

# IDENTIFICATION OF HUMAN REMAINS BURIED AT THE DOZIER SCHOOL FOR BOYS

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The Florida School for Boys, also known as the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys, was a reform school operated by the state of Florida beginning in 1900. After years of allegations of abuse and suspicious deaths, the school closed in 2011. Throughout 2012 and 2013, anthropological fieldwork and excavations of burials were performed by the University of South Florida at the request of the families and with the permission of the Florida Cabinet. A total of 55 graves, representing 51 individuals, were uncovered. After anthropological analysis, 69 bone and teeth samples for 51 individuals and 27 family reference samples representing 14 families were submitted to University of North Texas Health Science Center.

Autosomal STR and mitochondrial DNA testing were performed on all skeletal remains. Family references were tested for autosomal STR and/or mitochondrial DNA as appropriate. As a result, seven identifications were made.

Identifying these remains using DNA presents several challenges: severe degradation, lack of first-order relatives for comparison, and software limitations when using multiple genetically distant relatives. However, future technologies may provide additional benefit to these types of cases.

The State of Florida is currently deciding reburial and memorialization efforts for the Dozier School students.