



*Florida Department of Law Enforcement*

**OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE INVESTIGATIONS**

*Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys  
Marianna, Florida*

***INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY***

**INVESTIGATIVE PREDICATE**

On December 9, 2008, Governor Charlie Crist directed the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) to investigate 32 unmarked graves located on property surrounding the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys in Marianna, Florida. The request was made due to abuse allegations brought forth by individuals known as “The White House Boys Survivors Organization.” The individuals are former students who attended the reformatory school during the late 1950’s through 1960’s and allege that during their tenure they were subjected to repeated physical abuse by staff members as a form of discipline. The individuals believe there may be fellow students who died from the abuse and therefore may be buried at the School Cemetery.

**GOVERNOR DIRECTIVE**

Governor Crist requested that FDLE determine:

1. The entity that owned or operated the property at the time the graves were placed.
2. Identification, where possible, of the remains of those individuals buried on the site.
3. If any crimes were committed, and if so, the perpetrators of those crimes.

The purpose of this report will be to identify the remains of those individuals buried at the Dozier “Boot Hill” Cemetery, herein referred to as the “School Cemetery.” A separate report will be prepared regarding the allegations surrounding the abuse of the students.

FDLE reviewed and analyzed the following documentation to identify the School’s deceased: School ledgers, student record books, the School’s publication of *The Yellow Jacket*, local and national newspapers, the Florida Department of State Library and Archives, and the Florida Department of Health Division of Vital Statistics.

It is important to note that due to the passage of time, the School's documents, especially ledgers and actual administrative records, should not be considered complete and therefore a true account of all the students who attended the School. Due to the fact that the School was under the direction of various entities over the years, records were transferred between agencies. These transitions made it difficult to obtain and locate records. Once located, the ledgers and record books were found to be handwritten and had no signatures of authorship. Therefore, there are no known currently living custodians for these records. It is probable that other records existed; however, it cannot be determined what information could have been available due to poor record keeping, the legal purging of files, and/or damage due to environmental elements. In addition, administrative documents were not kept in a central repository at the School. Antiquated records were relocated to various buildings on campus in order to make room for the next generation of documents. Unfortunately, the buildings have deteriorated over time and records contained therein have been damaged by the elements. The majority of the antiquated documents were extremely fragile and had to be handled as such. Photographs were taken of the ledger entries and *The Yellow Jacket* newspaper articles due to their delicate condition and photocopies were made of all other documents. (See Figure 1)

Figure 1: Example of a School Ledger

NAME	DATE OF ENROLLMENT	DATE RETURNED	DATE RELEASED	DATE RETURNED	ENROLL	RELEASED	RELEASED	DATE RELEASED	HOW RELEASED	REMARKS
James	8/9/1920	8/20/1920						11/26/1920	Paroled	Body detail to mother
William	8/20/1920	8/21/1920	8/22/1920		8/23/1920	8/24/1920		8/25/1920	Paroled	to mother
George	8/26/1920	8/27/1920			8/28/1920	8/29/1920		8/30/1920	Paroled	to mother
John	8/27/1920	8/28/1920			8/29/1920	8/30/1920		8/31/1920	Paroled	to mother
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

Source: FDLE File Folder, 02/20/2009

## HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL

Mandated by the Florida Legislature in 1897, the Florida State Reform School opened its doors January 1, 1900, to provide a place “where young offenders against the laws of our state might be separated from older more vicious associates” {Florida Children’s Commission 1953}. The management and affairs of the School was under a multitude of entities during the last 109 years. In 1897 the Governor appointed five commissioners whose duty it was to superintend, manage the School, and report to the Legislature biennially. Shortly thereafter, the responsibility of the School was managed by The Board of Commissioners of State Institutions which consisted of the Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, Comptroller, Treasurer, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Commissioner of Agriculture. In 1969, the Legislature enacted the “Government Reorganization Act” that resulted in the Division of Youth Services, which became part of the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (HRS). In 1990, HRS transferred the School’s management to their Children and Family Services Program Office. In 1994 the responsibilities of the School fell under a new state agency, the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, who is still managing the school today.

In the early years, the facility was located on almost 1400 acres and periodically housed male and female students who were as young as six years old. Many of these students were committed to the facility for minor offenses, such as “incorrigibility” or “truancy.” “White” and “Colored” students were segregated from one another until 1968. The School had two campuses- the South Side or “Number 1” side for the white students and the North Side or “Number 2” side for colored students. The School’s North Side campus, where the cemetery was located, was permanently closed between 1990 and 1991. (See Figure 2)

**Figure 2: Playground and buildings at the Boys School**



*Source: State Library & Archives of Florida, C800000-144*

(The terms “white” and “colored” were used throughout this report as a means of identification based on the terms of reference utilized during the first sixty plus years of the School’s existence. “Whites” and “colored” were separated not only physically but also administratively in School ledgers.)

The School has remained open throughout the years having been known as the Florida State Reform School (1900-1913), the Florida Industrial School for Boys (1914-1957), the Florida School for Boys (1957-1967), and currently operates as the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys. During the early years, the School was self-sufficient in that it had its own source of food (cattle, hogs, poultry, dairy, vegetable gardens, etc.), laundry, infirmary, print shop, textile mill, brick mill, chapel, etc. The boys attended School every other day. On the days they did not attend class, they were required to work in these various departments.

Over the course of 109 years, the School has weathered many changes as well as stood watch as the United States entered into the modern era. In the beginning, the School transitioned from oil lamps to electricity, horses and mules to vehicles, toilets “with pans” to actual indoor plumbing with sewage pipes.

Today, the School is considered a high-risk residential commitment facility for boys 13-21 years of age and is under the jurisdiction of the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. For purposes of simplicity in this report, the facility will be referred to as the School.

## CEMETERY LOCATION

The School’s Cemetery is positioned in a small field approximately a quarter of a mile north northwest of the Jackson County Corrections Facility located at 2737 Pennsylvania Avenue, Marianna, Florida. The Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates for the School Cemetery are 30° 45’ 59”N 85° 15’ 43”W, situated in Jackson County Township Range 4N-10W. The property is owned by the State of Florida Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund and directly leased to the Florida Department of Health. The Department of Health has subleased the property to the Florida Department of Corrections (Lease # 2771). (See Figure 3)

**Figure 3: Photo of the School's Cemetery**



*Source: FDLE File Folder, 12/10/2008*

The majority of former students interviewed either had no knowledge of the cemetery or only heard rumors that it existed and contained the graves of boys who perished in a fire or of influenza. There were a few students who saw the cemetery during their attendance at the School, however, none had any specific knowledge regarding any unexplained deaths or burials on the site. Current and former staff members were interviewed and most had prior knowledge of the School’s Cemetery, which they referred to as “Boot Hill Cemetery.” In addition, several

newspapers, including the School's *Yellow Jacket*, commonly referred to the Cemetery as Boot Hill.

## INVESTIGATIVE ACTIVITIES/ANALYSIS

### CEMETERY INSPECTION

On December 11, 2008, the School's Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent escorted FDLE to the School's Cemetery. The grave site proper is defined by a wire perimeter fence (38' x 51') and contained therein are 31 metal pipe style crosses. (It is important to note that 32 crosses were initially reported by the news media however there were actually 31.) The area surrounding the cemetery is wooded and consumed with Kudzu and underbrush.

During the course of inspecting the cemetery location, FDLE searched the wooded area north of the site and found two separate areas where remnants of several discarded concrete crosses were found. These crosses were located approximately 30 yards north of the cemetery and approximately 20 yards from each other. Both sets of discarded crosses were located at or near the base of large trees. Although heavily damaged and broken, both sets of crosses were fortified with rebar. The crosses measured 48" tall and had an 18" cross beam. It was determined that the crosses had at one time been painted white. The crosses appeared to have been undisturbed for quite some time and were not noticeable from the roadway due to heavy brush and vines. There were no obvious trails showing any type of recent activity in the area. The crosses were photographed at their locations and left undisturbed until their removal on December 18, 2008.

Figure 5: Discarded Crosses



Source: FDLE File Folder, 12/18/2008

Figure 4: Discarded Crosses



Source: FDLE File Folder, 12/18/2008

On December 18, 2008, FDLE removed the discarded crosses from the wooded area. The crosses were separated from one another and an attempt was made to piece them together in order to obtain an accurate count. The majority of the crosses were incomplete, having lost their base as well as pieces of concrete that had separated from the rebar. However, the crosses' intersection portions were mostly intact and revealed that the number of crosses discarded totaled

28. The crosses were photographed, removed from the wooded area, and relocated to a secured area on the School property. (See Figure 4 and 5)

### **HISTORY OF THE CROSSES**

Former Superintendent Lenox Williams advised that in 1961 or 1962 he ordered the School's Boy Scout troop to clean the grounds of the cemetery and erect 31 crosses to honor those students who had passed away. According to Mr. Williams, until that time the grounds had not been maintained and he felt the deceased deserved more than an overgrown and unattended area. Mr. Williams advised that the number 31 was partially based on folklore (deaths from fire, influenza, drowning) and indentions in the ground that could still be seen. Mr. Williams stated that he felt that it was "better to have too many crosses than to have too few." Mr. Williams stated that there were no prior crosses or markers that would have identified the deceased.

However, other staff members interviewed alleged that wooden crosses existed prior to the cement crosses, but no evidence was revealed to suggest the existence of the wooden crosses. Mr. Williams advised that the School's maintenance department constructed the crosses out of concrete and rebar.

**Figure 7: Present Day Crosses**



*Source: FDLE File Folder, 12/12/2008*

**Figure 6: Present Day Crosses**



*Source: FDLE File Folder, 12/12/2008*

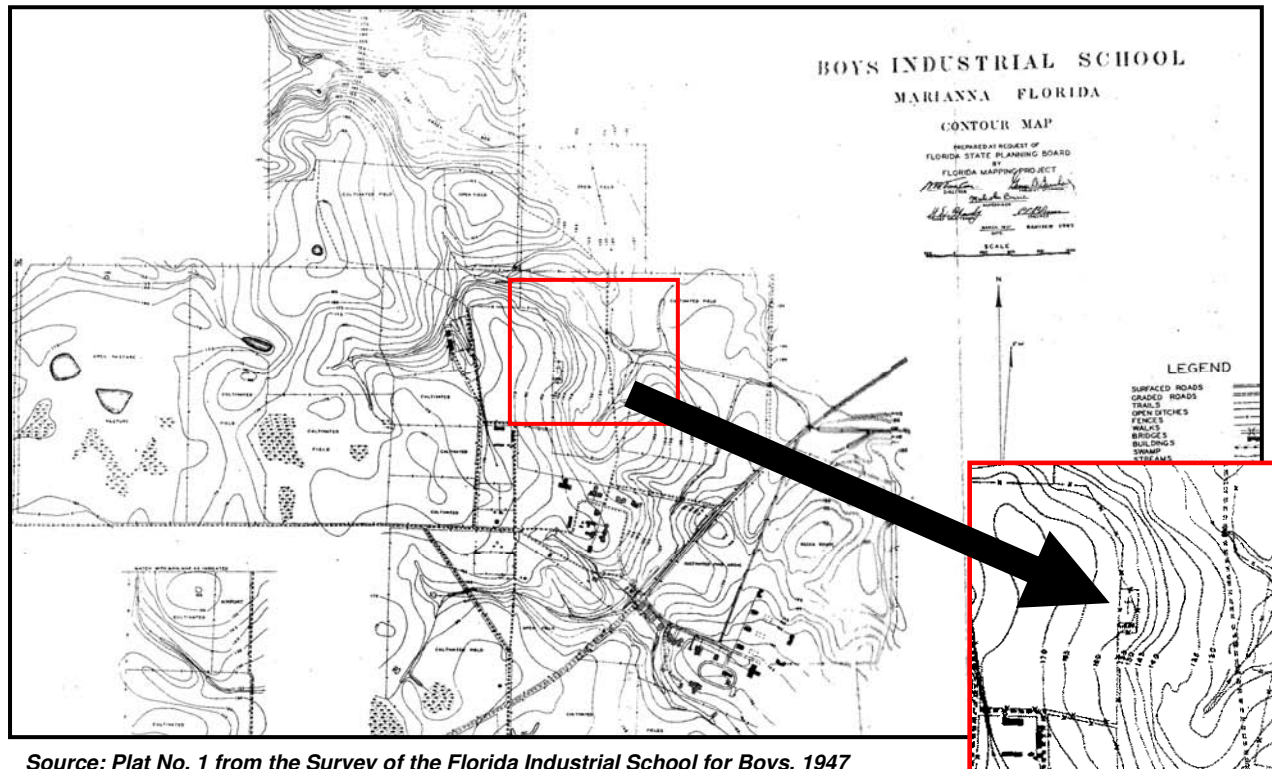
According to Mr. Williams, many years later (late 1980's-1990's), P.R.I.D.E. (Prison Rehabilitative Industries and Diversified Enterprises Inc.) farmed the land and destroyed some of the cemetery during the course of land clearing. Mr. Williams stated that as a result, the School's new Superintendent Danny Pate ordered replacement crosses for the cemetery. The School's maintenance employees all stated that they were tasked to clean the cemetery grounds and erect new crosses made of two inch steel pipe that they painted white. These are the grave markers currently in place at the cemetery. The employees all stated that they had no real reference point as to the placement of the new crosses and that they placed them based on how they thought they should be arranged. (See Figure 6 and 7)

## AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS, SURVEYS AND ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

Aerial photographs of the School and Cemetery were obtained through the University of Florida Digital Collections Library. For purposes of this report, the years 1948, 1955, 1961, and 1967 were used to document the changes of the area over time. Photographs prior to 1948 were of poor quality and lacked any useful detail. The North Side dining hall was used as a visual reference point for the cemetery and the distance between the two was calculated at approximately one quarter of a mile. The cemetery is located north northwest of the North Side dining hall. In all four photographs, there is an open field with very little vegetation separating the two points. The areas immediately surrounding the cemetery contain a small cluster of large hardwood trees. The remaining area between the cemetery and the dining hall appeared to have been used as farm land over the years. There also appeared to be dirt roadways leading from the School to the cemetery and its vicinity. In all four photographs, the cemetery appears to have always been situated in an area surrounded by undisturbed foliage.

The School's Cemetery has also been documented on the 1947 Survey of The Florida Industrial School for Boys, Marianna, Florida for the Florida State Improvement Commission, as well as the 1997 United States Geological Survey map. (See Figure 8)

**Figure 8: Photocopy of the 1947 Survey**



**Source: Plat No. 1 from the Survey of the Florida Industrial School for Boys, 1947 (Gravesite depicted by cross)**

There is no evidence to suggest or support that the School's Cemetery was a "well kept secret" hidden from the students. More than likely the cemetery was a necessity, especially in the early years for families who could not afford funeral expenses or lacked adequate means to retrieve or have their children's remains returned. Several articles were written in *The Yellow Jacket* documenting that students attended the funerals of their fellow classmates:

November 3, 1934, Thomas Varnadoe Claimed by Death

“...Funeral Services were held on Saturday, October 27, at the School cemetery. Dr. C.B. Toombs, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Marianna conducted the services. The Aces of the School acted as pallbearers, and a large number of the officers of the School were present.”

March 9, 1935, Death Claims Grady Huff in F.I.S. Hospital

“...Funeral Services were held in the School cemetery on Tuesday, March 5th, at 11 a.m., with Dr. C.B. Toombs, Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Marianna, in charge. All of the boys of Cottage Two, the cottage where Grady lived, and all members of the laundry crew, the crew in which he worked, attended the funeral. Miss Inez Huff, of St. Petersburg, sister of the deceased, and a large number of Staff members also attended the services.”

December 27, 1947, Obituary (Sue the peacock)

“...An elaborate funeral service was held and several of the students were present to pay full respects to her remains. She lies on “Boot Hill,” beside the bodies of several other of Marianna’s deceased.”

**BURIALS AT THE SCHOOL CEMETERY**

In 1919 the School ledger documented the first student death with subsequent burial at the School’s Cemetery. However, the deaths of eight students and two staff members due to a dormitory fire during the early morning hours of November 18, 1914, were reported in a November 21, 1914, *Miami Herald* article. The article stated a telegram was sent to Mrs. Fred Wetherbee advising,

*“Dormitories of industrial school burned last night. Ten lives lost. Among the dead was your son, Joe Wetherbee. Bodies charred beyond recognition. Will be buried here. Greatest sympathy to family.”*

Documentation regarding the dormitory fire was found in various local and national newspapers as well as an account provided to the Board of Commissioners of Institutions of the State of Florida. There was no independent documentation found in the School ledgers which confirmed the names of those individuals who perished. A search of the Department of Vital Statistics database for these individuals produced negative results primarily because death certificates were not issued until 1917 and even then, deaths were not required to be reported as they are in modern times. (See Figure 9 and 10)

Based on the newspaper accounts (*Idaho Statesman, Miami Herald, Bradford County Telegraph, and Kansas City Star*), the following ten persons died in the 1914 School fire:

**Staff Members**

Name	Race/Sex
1) Bennett Evans	White/Male
2) Charles Evans	White/Male

**Students**

Name	Race/Sex
3) Joe Wethersby [ <i>Sic</i> ]	White/Male
4) Walter Fisher	White/Male
5) Clarence Parrott	White/Male
6) Louis Fernandez	White/Male
7) Harry Wells	White/Male
8) Earl E. Morris	White/Male
9) Waldo Drew	White/Male
10) Clifford Jefford	White/Male

**Figure 10: Miami Herald Newspaper Article**

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.

Source: Miami Herald, 11/21/1914

**Figure 9: Idaho Statesman Newspaper Article**

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 WEATHERBEE.  
CLIFFORD GIFFORDS.  
LOUIS HAPPEL.  
LOUIS FERNANDEZ.  
WALTER FISHER.  
WALDO 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. Milton 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.

Source: Idaho Statesman, 11/19/1914

Other than the telegram that was sent to Mrs. Wetherbee, there is no known documentation to support that the students and staff members were buried at any location other than at the School Cemetery.

Further research into the history of the School's Cemetery revealed 21 other known burials at the site. The following individuals (11-31) were found to have been buried in the School's Cemetery through documentation in the School ledgers, *The Yellow Jacket* newspaper, and death certificates.

CEM = Death Certificate indicated Burial at the School Cemetery

C/M= Colored Male W/M= White Male

Note: Bolded individuals will be further discussed following the table.

**Students:**

Student Name	Race/ Sex	Date of Death	School Ledger Indication	Death Certificate Informant	Death Certificate Notations
11) Leonard Simmons	C/M	05/09/1919	Cemetery	N/A	None Issued
12) Nathaniel Sawyer	C/M	12/12/1920	Cemetery	N/A	None Issued
<b>13) Arthur Williams</b>	C/M	02/26/1921	Cemetery	N/A	None Issued
14) Schley Hunter	W/M	04/15/1922	Cemetery	Superintendent Knight	Pneumonia
<b>15) Calvin Williams</b>	C/M	12/31/1922	Cemetery	N/A	None Issued
<b>16) Charlie Overstreet</b>	C/M	08/19/1924	Died	Mamie James – Marvin, GA	Died During Tonsillectomy/CEM
17) Edward Fonders	C/M	05/18/1925	Drowning	George Robinson - Marianna	Accidental Drowning/CEM
18) Walter Askew	C/M	12/18/1925	Cemetery	N/A	None Issued
19) Nollie Davis	C/M	02/08/1926	Died	Superintendent Knight	Lobar Pneumonia/CEM
20) Robert Rhoden	C/M	05/08/1929	Cemetery	Annie Walton, St. Petersburg	Lobar Pneumonia/CEM
21) Samuel Bethel	C/M	10/15/1929	Cemetery	F.I.S. for Boys	Pulmonary Tuberculosis/CEM
22) Lee Smith	C/M	01/05/1932	Mule	N. A. Baltzell, M.D.	Rupture of Lung result of Falling from Mule/CEM
23) Joe Stephens	C/M	05/09/1932	Flu	J. A. Davis – Supervisor of Boys	Influenza/CEM
24) Thomas Varnadoe	W/M	10/26/1934	Pneumonia	F.I.S. for Boys	Lobar Pneumonia/CEM
25) Richard Nelson	C/M	02/23/1935	Influenza	Baltzell Hospital, Marianna	Lobar Pneumonia/CEM
26) Robert Cato	C/M	02/24/1935	Influenza	Baltzell Hospital, Marianna	Lobar Pneumonia/CEM
27) Grady Huff	W/M	03/04/1935	Illness/Cemetery	Miller Davidson – F.I.S. for Boys	Acute Nephritis/CEM
28) James (Joseph) Hammond	C/M	05/02/1936	Lung Trouble	F.I.S. for Boys	Pulmonary Tuberculosis

29) <b>George Owen Smith</b>	W/M	01/24/1941	Runaway found deceased under house	N/A	None Issued
30) <b>Earl Wilson</b>	C/M	08/31/1944	Murdered	Superintendent Davidson; (autopsy by Dr. Whitaker)	Homicide – Head Injury/CEM
31) <b>Billey Jackson</b>	C/M	10/07/1952	Deceased	J.Dykes – F.I.S. for Boys (autopsy by Dr. Whitaker)	Pyelonephritis /CEM

**Animals:**

The following animals (32-34) were found to have been buried in the School’s Cemetery through the following documentation:

Animal	Date of Death	Documentation
32) “Sue” peacock	12/27/1947	Obituary
33) Dog	Unknown	Edwards 1968 Internship Paper
34) Dog	Unknown	Edwards 1968 Internship Paper

Sue the peacock, was listed based on an obituary documenting her death and elaborate funeral at the School’s Cemetery. The dogs were listed based on documentation obtained from the 1968 internship paper written by Dr. Cortland Edwards (deceased). Dr. Edwards and others have stated that the dogs were also buried at the cemetery.

The following students’ deaths were also documented in additional records, to include the School’s Biennial Report and newspapers:

Arthur Williams C/M (1921), Calvin Williams C/M (1922), Charlie Overstreet C/M (1924)

The 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, lists the deaths of two unnamed students that occurred during a sixteen month period. One student was listed as a colored boy who died as a result of influenza. The other boy was a male brought to the School “unconscious by a man to whom the boy had been paroled.” It is possible that the colored boy was Arthur Williams or Calvin Williams based on the dates of death. The January 1, 1923, through January 1, 1925, Biennial Report lists the deaths of two unnamed boys who passed away during that period. One boy was listed as a “six year old white boy, who had chronic gastritis.”

The other was a colored boy who died during a tonsil operation. The colored boy is believed to be Charlie Overstreet who, according to his death certificate, died during a tonsillectomy.

George Owen Smith W/M (1941)

Smith was listed as being buried at the School’s Cemetery based on 1941 newspaper articles from the *Jackson County Floridan* and *Pensacola Journal*. Smith escaped from the School in September of 1940 and his remains were found in January 1941 under the Marianna residence of Ms. Ella Pierce. After a coroner’s inquest, no cause of death could be determined due to the

extreme decomposition of the body. According to the newspaper accounts, Smith was buried at the School's Cemetery and his funeral was attended by School staff members, students, and a sheriff's office representative.

#### Earl Wilson C/M (1944)

Of the 31 individuals listed as being buried at the School's Cemetery, Earl Wilson is the only known student whose death was attributed to foul play. On August 31, 1944, Wilson was strangled and beaten to death by four fellow students. Reportedly, Wilson had knowledge that the four were planning an escape and they feared that they would be reported. The four, Charles Bevels, Robert Lee Farmer, William Foxworth, and Floyd Alexander were charged in Wilson's death. The account of his death is listed in the *Evening Independent* newspaper as well as in an appeal to the United States Court of Appeals.

#### **STUDENT DEATHS WITH BURIALS ELSEWHERE OR UNDETERMINED**

The School ledgers were the primary source of information when determining the identities of those individuals buried at the cemetery. The ledgers also contained the names of 50 other youths who passed away while attending the School. The earliest known documented date of death for an individual not buried at the School or who had an undetermined burial location is 1911 (Per Biennial Report). The last known death at the School occurred in 1973. According to a *Miami Herald* article, several students succumbed to influenza and pneumonia in 1918. As stated earlier, the well documented 1918 influenza pandemic killed nearly 500,000 people in the United States. The "Official Report of Physicians Appointed to Investigate State Reform School at Marianna" which appeared in a November 19, 1918, *Miami Herald* newspaper article stated that 11 students/staff died as a result of the pandemic. The report noted that "Out of 247 boys all but three came down with it practically at one time: the assistant superintendent in charge of the colored side and his whole family. The matron at No. 2 died with it. In fact very few escaped the ravages of this insidious disease."

The influenza outbreak during the early 1930's was documented on several occasions in *The Yellow Jacket*. The North Side (colored) was hit the hardest and classes were cancelled. At one time the newspaper reported that over 100 boys had the illness. Normally, colored students worked as cooks and waiters in the South Side (white) dining hall. However, in order to prevent the influenza from spreading further, several white students were called in to replace the colored students until the outbreak abated. Although the newspaper did not mention the deaths of any students due to the illness, documentation pertaining to their deaths was discovered in the School ledgers. (See Figure 11)

Figure 11: Example of the School's Newspaper



Except as noted, the remaining deaths listed are largely accidental or medically related:

Note: Bolded individuals will be further discussed following the table.

Student Name	Race/Sex	Date of Death	School Ledger Indication	Death Certificate Informant	Death Certificate Notations
1) Unknown Name	C/M	1911	No Entry	N/A	None Issued
2) Scott Martin	C/M	1915	No Entry	N/A	None Issued
3) Granville Rogers	C/M	1915	No Entry	N/A	None Issued
4) Willie Fisher	C/M	1915	No Entry	N/A	None Issued
5) Sim Williams	C/M	1916	Deceased	N/A	None Issued
6) Tillman Mohind	C/M	1916	Deceased	N/A	None Issued
7) James Joshua	C/M	1916	Deceased	N/A	None Issued
8) Thomas Aikins	C/M	1918	Deceased	N/A	None Issued
9) Lee Gaalsby	W/M	1918	Deceased	N/A	None Issued
10) George Grissam	C/M	1918	Deceased	N/A	None Issued
11) Wilbur Smith	C/M	1918	Flu Epidemic	N/A	None Issued
12) Willie Adkins	C/M	1918	Deceased	N/A	None Issued

13) Lloyd Dutton	W/M	1918	Deceased	N/A	None Issued
14) Ralph Whiddon	W/M	1918	Deceased	N/A	None Issued
15) Hilton Finley	W/M	1918	Deceased	N/A	None Issued
16) Puner Warner	W/M	1918	Deceased	N/A	None Issued
17) Joe Anderson	C/M	1919	Deceased	N/A	None Issued
18) Henry Murphy	C/M	1920	Died at Home	N/A	None Issued
19) Alton Long	W/M	1920	Body Shipped	Mr. Garrett - Marianna	Pneumonia
20) Wallace Ward	W/M	1921	Body Shipped	Mr. Caubell – De Funiak Springs, FL	Pneumonia
21) Sam Morgan	W/M	1921	Deceased	N/A	None Issued
22) Guy Hudson	W/M	1921	Drowned	Mr. Hadley	Drowned while Swimming
23) John H. Williams	C/M	1921	Accident	N/A	None Issued
24) George Chancey	C/M	1923	Malaria	Superintendent Knight	Malaria
25) Clifford Miller	C/M	1924	Deceased	N/A	None Issued
26) Willie Sherman	C/M	1926	Body Shipped	F.I.S. for Boys	Lobar Pneumonia
27) George Johnson	C/M	1926	Body Shipped	F.I.S. for Boys	Double Lobar Pneumonia
28) Ernest Mobley	C/M	1927	Body Shipped	N/A	None Issued
29) Moses Roberts	C/M	1928	Body Shipped	F.I.S. for Boys	Malaria
30) Cecil Ansley	W/M	1929	Body Shipped	F.I.S. for Boys	Toxemia following a 35% burn of body from clothing catching fire
31) Lonnie Harrell	W/M	1932	Died-operation	F.I.S. for Boys	Hernia Operation
32) James Brinson	C/M	1932	Flu Epidemic	N. A. Baltzell, M.D. – Marianna	Pneumonia
33) Willie Heading	C/M	1932	Flu Epidemic	F.I.S. for Boys	Pneumonia
34) Sam Nipper	C/M	1932	Flu Epidemic	Superintendent for F.I.S. for Boys	Lobar Pneumonia
35) Jesse Denson	C/M	1932	Flu Epidemic	Superintendent for F.I.S. for Boys	Lobar Pneumonia
36) Fred Sams	C/M	1932	Flu Epidemic	Theodore Opie – Jacksonville, FL	Influenza
37) Lee Underwood	C/M	1932	Flu Epidemic	O. Underwood	Influenza
38) Dary Pender	C/M	1932	Flu Epidemic	J. A. Davis – Supervisor of Boys	Influenza
39) Oscar Murphy	W/M	1932	Auto Accident	Lulu Hamilton - Ona, FL	Run Over by Auto

40) Archie Shaw	C/M	1932	Flu Epidemic	N/A	None Issued
41) Joshua Backey	C/M	1935	Blood Poison	N/A	None Issued
<b>42) Robert Seinous (Stephens)</b>	C/M	1937	Stabbed by Student	C.M. Mayo – F.I.S. for Boys	Knife Wounds following Hemorrhage
<b>43) Eddie Black</b>	W/M	1949	Murdered by Student	Evans Colbert, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Lt., Panama City, FL (autopsy by Dr. Whitaker)	Strangling/Severe Contusions
44) Clarence Cunningham	C/M	1954	Cancer	Inez Cunningham, Gainesville, FL (autopsy by Dr. Hutchinson)	Metastasis to Spinal Cord
45) George Fordom (Fordham)	C/M	1957	Cancer	W.T. Edwards Hospital (autopsy by Dr. Shaffer)	Sarcoma of Lung
46) Edgar Elton	W/M	1961	Heart Attack	Lamar Elton, Umatilla, FL (autopsy by Dr. Whitaker)	Acute Dilation of Heart
<b>47) Raymond Phillips</b>	W/M	1961	Deceased off campus	Medical Records – University of FL Teaching Hospital	Gunshot Wound of the Brain
48) James Lee Fredere	W/M	1965	Auto Accident	James Fredere, Pineallas Park, FL	Auto Accident
49) Alphonse Glover	W/M	1966	Drowning	Maurice Crockett – F.I.S. for Boys	Drowning
50) Martin E. Williams	C/M	1973	Drowned in River	Carrie Taylor	Drowning

Unknown Name C/M (1911), Scott Martin C/M (1915), Granville Rogers C/M (1915) and Willie Fisher C/M (1915)

The Unknown Named student's death was documented in the Biennial Report for 1911 to 1912. Martin, Rogers, and Fisher's deaths were documented in the School's Discharge Book for the year 1915.

Robert Seinous (Stephens) C/M (1937)

According to the School ledger, on July 15, 1937, Stephens was stabbed to death by fellow student Leroy Taylor.

Eddie Black W/M (1949)

The School ledger indicated Black was murdered by a fellow student, Frank Murphy. *The Yellow Jacket* reported that Black witnessed fellow student Frank Murphy smoking a cigarette and threatened to tell staff members. On May 4, 1949, Murphy lured Black into a culvert drain filled with water and strangled him. Authorities first believed that Black had accidentally fallen into the drain and drowned, however, it was learned that Murphy had confided his intentions to another student. Murphy later confessed to the homicide.

Raymond Phillips W/M (1961)

On September 15, 1961, Phillips, an escapee from the School was shot and killed by an Alachua County Sheriff's Deputy. According to an article from the *St. Petersburg Times*, Phillips and another escapee had stolen a vehicle and were spotted in Alachua County. Phillips ran from the vehicle, however, his companion surrendered. The deputy fired two warning shots over Phillips' head and then fired a third warning shot which struck Phillips in the back of his head.

**ALLEGATIONS OF SUSPICIOUS DEATHS**

During the course of this investigation, several former students of the School stated that they heard rumors that fellow students disappeared never to be seen again or were murdered by School staff members. Other former students stated that they observed what they believed to be: a body wrapped in a sheet being carried away by School staff members, a covered body lying bloody and motionless on the ground, and a student's body in a tumble dryer. Several students stated that they were either told by School staff members or overheard staff members state that students would be killed by "boy hunters," or taken into the snake infested fields if they were caught trying to escape. Another version of this rumor was that escapees were killed by local farmers and their bodies tilled into the soil. Several of these rumors have become folklore and thus passed on throughout the years.

It is important to note that none of the former students in the above instances were able to provide any specific first hand information which would have identified any of these alleged victims or the person/s responsible for their purported demise.

The news media has interviewed some of these former students and included their accounts in articles regarding this investigation. One such incident includes a student who was interviewed by the media and stated that in 1953, he was asked to help dig the grave of a fellow student named "Billy." The student stated that "Billy" frequently escaped from the School and was punished each time as a result. The student stated that the last time he saw "Billy" his stomach was bloated. The student stated that "Billy" died two weeks later and was buried in the School's cemetery. FDLE obtained records that identified "Billy" as Billey Jackson of Daytona Beach, who according to his death certificate, died on October 7, 1952, at the Jackson County Hospital of pylonephritis (kidney infection) due to hydro-nephrosis (obstruction). According to the death certificate, the interval between symptom onset and death was ten days.

During the course of the investigation it was determined that neither the School nor its staff made any attempt to conceal any student deaths. Furthermore, no evidence or information was discovered which indicated that any staff member was responsible for any student deaths at the School.

## EXHUMATION

It has been 56 years since the last known burial at the School's Cemetery. In the time span since, there is no known documentation or personal knowledge as to the precise location of each grave, or more importantly, which grave belongs to which student, staff member, or even school pets.

There is also no known documentation that the graves ever had markers that would have individually identified the deceased.

Although it is possible to exhume the deceased in an attempt to confirm identity, without knowing the precise location of each grave, it would not be possible to exhume any one individual gravesite. Attempts to exhume an individual's gravesite would likely result in the destruction of the entire cemetery and the desecration of its most innocent remains. Additionally, the physical condition of the remains would make specific identification unlikely. There is no known evidence that any of the deceased were embalmed or buried in sealed or structurally sound caskets. The possibility of confirming identification based on DNA may be difficult due to these burial conditions alongside other contributing factors including advanced decomposition, environmental elements, passage of time and a deficiency of suitable familial candidates for comparison.

Exhumation in the State of Florida requires a court order issued by a Judge with jurisdiction for the area of the gravesites. Although the requirements for the issuance of a court order are not specifically enumerated in state statute, there are elements common to previously issued exhumation orders. An affidavit requesting the exhumation order would include the following elements; a compelling legal reason for exhumation (usually probable cause that the deceased died as a result of criminal conduct and that an examination of their remains would reveal evidence to further prosecution of the criminal case), a reasonable likelihood that an autopsy will disclose relevant information essential to the investigation, and the opinion of a forensic expert that there is a reasonable likelihood of relevant and essential evidence being obtained.

In addition to the referenced criminal, legal, and forensic concerns, previously issued exhumation orders have acknowledged and addressed conflicts raised by religious beliefs and the feelings of family members and friends as it relates to the exhumation process.

It does not appear that the results of the investigation support the issuance of any exhumation orders. The investigation did not reveal evidence to suggest that any of the deceased died as a result of criminal conduct which had not been previously investigated. Therefore it is highly unlikely that an autopsy would reveal any information relevant to the investigation.

## CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of Governor Crist's directive was to identify those individuals buried at the School's Cemetery. In order to accomplish this task, numerous public records including newspaper and *The Yellow Jacket* articles, as well as existing official documents were searched to determine their identities and where possible, cause of death.

Governor Crist Directives:

**1. The entity that owned or operated the property at the time the graves were placed.**

The entities that operated the School during the time the graves were placed (1914-1952) were:

- Governor Appointed Commissioners
- The Board of Commissioners of State Institutions

**2. Identification, where possible, of the remains of those individuals buried on the site.**

- Thirty-one (31) individuals purportedly buried in the School's Cemetery have been identified

Of those 31 individuals identified:

- Five (5) individuals, between 1919 and 1925, had no listed cause of death and their only notation was that they were buried in the cemetery
- Twenty-four (24) individuals died as a result of illness or accident
- One (1) death was a homicide by identified assailants
- One (1) cause of death was undetermined (1941 Coroners Inquest) due to advanced decomposition.

**3. If any crimes were committed, and if so, the perpetrators of those crimes.**

In all cases, the deceased were accounted for in official documentation. There is no evidence to suggest that the School or its staff made any attempts to conceal and/or contributed to the deaths of these individuals. There is no evidence to support that an unidentified perpetrator exists or existed that was responsible for any of these individual's deaths.

Therefore, from witness testimonies, records that were examined and all information currently available, FDLE determined that there was no indication of a criminal predicate to warrant further investigation into this matter. The investigation pertaining to the School's Cemetery will be closed due to lack of evidence as defined by Florida Statutes. A separate report will be prepared regarding the allegations surrounding the abuse of the students.