy returned to the area to look for something he lost. While awaiting trial, Murphy received a note from a fellow inmate that three witnesses saw him leave the area when Black was still alive, both the prosecutor and defense attorney were informed of the letter before the trial began. However, during the recess of the trial, Sheriff Ernst Barnes questioned Murphy alone about how he obtained the letter in jail. According to court documents (*Murphy v. Wainwright*, 372 F. 2d. 942 5<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1967), "The sheriff is said to have made certain threats regarding the horror of dying in the electric chair and advised appellant that it would be the part of wisdom to enter a plea to second degree murder in the event such an opportunity was offered to him." Fourteen year old Murphy pled guilty for a life sentence, rather than face the death penalty. In his appeal, Murphy argued that the sheriff's actions, along with the fact his legal guardian (his sister as both parents were deceased) was not informed about his murder trial created a coerced, involuntary confession.

On January 20, 1973, Murphy was awarded an evidentiary hearing (*Murphy v. Wainwright* 73 304 Civ J S). The evidence consisted of the testimony of Murphy and John Roy Smith who testified to the comments that were made by the sheriff. The court found that Murphy's confession was entered involuntary, granted a writ of habeas corpus and vacated his conviction.

## Earl Wilson

Earl Wilson was a 12 year old colored boy committed to the school on 6/20/1944 for larceny from Polk County. Seventy-two days later on September 1 he was killed while detained in a 7' by 10' confinement cottage along with eight other boys, ages 11-17 years. These boys had been held in the confinement cottage for varying lengths of time from several days to several weeks (Figures 55-56).

Four boys were convicted of Wilson's murder: William Foxworth, Charles Bevels, Robert Farmer, and Floyd Alexander. According to the death certificate, Wilson was autopsied by Dr. Whitaker, the school physician and buried at the school. The death certificate states the cause of death was "Head Injury, Blows on Head". Note that the testimony of Dr. Whitaker about the autopsy findings conflicted with witness statements. See *Foxworth v. Wainwright*, 516 F. 2d 1072, 1074-1075 (5th Cir. 1975) :

The cell contained one set of bunk beds, an open bucket for toilet needs (emptied once daily), a bucket for drinking water, and a continuously burning light bulb. Four of the boys in the cell, including Foxworth, were charged with murdering Earl Wilson, and the other four became prosecution witnesses. Because Florida had no juvenile statute at that time, the four faced a sentence of death in the electric chair if convicted. One attorney was appointed to represent Foxworth and two of the other boys, Charles Bevels and Robert Farmer. The fourth, Floyd Alexander, had privately retained counsel.

At the trial, which lasted one day, the prosecution's theory was that the four defendants had choked Earl Wilson by holding him down and pressing a stick against his throat. This theory was presented in the versions of the facts related by the four boys who testified for the prosecution. These witnesses also testified that earlier in the day one of the defendants, Charles Bevels, had struck Earl Wilson repeatedly with the stick. The medical evidence, given by a doctor summoned when Earl Wilson was found dead, was that death was caused by blows to the head with a blunt instrument. A dissection of the decedent's neck muscles revealed no bruises. The four defendants' theory, as presented in their testimony, was that the incident in which they held the stick to Earl Wilson's neck was just horseplay. They contended that the four prosecution witnesses killed decedent by beating him on the head with the stick.

The jury returned a verdict of guilty against all four defendants, but recommended mercy. The court imposed life sentences on all four defendants. The conviction was affirmed by the Supreme Court of Florida. *Bevels v. State, Fla.*, 1945, 156 Fla. 159, 23 So.2d 156.



Figure 11 Former farm manager's office converted into a confinement cottage at the North School. The building had originally been constructed for storing farm goods. The interior measurements of the building are 7.4 by 10.0 feet in dimension and it is believed to be the location of the death of Earl Wilson in 1944.



Figure 11. Door frame of confinement cottage showing modification to door when building was converted from storage to confinement cottage and later to the farm manager's office. The door was modified to swing outside, rather than inside. The small window in figure shows former outside latch for lock.

## VARIATION IN REPORTING

The discrepancies that occur in the documentation for burial location, the cause of death, and certification of the deaths by a physician or coroner are not limited to particular years or administrations and do not appear to be a matter of changing policies from one administration to another. The problem of under-reporting was not the only type of inconsistency found between school and state records. Practices during the Flu epidemic of 1918, also shows significant variation in the reporting and number of deaths. Reports vary as to the number and ancestry of boys who died, as well as the dates of their deaths in that year. A number of deaths appearing in the ledgers or other historical documents were not included in the FDLE report, which is why the total number of deaths that occurred differs among more recent reports. For example, William McKinley's name and the statement "Died" appears in the discharge ledger but does not appear listed in the full record ledger from the school, which is a common finding for the time period (pre-1919); therefore no other information is known about him (Figure 57). Several other differences were also found for boys whose names do not appear in prior reports:

- Louis Haffin, a white boy died 11/18/1914 in the fire.
- S. Barnett, a white boy died 11/18/1914 in the fire.
- William McKinley, a colored boy died from unknown causes on 7/19/1915.
- Thomas E. Curry, a 15 year old white boy died of blunt trauma on 12/11/1925 after running away.
- Robert Jerald Hewett, a 16 year old white boy died of gunshot wounds on 4/4/1960 after running away.
- Eleven (11) unidentified colored boys died of Influenza between November 6 - December 31, 1918.

FLORIDA INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL FOR BOYS						
COLORED						
DATE	NAME OF BOY	D-P-R	SENTENCE	EXPIRATION	No. Boys Present	
7/15	Chas. Lowry	Escaped			169	
7/18	John Austin	Recd.			170	
7/19	Wm. McKinley	Dead.			169	
8/11	Tom Cole	Escaped			168	
7/19	Tom Cole	Ret.			169	
7/19	John Austin	Escaped			168	
7/30	Ben Williams	Dismissed			167	
7/24	Jas. Wilson	Escaped			166	
7/25	Grant Duke	Recd.				
" "	Aron Clark					

Figure 57. Discharge ledger, now located in the State Archives, showing name and record of death for William McKinley in July 1915 (Florida School for Boys, Student Ledgers: Vol. 18).

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK**

To date, historical and field based research has been completed at the Boot Hill Cemetery. Research began in 2011. Fieldwork consisted of eight weeks of survey, GPR, trenching, and soil analysis. This work has been focused on remote sensing and some excavation. In total, a minimum of 50 grave shafts have been identified, although it is not known if this represents all burials or some aspect of the cemetery. Therefore, based on our findings we recommend the following actions in the next phase of investigation:

1. Additional GRP evaluation in the areas adjacent of Boot Hill Cemetery;
2. Archaeological test excavations in the areas marked by GPR anomalies, especially on the east side of the cemetery, to define the boundaries of the burial area and its spatial relationship with adjacent landscape features (roads, historical buildings, etc.);
3. Horizontal clearing through mechanical excavation of the primary burial area to identify the exact number and locations of individual grave sites;
4. Exhumation and skeletal autopsy including forensic pathological, anthropological, and bioarchaeological analysis of individuals from the cemetery to determine cause of death and identification for re-interment;
5. Additional archival research of historical documents, maps, and photographs;
6. Additional interviews from families, employees, and other key stakeholders associated with the school's history.

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## **APPENDIXES**

**To: Erin Kimmerle, Ph.D. University of South Florida**

**From: Laura Hair, M.D. and Leszek Chrostowski, M.D.; Associated Medical Examiners,  
District 13 Medical Examiner Department, Tampa, Florida**

**Date: October 18, 2012**

**Re: Expert Opinion on Medical Review of Deaths at the Former Arthur Dozier  
School for Boys**

Historical investigations that seek to understand past medical and pathological diagnoses are always a challenge due to the evolution of forensic and diagnostic medicine in recent years. The field of forensic pathology is relatively young, but combined with modern death investigations, we offer the justice system methods to try to answer questions that could not be found in the past.

We were asked to provide an expert opinion on several child deaths that occurred between 1952-1966. The records that exist were reviewed, and our opinions are summarized below:

1. Billey Jackson was a 13 year old African American boy, who died on 10-7-1952 in Jackson Hospital, 10 days after admission from FIS. According to his death certificate, his cause of death was pyelonephritis. Two witnesses (Walthour and Williams) stated that about two weeks prior to his death, Billey Jackson was severely beaten following an attempt to escape from the school; allegedly, the beating included his abdomen, which then swelled, and prompted his hospital admission. After his death an autopsy examination was performed by the school physician, Dr. Whitaker; however, no written record of the examination can be found.

Pyelonephritis is a form of ascending urinary tract infection, which may affect one or both kidneys. It is usually associated with urine retention, and can indeed be fatal. The obstruction of flow initiating the pathology may result from a congenital condition, e.g. inadequate valve mechanism at the junction of the ureters and the bladder, or obstruction of the ureter(s) due to urolithiasis, i.e. kidney stones, or trauma. Nowadays the cause of death is defined as "injury or disease initiating the chain of events resulting in death". Having no record of the autopsy, we are unable to conclude the primary cause (or combination of causes) of Jackson's ailment, hence his cause of death remains unknown. The manner of his death is undetermined, since a natural death would be exclusively due to natural disease, and in his case it is uncertain whether there was a contributing traumatic factor. Review of the original autopsy report would be most helpful to clarify the above.

2. Robert Jerald Hewett was a 16 year old white boy who entered FIS on 3/22/1960. The FIS ledgers confirm that Hewett was admitted and then on March 25 was temporarily released to the Jackson Hospital. He returned to FIS the following day on March 26 and then on April 2, he ran away. The ledger and death certificate indicate he died two days

later on April 4. All of this information comes from the daily ledger, as the discharge ledgers for this time are not public record. Hewett's death certificate states the manner of death is "unknown" and the cause of death is "gunshot wounds in chest inflicted by person or persons unknown". There was no autopsy performed. No other information including coroner or police incident reports could be located.

Hewett's death certificate is incorrect by today's standards: once a person dies due to gunshot wound(s) inflicted by another person, his manner of death is classified as homicide, i.e. "death from hands of other person, regardless of intent". Such classifications do not indicate "murder", "manslaughter" or other variations, which are of interest to the judicial system rather than medical examiner. Examination of R.J. Hewett's remains is recommended because if there was skeletal trauma, it would be possible to learn about the projectile trajectory, shedding a light on possible circumstances of the incident.

3. Michael Smelley was a 17 year old white boy who died 3/15/1966. His death certificate indicates he died of "carcinoma of the spine and lungs" about a year after his incarceration at the school. Witnesses allege he was beaten severely following an attempted escape and that immediately afterwards he was unable to walk. Several days later he was admitted to the hospital. Michael had a history of "carcinoma" and prior to entering FIS in 1965 had a tumor removed from his spine. In Montgomery's 2009 investigation, he posed the question as to "...whether a blow or multiple blows to a spinal tumor could aggravate the tumor or cause paralysis or even accelerate the spread of the cancer and lead to early death?"

Medical records and autopsy indicate that Michael had a sarcoma around his spinal cord with later metastases to the lung. Since no evidence of fractures is noted in his hospital records during surgery, the "blow or blows" most likely did not affect the tumor. His inability to walk following the blows might be related to the alleged beating but nothing is stated of his walking ability before the alleged beating. His inability to walk could be a result of the tumor. After his first surgery, Michael did have the ability to walk with a cance.

The acceleration of the spread of a neoplasm by beating is not likely and very speculative. The hospital records available from the University of Florida do not indicate trauma. Our conclusion is that Smelley died a natural death, due to malignant neoplasm. This of course does not exclude a possibility of being beaten; however, if a beating occurred, it cannot be linked with this person's cause of death.

October 15, 2012

Attention: Erin H. Kimmerle, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of Anthropology  
University of South Florida  
4202 E. Fowler Ave., SOC 107  
Tampa, Florida 33620-8100 USA

Subject: **Fire Origin and Cause Investigation**  
The Florida Industrial School for Boys  
4111 County Road 167  
Marianna, Florida 32448

Dear Professor Erin Kimmerle,

City of Tampa Fire Investigator Christopher M. Stone and retired City of Tampa Supervisor of Fire Investigation Al Alcalá are pleased to submit this summary regarding our fire scene findings at the above-referenced location which was conducted on Monday, October 1, 2012. The purpose of the investigation was to render a professional opinion as to the origin and cause of the fire that reportedly damaged the above referenced Florida Industrial School for Boys building on Wednesday, November 18, 1914 and to list any and/or all contributing factors. The site assessment included an examination of all provided historical documentation of relevant information and findings.

Based on our investigation of all available resources obtained of the fire damage at the loss site, as presented within the remainder of this report, our conclusions are summarized as follows:

- No evidence of an exterior fire was discovered during the document reviews of the fire scene inspection conducted in 1914.
- Based on a known account from one of the residing staff members, O.G. Marston, the fire appeared to have originated near the main stairwell on the east side of the first floor of the building, because he had alerted and directed the boys on the second floor to the stairway located on the western end of the building.
- The area of origin was determined to be on the first floor level at/or near the eastern portion of the building, which consisted of the assembly room, washrooms, and offices.
- After analyzing the collected and available data using the principles of the scientific method, several hypotheses were developed.
  - Recognize the need. We could all come to a conclusion that a fire occurred on November 18, 1914.

- Define the Problem. Having determined that a problem existed, a proper origin and cause investigation was not conducted in 1914. Through a combination of other data collection methods, such as the review of several previously conducted investigations of the incident, the interviews of witnesses the morning after the fire, and/or other knowledgeable persons involved, several competent ignition sources existed within the building.
- Collect Data. Not all known facts about the incident were collected. The building materials, the dimensions of the building, configuration of the building, room by room, floor by floor, fuel loads such as all combustible materials (furniture, rugs, clothing, chemicals, etc.) present within the building, ventilation and constructed openings such as windows, doors, ceiling heights, and stairwells were not properly documented. We were unable to identify any fuels in the area of origin, identify potential ignition sources in the area of origin, or identify the first fuel ignited.
- Analyze the Data. Based on the limited data gathered during the investigation review process, several hypotheses were considered based on the limited information gathered.
- Develop a Hypothesis (Inductive Reasoning). The limited empirical data that was collected and considered during this investigation, revealed several lit kerosene lamps used for lighting placed throughout the staircases and walls of the building, oil based paints and rags used in the painting process, a wood burning stove used for heating, and arson were all possible competent ignition sources and contributing factors to the fire.
- Test the Hypothesis (deductive Reasoning). Based on the limited information gathered and reviewed, the following hypotheses were considered:
  - The wood burning stove used for heating could not be eliminated as a possible source of ignition. According to the 1914 report, this wood burning stove was brought into the building to heat the building on a cold night. This wood burning stove must have proper ventilation routed to the exterior of the building, as to the safety concern of carbon monoxide poisoning caused from the burning wood within the stove. This wood burning stove was supported with three legs and two bricks and was functioning properly when staff members went to bed. The location of this wood burning stove still remains unknown; however, the possibility of the floor being ignited horizontally by the wood burning stove is unlikely. The ventilation pipes from the wood burning stove if routed to the exterior of the building through a window opening or wall opening would be a likely competent source of ignition if the ventilation pipes had perforations which would allow the flames and heated gasses to escape and make direct contact with the building's combustible materials and eventually ignite them vertically. A fire that burns vertically spreads rapidly and a fire that burns horizontally spreads slower.

- If spontaneous combustion is believed to be the cause of this fire it is necessary to determine if this is possible. Firstly, it should be determined whether or not the materials involved in the fire are susceptible to spontaneous combustion. This requires investigation of the material itself and the conditions present at the time of the fire. The only information provided is that oily greasy rags had been used during the painting process and placed at/or near a locker stored with dynamite underneath the stairwell. The configuration of the reacting mass is also important in determining whether sufficient heat could build up to the point of ignition. A loosely placed or thrown pile will undergo spontaneous ignition. If a spontaneous combustion fire would have occurred at/or near the stored dynamite locker located underneath the stairwell, this would have possibly resulted in an explosion causing severe damage to the stairwell and building. According to eyewitness accounts, no explosion was mentioned.
- Kerosene oil lamps were used for lighting and placed throughout the staircases and walls of the building. The exact manufacture of the oil lamps, the total number of oil lamps, location, and/or mounting of the oil lamps is unknown. Kerosene oil lamps require constant cleaning, maintenance, and a watchful eye to insure proper operation. If the accumulation of residue and debris builds up on the lamp and glass surfaces, the lamp will not operate properly. Over filling the reservoir with kerosene oil could result in the oil igniting and causing the oil to drip onto other surfaces eventually igniting other combustible materials in the immediate area. The most common cause of kerosene oil lamp fires is that of an accidental nature, being knocked over causing the ignited liquid to spill resulting in rapid fire spread. The use of contaminated kerosene oils could have also posed a potentially serious fire hazard. The daily operation and use of the oil lamps is unknown, therefore the possibility of the kerosene oil lamp as being a potential fire cause cannot be ruled out.
- Arson was also believed to be a possible cause of the fire which was considered. The Pensacola Journal reported that prior attempts to burn down the dormitory building had been made several months earlier. Further, a Mr. George Coldwell, of Laurel Hill, Florida, attempted to have his son released from the school several days prior to the fire with negative results. Mr. Coldwell allegedly made verbal threats to blow up the building if his son was not released. Coldwell was allegedly seen on the school grounds earlier the day of the fire. Coldwell was later exonerated by a grand jury and his son who ran away from the school before the fire was released several days after the fire. Although Coldwell was exonerated arson cannot be ruled out as a possible cause of the fire. The evidence against Mr. Coldwell appears to have been circumstantial, which today can be used during prosecution in trial. The use of a handheld open flame device (lighter, matches, candle) used to ignite common combustibles and

/or an accelerant (ignitable liquid) is a possible cause of the fire and therefore cannot be ruled out as a potential cause of the fire.

#### Investigation Methods:

- The investigation method(s) and/or Procedures utilized during the course of this limited investigation were conducted in accordance with NFPA 921, Guide for Fire and Explosion Investigations 2011, and NFPA 1033, Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Investigator 2009. The systematic approach used in this limited investigation was that of the scientific method as prescribed in NFPA 921, Chapter 4 Basic Methodology, and NFPA 1033, A.4.1.2.
- The data collected was systematically examined, the collected data analyzed, possible hypotheses were considered based on the limited amount of data collected.

#### Documents Reviewed:

As part of our assessment of the reported damage at the Industrial School for Boys, we reviewed the following documents:

- The 6<sup>th</sup> Legislative Committee since 1901 report of 1913
- Board of Managers Report (W.H. Milton)
- Edwards Report of 1969
- Florida Legislative Committee
- Jackson County Coroner (Conducted Coroner's Jury)

#### Conclusion:

Based on the limited amount of information gathered regarding the fire at the Industrial School for Boys, a true definitive cause of the fire could not be reached. We were unable to state specifically which of these competent ignition sources ignited the unknown first fuel. The determination of the cause of the fire requires identification of those circumstances and factors that were necessary for the fire to have occurred. Those circumstances and factors include, but are not limited to, the device or equipment involved in the ignition, the presence of a competent ignition source, the type and form of the material first ignited, and the circumstances or human actions that allowed the factors to come together to allow the fire to occur. The cause of this fire cannot be proven to an acceptable level of certainty, therefore, should be classified as undetermined until new information becomes available.

#### Limits of the Study

This report was prepared for the exclusive use of Professor Erin H. Kimmerle, Ph. D. and was not intended for any other purpose. This report represents the forensic observations and conclusions resulting from information that was provided to us as well as several reported fire scene findings. The opinions of this report are based upon fire science and limited documented observations made during the course of this study and were developed to a reasonable degree of investigative certainty. Please note that we reserve the right to revise the documented findings, comments, and/or conclusions above as conditions change or additional information becomes available. This report was prepared for Erin H. Kimmerle Ph. D. and we disavow any liability for use by others.

We appreciate this opportunity to have assisted you with this investigation. Please contact us if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

Christopher M. Stone  
City of Tampa Fire Investigator



October 10, 2012

Dr. Erin Kimmerle  
Department of Anthropology  
USF  
4202 E. Fowler Ave.  
Tampa, FL 33620

Dear Erin:

I have been at work processing the cedar cores as best as I can. I am able to tell you a couple of things, but generally I don't have good news for you.

What we have been calling "cedars" are members of the genus *Juniperus*. They are either Eastern Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) or Southern Red Cedar (*Juniperus silicicola*). To be sure, we would need information from other tree structures that weren't available when I was there, like male and female cones. But it doesn't matter much, as the two species have very similar ring structures. In general, the eastern *Juniperus* are notoriously difficult to date, and these trees share that quality.

There are two problems with dating the tree cores. The first is heart rot within the trees. Because of the heart rot, the samples do not go back as far as we would like. Many of my cores are less than half as long as they would be in the absence of rot. Because ring widths vary throughout time (randomly from year to year, and systematically declining in width with age), it isn't possible to estimate ages from either the tree ring record itself or by combining it with the measurements of the trees that I made while there

The second major issue I failed to reconcile—false rings. Cedars make a lot of them. These aren't an indicator of annual growth, and distinguishing them from true rings in this species is very difficult, increasing error. It's also possible that these cedars are missing rings as well. I also noticed that the rings can vary much more than usual between the two samples taken per tree, which makes it difficult or impossible to cross-date the trees given such a small wood sample.

Consequently, I can't give you an estimate of cedar ages. The only thing I can say is this: the trees in the cemetery, along the fence (AWC2 and AWC3), **MAY BE** younger than AWC4, AWC5, and StumpD. AWC6 is likely closer in age to AWC2 and 3 than the other trees in the cemetery. This is based almost solely on tree diameter, and I cannot say this with very much certainty.

It may be possible to get some rough ages of the cedars with a fair amount more work. At this point, my only suggestion would be to take thick cross sections of the trees using a

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chain saw. The sections would need to be a bit thicker than traditional cross-sections (which are roughly 1") in case the pockets of rot cause them to break apart. Because this requires cutting down the tree and may still not result in solid ages, I can't necessarily recommend this, but it could work because it would make it easier to distinguish false from true rings and would be more likely to give us a more complete record unless the entire center of the tree is rotted.

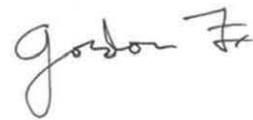
Most people who work with tree rings avoid working with cedars, for good reason. If you want to pursue this using cross-sections, Gordon can recommend some people to you – people who would probably be the best possible bet for getting meaningful results. If you do continue with dating these trees, I may be able to help, if time and lab space aren't too constricting.

As far as the other cores, like the pecans and oak—They are a different type of wood that I am presently unable to spend the time learning to understand and cross date, and those samples are also much shorter than they should be. In this case, these trees are hardwoods, and they usually require cross sections (and a ton of elbow grease) for sampling as well.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if I may be of help in the future. Thank you for bringing me on board. I really enjoyed meeting and working with you and your team, and I'm happy to have been a part of the project.

Sincerely yours,

Jamie Gluvna  
Ph.D. student

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gordon A. Fox". The signature is written in black ink and includes a stylized flourish at the end.

Gordon A. Fox, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor