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The Performance of Memorialization: Politics of Memory and Memory-Making at the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys

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The Performance of Memorialization:
Politics of Memory and Memory-Making at the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation to my mother, Katherine Robinson, and my uncle, Charlie Lee Penn. Although I lost her at the age of 15, my mother’s spirit and love has guided me through this process. Her strength and tenacity was instilled in me at a young age and I will carry it with me as I continue on life’s journey. My uncle was very supportive of me starting this program. He encouraged me in so many ways, from a simple smile when I talked about being in a doctoral program to constantly saying how proud he was of me. Uncle Charlie always dreamed of coming to Florida and was excited to see me when I finished this doctoral program. He may no longer be here in person, but I know his spirit will be with me as I approach this finish line. I am thankful to have two amazing angels watching over me.

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Abstract

My study examines how religion operates as a form of social control in the politics of memory and memory making in the case of the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys (1900-2011), a state reform school in Marianna, Florida. Collective memory making is a dynamic process that reflects the social, economic, and political tensions of the present. It is a process most evident during circumstances of reconciliation following conflict, violence, or cases of turmoil resulting in death and in conflicting memories of the experience. Emergence of a dominant narrative about the tragedy or traumatizing event and subjugation of conflicting stories and memories often follows. At this intersection, memory becomes a weapon or reflection of power.

Religion has been defined as operating as means of social control, particularly in the face of uncertainty, fear, and conflict. This study explores dynamics of power with respect to memorialization and ways in which religion informs the present and the past through processes of collective memory making. I also explore ways in which Christianity is employed as a means of bringing about reconciliation through public memory making and memorialization efforts as in the case of the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys located in Marianna, Florida.

In 2013, a team of anthropologists from the University of South Florida (USF) received approval from the State of Florida to investigate the location of missing children buried at Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys. This research, known as the Boot Hill Burial Ground Project, resulted in the excavation of 55 burials. The Boot Hill Burial Ground Project is integral to the memorialization efforts and processes at Dozier as multiple stakeholders utilize the
findings of the project for the construction of collective and public memories. The purpose of this study is to analyze tensions involved in processes of memory making resulting from the discovery, excavation, and identification of bodies at the Boot Hill Burial Ground on the Dozier campus and ways power is expressed within this process.
Chapter One: Introduction

My study examines how religion operates as a form of social control in the politics of memory and memory making in the case of the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys (1900-2011), a state reform school in Marianna, Florida. To do so, I look at religion in two dynamics: 1) the ways in which religion, specifically Christianity, was employed during the school’s history; and 2) the role of religion in performance of memory following the exhumation of 55 burials from Boot Hill Cemetery, located on the North Campus of the institution. I document the memory making practices of multiple stakeholders in the Dozier case as they create, negotiate, and contest collective memories of the school’s past. Further, I investigate how power manifests in various forms through memory and the memorialization process of Dozier and the manner in which religion is used during these practices.

**Dozier School for Boys**

On July 4, 1897, Florida Governor W.D. Bloxham signed “An Act to Provide for the locating and erecting a State Reform School, and to Appropriate Money Therefore” into law for establishing a juvenile state reformatory (Holt 2005; Edwards 1968; Kimmerle et al. 2012). Prior to this point, juvenile offenders were placed in adult prisons and endured similar work/punishment (Holt 2005).

Florida was one of the southern states that utilized convict leasing as a method for rebuilding its economy and punishing criminals. The convict leasing system was the systematic
leasing of prisoners to work for private contractors (Holt 2005; Mancini 1996). After the Civil War, many county and town governments around the states were looking for better facilities for housing the increasing number of criminals (Mancini 1996). Prior to the Compromise of 1877, Republicans had control over the state and spent money to build schools, railroads, and prisons (Mancini 1996; Holt 2005). However, the citizens did not want to pay taxes for a prison when most of its convicts were black (Mancini 1998; Holt 2005). The incarceration of black people increased as white southerners sought to suppress Black economic and social mobility. Republican Governor Harrison Reed appealed for a state prison in 1868 that would not accrue much cost (Holt 2005). If used properly, the prison would engage in convict leasing and be a source of profit for the state. When the convict leasing system began in Florida under the Republican leadership, the contracts to private business and individuals failed, with the state not collecting the money (Holt 2005; Mancini 1996). It was not until the Democrats expanded the convict leasing system that it became successful. The Democrats required that the farms and business feed and house the prisoners (Holt 2005; Mancini 1996).

Figure 1.1: Map of the State of Florida. Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys is marked with an orange icon. Copyright 2018 by Google. Used with permissions.
Children who were convicted of such crimes as incorrigible conduct, which primarily implied habitual truancy, were included in the convict leasing system in Florida (Holt 2005). The public detested the brutality of convict leasing, particularly in regards to the children working alongside the adults. The Commissioner of Agriculture, L. B. Wombell, recommended in 1890 that separate prisons be established for juvenile offenders, as they were not being effectively reformed or punished in adult prisons (Holt 2005). A Joint Legislative Committee investigation in 1896 and 1897 on the adult prisons and recommended that the Florida Legislature stop putting juveniles under sixteen in the same position as adult criminals, reinforcing the need for reformatories (Holt 2005).

The “An Act to Provide for the locating and erecting a State Reform School, and to Appropriately Money Therefore” signed by Governor Bloxham was to select and purchase land for that would fulfill the needs for reforming juvenile offenders, i.e. education and employment (Edwards 1968; Holt 2005). Marianna, Florida (see Figure 1.1), located on the state's panhandle, was chosen as the location for the reform school in early 1898. Under the leadership of State Senator William H. Milton, the community offered $1,400 and more than 1,200 acres of land for the building of the reform school, tangibly showing support for the institution (Edwards 1968; Holt 2005; Kimmerle et al. 2012). After accepting the land and cash from the people in the town, the State—specifically the Governor, Attorney General, and Commissioner of Agriculture—approved plans to open the Florida State Reform School on January 1, 1900 (Edwards 1968; Holt 2005; Kimmerle et al. 2012). The name of the institution changed over time: Florida State Reform School (1900-1913); Florida Industrial School for Boys (1914-1957); Florida School for Boys (1957-1967) and the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys (1968-2011). In this dissertation,
the institution will be referred to as state reform school unless otherwise noted for historical purposes.

Figure 1.2: Map of Marianna, Florida. Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys is marked with an orange icon. Copyright 2018 by Google. Used with permissions.

Jackson County was, and still is, a religious community. The county consisted of a range of religious groups, primarily of the Protestant Christian faith, such as Episcopal, Methodist, and Baptist denominations (McGovern 1982). There were more Baptist and Methodist churches in the early half of the 20th century than other denominations in Jackson County. Marianna had small pockets of Presbyterians, Adventists, and Episcopalians (McGovern 1982). The residents of Jackson County typically went to church on Wednesdays and twice on Sunday, allowing people to fellowship with others who have a relationship with God. In addition to wealth and power garnered through business or inheritance, publicly declaring religious devotion and regularly attending Christian worship services were important aspects of obtaining social approval (McGovern 1982).

Discipline was also considered an important aspect of character development throughout Jackson County. Being spanked was a part of the cultural norms in the area. As noted by McGovern (1982), parents and teachers “didn’t spare the rod” when disciplining the children.
This is in reference to the following Bible scripture: “He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him promptly” (KJV, Proverbs 13:24). I posit this as another example of how religion permeated the Jackson County community, including the school. Dozier’s methods of punishment for the students were extreme. Reports of brutal punishments such as being beaten with wooden paddles and locked in dark rooms for isolation surfaced throughout the school’s history (Edwards 1968; Fisher, O’McCarthy, and Straley 2010; Kimmerle et al 2012).

According to the law, students could be sent to the reform institution if they were over 10 and under 16 years of age (Holt 2005). These students—including black, white, male, and female juveniles—were convicted of misdemeanors or felonies. The term limits for the juvenile convicts at the Florida State Reform School ranged from at least six months to about four years (Holt 2005). Children sent to Dozier were usually from marginalized groups. Antoinette Jackson (2016) states that the boys sent to the reform school were “typically poor, black, and socially, historically, and legally vulnerable to the history and practice of slavery and segregation in the United States” (164). She further explains that these marginalized groups were vulnerable to the application of institutional power that was combined with the labor needs of businesses. For example, as Jackson states in her article entitled “Exhuming the Dead and Talking to the Living: The 1914 Fire at the Florida Industrial School for Boys—Invoking the Uncanny as a Site of Analysis,” boys who did not have enough money to go home would be paroled to provide labor to local businesses and farms/plantations until they were able to purchase their transportation home (2016, 164). In the first few years of the school, the children did not receive academic or vocational education. Instead, they were leased out to local businesses and farms or worked on
the property (Holt 2005). Outside contractors even expected them to work as hard as an adult; if they did not, the children were subjected to brutal punishment (Holt 2005).

**Racial Segregation as the Norm**

The law required that the school was racially segregated: the white students were on the South Campus and the black students were on the North Campus (Edwards 1968; Holt 2005). By 1901, the Florida State Reform School received 22 black boys, five white boys, and three black girls (Edwards 1968). In 1913, girls were no longer allowed at the institution and the school changed its name to the Florida Industrial School for Boys. As characteristic of the convict leasing system and Jim Crow South, the majority of students who have been enrolled at the Dozier School for Boys were African American. The North Campus, the black campus, was usually overcrowded with boys. This overcrowding was highly likely due to the fact that black people were vulnerable to incarceration due to the racial tensions following slavery in the Jim Crow South (Lundrigan 1975; Kimmerle et al. 2012; Mancini 1996).

Racial differences were geographically and systematically enforced at Dozier. As explained by Jackson (2016), the social and spatial geography of Dozier’s campus shows the racial divide, which was mandated by the Jim Crow laws. The school was divided into two campuses—South Campus was only for the white boys and the North Campus housed “colored” boys. Two members of the White House Boys have stated to me that while enrolled at Dozier, they did not see any "black boys" because they could not go on the other side. Therefore, they did not know what occurred on the North campus. As dictated by the laws of segregation in the Jim Crow South, white and black students were not allowed to associate or work together. The students also could not be taught in the same building (Edwards 1968; Holt 2005). Jackson (2016) explains that racial segregation was also integrated in the record keeping practices. For
example, in the Dozier’s ledgers, the documented listing of all inmates, boys were listed in
different sections according to their race (Jackson 2016). For example, in the Dozier school
ledgers, which were log books or the official place in which names of boys admitted to the
school as inmates were entered, entries were segregated by race. This means there was a colored
section within the ledger and a white section until after desegregation (Jackson 2016, 167-168)

In addition to the racial segregation, the documented number of African American deaths
at the school was higher than that of whites, if you do not include the 1914 South Campus fire
that killed several white students (Kimmerle et al. 2012). Black juveniles also received different
treatment than that of their white counterparts. African American juveniles mainly worked on the
farm all day, with limited academic training in comparison to the white students. Based on a
1912 Joint Investigative Committee report, the black children had to work the entire day and
were only in the classroom for a short period during the day (Lundrigan 1975). The next year,
another report explained that the “colored school” only had one teacher, a 75-year old white
man, for the 97 boys and 5 girls, which would make it very difficult to provide optimal academic
training (Lundrigan 1975). The racial and economic history was a significant point of
contestation during the memorialization of the Dozier School for Boys. In this dissertation, I will
use the terms “black,” “African-American,” and “colored” to refer to the black youth who were
inmates at the reform school.

Boot Hill Burial Ground Project

Dozier closed its doors on June 30, 2011, following the several investigations by the
Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights
Division into the mistreatment of the juvenile inmates as well as the public outcry of former
students who were abused. Despite its closing, Dozier School for Boys gained national attention
as the result of the Boot Hill Burial Ground Project. In 2013, a team of anthropologists from the University of South Florida (USF) received approval from the State of Florida to investigate the location of missing children buried at Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys. This investigation included several tasks. In addition to locating and excavating the graves, the tasks included identifying and repatriating remains; conducting archival research using primary and secondary documents; interviews with stakeholders associated with the school, such as families and community members; and submitting the findings to the State of Florida. This research was an interdisciplinary effort that included forensic anthropology, cultural anthropology, archaeology, and bioarchaeology (Jackson 2016; Kimmerle, Wells, Jackson 2016).

As part of the Project, 55 burials were excavated from Boot Hill Burial Ground. Seven positive identifications of human remains have been made and five have been repatriated back to the families. In addition, the Dozier Digital Archive was created that includes Dozier’s historical materials and the research of the Boot Hill Burial Ground Project. The findings were presented to the State of Florida Cabinet and made available to the public in January 2016. The Boot Hill Burial Ground Project was integral to the memorialization of Dozier as multiple stakeholders depended on the work and findings of the project for the construction of collective and public memories.

I was introduced to the Dozier School for Boys case in 2013 as a graduate student assistant for my advisor, Dr. Antoinette Jackson, cultural anthropologist in the Department of Anthropology at the University of South Florida. She collaborated with Dr. Erin Kimmerle (forensic anthropologist) and Dr. E. Christian Wells (archaeologist) on the Boot Hill Burial Ground Project. During her research trips, I, along with other graduate students, assisted Dr. Jackson with her ethnographic research. This experience not only provided valuable research
training, but it was the catalyst for my interest in religion at Dozier. In addition, I worked as a research assistant for Dr. Kimmerle, beginning in summer 2015, assisting with organizing the Dozier files and DNA database in the University of South Florida Forensic Anthropology Lab. These experiences exposed me to stakeholders (i.e., state officials, families, faith-based groups, and others) involved with the Dozier case. I also attended various events regarding the reform school, such as funerals, memorial ceremonies, and state meetings. My work on the Boot Hill Burial Ground Project was the foundation for this study. Also, by working with both Dr. Jackson and Dr. Kimmerle, I gained insight on what it means to be a woman navigating scientific and ethnographic research terrain in the U.S. South.

**Research Study**

My study focuses on the role of religion as a form of power in the memory and memorialization of Dozier School for Boys. I examine how religion is used in two contexts/registers at Dozier School for Boys: 1) as a moralizing and disciplinary institution and 2) as a reconciliatory practice. This purpose of the reform school was to provide academic, vocational, and moral training for the youth. Moral training was based primarily on beliefs of Protestant Christianity. This dissertation explores how religion was employed in the administration and daily activities of Dozier. I also analyze the power dynamics of memory making practices regarding the alleged abuse at the school as well as the unidentified remains exhumed from Boot Hill. I document the manner in which religion has been used to facilitate the performance of memory in this case. For example, a pastor of an African Methodist Episcopal Church in Marianna, Florida interviewed by Antoinette T. Jackson, co-PI on the Boot Hill Burial Ground Project, supported exhumation at Boot Hill Cemetery so that families receive closure and the deceased have a proper burial by relatives (Jackson 2016, 172-173). In this context, my
research explores sites of collective memory such as the use of religion for reconciliation in discussions and planning for memorials and reburial. My study focuses on the central question: How is power expressed in the form of religion, specifically Christianity, with respect to Dozier, and how does it impact memorialization efforts, past and present? This question is addressed by the following research questions:

1. How has Christianity been used to rehabilitate juveniles at the Dozier School for Boys?
2. How do faith-based organizations, such as the Interfaith Commission on Florida’s Youth and Children, employ Christianity when seeking to memorialize the unidentified remains of the Dozier Boys?
3. What are tensions of collective memory and memorialization and how are they experienced in the case of Dozier?
4. What lessons can be learned concerning navigating stakeholder communities in processes of memory and memorialization?

Situating Theory and Method

In this dissertation, I use Karl Marx’s articulation of religion as the framework. The reason is because Marx was critical of religion and its role in society, specifically division of labor. He referred to religion as the “opium of the people” (Marx and Engels 2008). By using this phrase, he argues that religion is used to dull the proletariat’s desire for social change (Guest 2014). Marx’s articulation of religion is an effective definition for this study, as it provides an understanding of how religion was used, not only as a doctrinal method, but also as a tool for social control. Marx’s understanding of religion centers on the division of labor, particularly in relation to class interests. It is an effective way of understanding how the state entities utilize religion as a disciplinary force to maintain control of society. This force, which Peter Berger
(1969) refers to as sacred cosmos, is established to maintain normality, or nomos. However, “normalcy” is socially, culturally, and historically situated and created by those who exercise power. Institutions of power use their authority to construct cultural norms and values that become an established system. Antonio Gramsci (1971) emphasizes such state control through his concept of hegemony, which explains the power of institutions to create complicity among groups of people, who agree and do not contest the power structure. Again, creating this normal environment and complicity involves several methods, including religion, that operate as hegemonic power, one that creates self-discipline. Thus, referring back to Marx and Berger, the hegemonic power of religion, specifically Christianity in the United States, functions as a sacred cosmos, one that is unquestioned, yet obeyed and upheld in order to maintain the nomos established by the state.

To analyze the ways in which religion functions as a form of power in the memory-making practices of Dozier, I employ the concept of collective memory as the theoretical foundation of this study. Collective memory, a dynamic practice, is constantly made and remade in the present for present purposes. It is often contested as competing groups remember the past based on their own experiences and interests, making it difficult to have a single collective memory that encompasses every group remembering. It is at this juncture that power becomes an important characteristic in understanding collective memory. Power elite has the ability to exert control through memory practices by silencing the subjugated discourses for specific aims and purposes. As a result, these subjugated groups create counter-memorials to give meaning to their experiences. Michel Foucault (2003) articulates counter-memory as resistance to the authoritative power given to dominant narrative. Counter-memory directs the focus from an authoritative memory to the multiple and complex recollections of marginalized people. As the
State of Florida and other leading stakeholders in the Dozier narrative form dominant narratives, counter-memory practices commenced in opposition to the authoritative accounts of Dozier’s past.

**Applying Black Feminist Methodology**

I use black feminist ethnography as a methodological frame for exposing and analyzing the exercising of power in the Dozier narrative. Feminist ethnographers champion the use of standpoint theory that emphasizes that knowledge is socially situated and these “situated knowledges” is partial in nature, not claiming to be universal, as well as shifting (Donna Haraway 1988, 581; Davis and Craven 2016). As argued by Patricia Hill Collins (2009), marginalized groups are positioned in a manner that questions the core of power structures and are able to ask different questions than non-marginalized groups. As a tenet of standpoint theory, feminist ethnographers encourage a critical analysis of positionality and reflexivity. This requires the researcher to understand their identity and its relation to their work. Black Feminist anthropology developed from feminism and the Black intellectual tradition. For this research, I utilize a Black Feminist ethnographic framework that is situated in my racial and gendered identity. My identity and associated experience influenced my data collection, such as the ability to gain access to certain groups and develop certain types of questions, as well as my analytical lens for this study. Black feminist ethnography was instrumental in the critique of power relations from my situatedness as a Black woman. This dissertation is written in a manner that reflects my Black feminist ethnographic approach to my study. I combine scholarly knowledge of this research with vignettes from my fieldwork journal that offers insight into my research experience. Black feminist ethnography helps me structure and focus my positional knowledge to address my research questions, concerns, and observations.
Research Goals

The overall goal of this study is to examine ways religion operates as a form of power in the memory-making practices of the Dozier School for Boys. I also examine the performance of memory making between stakeholder groups and tensions and negotiations of narrative control. This qualitative study uses theories of memory to critique expressions of power in the form of religion around issues of reconciliation and memorialization; and issues of power between stakeholder groups engaged in memorialization efforts. This study produces greater insight and strategies for understanding multi-stakeholder roles in memorialization efforts and ideas for expanding space for engaging and reconciling multiple narratives and expressions of the past.

Organization of Dissertation

This dissertation consists of nine chapters. The introductory chapter, Chapter One, offers an overview of the research. It explains the research purposes and goals, and also provides background information concerning the main research site of this study, Dozier School for Boys. In Chapter Two, I discuss the theoretical framework for this research. I explore the relationship between religion and power and I introduce the theoretical framework pertaining to constructing and engaging memory. I conclude with an examination of religion and collective memory in efforts of reconciliation.

Chapter Three focuses on methods and methodology used in this study. I introduce Black feminist anthropological critique as a methodological approach utilized for data collection and analysis. I discuss my positionality as an aspect my field experience, including how it influenced my research process. Chapter Three also details the ethnographic methods used in this study to answer my research questions and the ethical considerations for this study.
Chapters Four and Five explore the stakeholders and their interests and access to power in the construction of Dozier’s collective memory. In Chapter Four, I discuss the manner in which stakeholders participate in the memorialization of Dozier and its victims. Chapter Five focuses on the White House Boys, a specific stakeholder group and major player in demanding recognition of the problems associated with Dozier.

In Chapter Six, I discuss the role of religion, specifically Christianity, in Dozier’s past. This chapter provides the broader historical context of religion as social control in the United States, including the Native American boarding schools as well as the child-saving movement of the Progressive Era. I also explain how the religion was incorporated into the reform school.

Chapters Seven and Eight focus on the performance of memory making in the case of Dozier. Chapter Seven discusses the complicated memorialization of the victims by the State of Florida. It explains the process involved in creating the Dozier Task Force, a nine-member group tasked with providing recommendations for the reburial of unidentified and unclaimed remains as well as the memorialization of victims. Chapter Eight focuses on the counter-memory practices of stakeholders in resistance to a dominant narrative. In this chapter, I utilize a Foucauldian analysis of genealogy, specifically counter-history and counter-memory, to examine how stakeholders participated in memorial practices in opposition to the silences and distortions created by dominant narratives.

Chapter Nine concludes with a summary of this study and analysis of findings. I explain the contributions of my research to the current literature on religion and power as well as the applied implications. At the end of the chapter, I discuss plans for disseminating the results of my study.
Chapter Two:

Theoretical Framework

Dozier School for Boys provides a good case study of the relationship between history and memory as a means of engaging the past. History is a narrative about the past constructed from the point of view of the history maker/teller (Trouillot 1995; Carr 1986). It is also embedded with power. Memory, a selective recollection of the past based on present conditions, is also subjected to manipulation and control by the power elite (Shackel 2003). However, collective memory, a common and public retelling of the past, can create its own silences and gaps. This chapter begins with a discussion of history as an approach to understanding the past and how power is infused in its production. In the next section, I focus on collective and public memory and silences and gaps that develop during the construction of an official narrative. The following discussion tackles the subject of memory and reconciliation following issues of human rights abuses. This chapter concludes with a discussion of case studies regarding truth and reconciliation commissions around the globe.

Primarily individuals commissioned by the state have written many accounts of Dozier’s history. As previously outlined, Dozier was a reform school established in 1900 with the aim of providing an alternative to prison for educating and rehabilitating young men ages 10-16. The school’s efforts were applauded and supported by the local community in a variety of ways—from financial support to the provisioning of professional services and religious training. Dozier was a resource for the community in terms of employment and as a site of social interaction (i.e.,
the annual Christmas parade and show). The school’s newspaper, The Yellow Jacket, provided constant information to the public about the success of the school and its students. Yet there are contested memories about the school and what it meant to be a student there. For example, a group called the White House Boys, have been actively engaged in making the state of Florida recognize other, less positive, aspects of the school and its impact on the lives of those sent there.

**Historical Production and the Exercising of Power**

Antoinette Jackson (2012) emphasizes the importance of critiquing what is meant by the past and understanding the multiple ways of interpreting the past. In her work *Speaking for the Enslaved: Heritage Interpretation at Antebellum Plantation Sites*, Jackson explains that there are multiple ways of engaging the past: myth, memory, tradition, heritage, and history (22-23). She defines history as one of many stories about the past that can be told at any moment. She further explains, “The skill of the history maker is determined by the evidence used to tell the story as judged by the stakeholders that sanction its production” (Jackson 2012, 23). E. H. Carr argues that before understanding the facts, you must study the historian who begins with a selection of facts and how the interpretation of that selection is conducted. History, according to Carr, is a consistent interaction between the facts and the historian. It is also a constant dialogue between the past and the present (1986, 24). This process also involves a reciprocal interaction between the present and the past as the historian is in the present and the facts are a part of the past (Carr 1986).

History, as argued by Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995), is produced within a particular historical context, is a dual process of both “what happened” and “what is said to have happened” (1995, 2). The first point of history he explains emphasizes the sociohistorical process. The second aspect of this definition is the focus on our understanding of and on a story
about the process. For this study, I define history as a dynamic process that engages the past through the selective accumulation of facts within the social and political context of the present for present purposes. As argued by Benedetto Croce in his work *History as the Story of Liberty* (1941), history should be considered “contemporary history” despite how distant the recounted past may be because history reflects the present needs and situations where those events vibrate (1941, 19).

Trouillot’s (1995) articulation of power the historical production is useful in understanding how the official narratives develop in Dozier’s past. Echoing Michel Foucault’s point, Trouillot explains that we should be concerned not only with who exercises power, but we should also question how power is exercised at the same time (1995, 28). Power does not enter the historical production at one point, but it inserts itself at different times and ways. Trouillot explains that power begins at the source. It is at the source that we can begin to discover the silences and gaps in information, facts that are included or excluded. Trouillot argues that power should be traced in all of the moments of historical production: “the making of sources,” “the making of archives,” “the making of narratives,” and “the making of history” (Trouillot 1995). A historical narrative is a bundle of silences, especially as the historian selects the facts based on the present influences.

**Memory and Power**

Yelvington (2002) cautions against what Megill refers to as a “valorization of memory” as opposed to history (Yelvington, 236). In his article “History, Memory, and Identity: A Programmatic Prolegomenon,” Yelvington offers seven reasons why anthropologists may view memory as more authentic. 1) Cultural learning and practices are dependent on memory. 2) Fieldwork and writing fieldnotes involve memory. 3) Based on the people we learn from,
identity and memory-as-authenticity are connected. They dispel history and culture as deceitful and memory as “unproblematic, possessable, and as a recollection of an authentic past” (Yelvington 2002, 236). 4) As a result of number three, anthropologists may choose to focus on memory to get beyond culture and history because memory is "construed as unmediated and genuine” (Yelvington 2002, 236). 5) The notion of memory fits in with the “hangover of historical particularism” (Yelvington 2002, 236). Cultures and groups define themselves based on their memory and vice versa. 6) Invoking memory is a way in which groups participate in a secular discourse of the soul, one that evokes the religious fixation on the future of humanity. 7) An additional reason anthropologists may prefer memory is “the intellectual laziness that makes it easy for us to impute motives…and psychological ‘inner states’” (Yelvington 2002, 236). Instead of valorizing memory as an authentic approach to the past, it is important to understand the political and cultural context of memory. It is not a direct recollection of the past but is influenced by the present climate as well as the experiences of the individual(s) remembering, as emphasized by Maurice Halbwachs and Frederic Bartlett.

Maurice Halbwachs, a student of Emile Durkheim, considers memory a social notion, even as individuals elicit memories. Halbwachs (1992), the first scholar to coin the phrase “collective memory,” argues that social groups create their worldviews based on common and public retellings of the past. These memories are always recalled within a social context; a person only remembers as a member of a group. Although an individual may be the one retelling the story, it is the group dynamic of the memory itself that influences what is remembered. For example, as provided in Halbwachs' work On Collective Memory (1992), if a student remembers what happened in a class among other students, the teacher may not recall. This forgetfulness is
due to the teacher’s exclusion from the social group of students (Halbwachs 1992). Halbwachs explains that memory is social reconstruction that is not a pure retelling of the past.

Memories are also influenced by the experiences of the individual or social groups. Frederic Bartlett argued that people’s recollections are shaped by cultural expectations, background knowledge, and the context of the present. Bartlett, in his famous work *Remembering* (1932), focused on the cognitive nature of memory. He studied how people remembered stories and how those memories change over time (Bartlett 1932; Roediger 2003). Bartlett argued that as people are told stories of the past, they attempt to provide a general organization of the narrative based on their own life experiences. Our recollections conform to the background knowledge, cultural context, and the present situation (Zaromb and Roediger 2009). This organization, called schema, is the result of people’s need to rationalize parts of the story that seem unnatural from their standpoint (Bartlett 1932; Roediger 2003). This rationalization process involves restructuring the story and, at this point, the story loses some of its core characteristics as individuals change elements that are too difficult for them to understand. Bartlett refers to this concept as “effort after meaning” (Bartlett 1932; Roediger 2003). The created schema is integral in the retelling of the new story, with the abnormal details being forgotten or distorted (Bartlett 1932; Roediger 2003). Due to the fact that their own schema affects individuals’ memories, a shared collective memory may be difficult to achieve.

Collective memories can be the center of contestation and conflict, especially as they are products of particular groups (Climo and Cattell 2002). They are formed based on the economic, social, and political situation of the present. The schema, as well as the beliefs, values and cultural norms of the person/persons remembering, influences the shared collective memory/memories, which are never constant and consistent (Climo and Cattell 2002; French
2012; Bartlett 1932). Their dynamic nature allows them to be negotiated, revised, created, and re-created. Noted in Bartlett’s argument, collective memories can also be affected by experiences of various generations or cohorts who are continuing on the recollections, which can challenge the notion of a hegemonic memory (Climo and Cattell 2002).

Despite the difficulty in creation and the influence of those who challenge hegemonic memory, dominant narratives can emerge, especially as collective memories become public. Public memory, as argued by Johannes Fabian (2007), is one that is open to the masses and promoted through *lieux de mémoire*. At the intersections of history and memory, Nora (1989) argues that *lieux de mémoire*, or sites of memory, are created. *Lieux de mémoire* is the reconstituted object that remains, gaining the attention of history’s critical gaze, when the memory disappears (Nora 1989; French 2012; O’Meally and Fabre 1994; Klein 2000). These mémoires are made to limit forgetfulness and elicit recollections and historical consciousness. People aim to create *lieux de mémoires* by such practices as making archives, building historical institutions (i.e. libraries and museums), maintaining anniversaries, language dynamics, and building memorials (Nora 1989; Legg 2005). Groups and individuals choose certain places, dates, and objects for landmarks that represent the past on which they bestow political, social, and symbolic significance (Nora 1989; French 2012; O’Meally and Fabre 1994; Klein 2000). *Lieux de mémoires* are simultaneously symbolic, material, and functional (Nora 1989; French 2012; O’Meally and Fabre 1994; Klein 2000). For example, materials, such as archives or monuments, are used during rituals or other forms of ceremony that commemorate the past, which then becomes symbolic as the past is being remembered through the objects (Nora 1989; Klein 2000).
Dominant narratives written and/or articulated by groups with economic, political, or social power (i.e. government entities) become enshrined in *lieux de memoires*, emphasizing the erasures that are created during the collective memory process. When stories of the past are made official, they risk alienating groups from their history. This invisibility then becomes retold throughout time, as once a story is told and repeated, experiences not included are forgotten or erased (Nora 1989). Erasure is the process through which some activities and people are rendered invisible. Such invisibility occurs when a homogenous understanding of a story overlooks the myriad of perspectives and social groups (Gal and Irvine 1995). According to Susan Gal and Judith Irvine (1995), who analyze silences from a linguistic standpoint, erasure happens when a problematic part of the picture fits its alternative, threatening the story being depicted (Gal and Irvine 1995).

**Counter-Memory**

Michel Foucault articulated counter-memory as a method of resisting the authoritative power involved in dominant discourses (Foucault 2003; Bouchard 1977). This notion of resistance involves memories that oppose the dominant national historiography and steers historical inquiry away from the history established by the nation-state (Olick and Robbins 1998; Bouchard 1977; Foucault 2003). George Lipsitz (1990), building on Foucault’s definition, explains counter-memory as an account of singular accidents, details, and events that contest the totality of dominant narratives (Olick and Robbins 1998). Counter-memory aims to look for subjugated discourses that were excluded in the memory process (Leonard and McLaren 1993, 8). Although this counter-memory disputes the hegemonic history, it does not seek to completely get rid of the larger history. It asks for a revision of the existing history, as argued by Lipsitz, that involves aspects of history and myth, but remains critical of both categories Lipstiz 1990;

**Memory and Reconciliation**

In regard to justice seeking and reconciliation, memory serves different purposes for the perpetrators and the victims. According to Amstutz (2005), when a wrongdoing occurs, accountability is difficult because the antagonist’s worldview and perceptions are based on looking at the past. Hence, memory of the past suffering or political conflict dominates the political vision. Victims use memory to seek justice as a method for continuing to achieve truth, legal retribution, and accountability. Perpetrators, on the other hand, use memory as a tool to justify their actions, even if those actions lead to human suffering. Amstutz (2005) suggests that in order for reconciliation and communal healing to occur, there must be a moral reformation of memory, which would lead to forgiveness.

Forgiveness—the opposite of retributive justice that identifies the perpetrator and compensates the victims—also happens differently for the two opposing parties (Amstutz 2005). Forgiveness happens for the offenders when the victims do not pursue any justice or make claims against them, thereby liberating them from any wrongdoing (Amstutz 2005; Tutu 1999). Victims achieve forgiveness when they are no longer angry or carry any resentment toward the perpetrator. Amstutz (2005) argues that it is only through forgiveness that a moral order can be restored. When the perpetrator committed the wrongdoing and unjustly garnered resources during this immoral act, they created moral inequality between them and the victims (Amstutz 2005). Forgiveness is the process of restoring moral equality and interpersonal relationships that
were broken. It tries to redeem the past of any injustices. Memory, which is the foundation of forgiveness, is then articulated in a manner that the individual and community views the past from a different standpoint, such as one of survival (Amstutz 2005).

A reconciliation following an act of injustice consists of producing a collective memory or national narrative, which can incorporate multiple and conflicting memories. However, constructing a national and collective memory is prone to contestations as silences are imbedded in its structures, especially as some memories, groups, and peoples are privileged over others. The disenfranchised groups then seek to create counter-memories that are plural in nature, acknowledging the multiple experiences and perspectives of the past.

Dozier School for Boys is an important case for understanding the intersections of history, memory, and power. Different stakeholders—families, victims, communities, and civic organizations—inserted their recollections of the past into the dialogue of memorializing Dozier, which included positive and negative depictions of the school. However, the conversations are conducted under the guidance of Florida State officials, who are the ultimate decision-making power in the memorialization process. In addition, due to the fact that Dozier was a state institution, the Florida government is responsible for all memorials and reburials. Although state politicians engaged with multiple perspectives regarding the memorials and reburials, there was very little conversation about the religious undertones of the memorialization process.

**Religious-Redemptive Narrative: Religion and State Politics Globally**

*South African Case*

Richard A. Wilson, a social anthropologist, critiqued the role of religion in the reconciliation processes, specifically the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The government of South Africa set up the TRC as a result of the human rights abuses
and violence that occurred during the apartheid era. According to Dullah Omar, former Minister of Justice, “...a commission is a necessary exercise to enable South Africans to come to terms with their past on a morally acceptable basis and to advance the cause of reconciliation” (qtd in. Shore 2009, 116). Religion was central to this reconciliation championed by Omar and Bishop Desmond Tutu. Wilson criticized this religious-redemptive approach (Wilson 2001; Graybill 2002; Shore 2009). He states that this religious-redemptive narrative focuses on reconciliation through confession, redemption, and forgiveness, all based on Christian tenets. This approach centers on reconciling the individuals within the state as well as with the nation as a whole, emphasizing group cohesion and moral unity based on Christian doctrine.

In the case of the South African TRC, testimonies were elicited as truth-telling mechanisms, which mirrored the Christian emphasis on confession. These testimonies that were spoken during the Human Rights Violation hearings contained healing powers, helping the victim to deal with the atrocities of the past. However, as argued by Wilson, the hearings encouraged an “emotional ‘catharsis’ rather than to unearth information which could be of use to the investigative unit” (2001, 110). He explains that these testimonies were not a part of the investigative findings, but they were mainly for the media in order to promote a nation-building image. Christian discourses on suffering, forgiveness, and redemption supported the truth telling testimonies, particularly in combination with the liberation narrative. Wilson argues that suffering came to be understood as a sacrifice for liberation, creating heroes and martyrs. The ensuing memorialization of human rights abuses was compensation for the victims’ experience, which quells any feelings of retribution. The liberation narrative connected the experience of the individual to the larger society, further promoting moral unity of the nation.
The religious-redemptive narrative of reconciliation was significant to some individuals; however, its encouragement of forgiveness over retribution was silencing and alienating to many of the victims. According to Wilson, “Virtues of forgiveness and reconciliation were so loudly and roundly applauded that emotions of vengeance, hatred and bitterness were rendered unacceptable, an ugly intrusion on a peaceful, healing process (2001, 120). He argues that this religious-redemptive model threatened the goal of the TRC to rewrite history in order to promote reconciliation and justice. Ultimately, the TRC was unable to truly address the injustice of human rights violations and did not change the overall socio-political structures due to its emphasis on the religious-redemptive narrative (Shore 2009; Wilson 2001).

**Australian Case**

Marion Maddox (2007), scholar of religion and politics in Australia, also highlighted the religious-redemption paradigm in her research on aboriginal reconciliation. Based on the Australian government’s main website, “Reconciliation is about unity and respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-Indigenous Australians. It is about respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and valuing justice and equity for all Australians.” However, steps to reconciliation initiated by the government was often contested and controversial, such as the comment made by John Howard, former Prime Minister, noting that the policies of assimilation were done in “good faith.” The reconciliation efforts were in response to the indigenous children who were forcibly taken from their families due to assimilation policies between 1900 and 1969. Despite the problems with the state’s movement towards reconciliation, several symbolic marches and activities were done as an apology for Australia’s past. On behalf of the Federal Government, Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd formally apologized to the Stolen Generations in 2007. He recognized the abuses of the past and
how they are continually felt currently. This official apology came after a decade of apologies made by local governments and religious organizations (Maddox 2007).

Maddox argues that the local and federal response to the reconciliation efforts reflects that religious-redemptive model of reconciliation that includes several characteristics (2007,96). In the religious-redemptive model, an apology depends on faith to ensure forgiveness and that the belief that an apology comes from a sacred source. The intergenerational apologies, based on this narrative, are likely not from those who committed the offence, but benefited from it. Therefore, they are taking responsibility for the problem. This concept is connected to the Christian principle of “original sin,” which suggests that all human beings inherited sin from Adam and Eve. Due to the fact that all humans are born with this sin, believers are supposed to go through steps to atone for this sin. The last component of religious-redemptive model is that reconciliation is anchored in the “transformative power” that comes from giving and receiving forgiveness (Maddox 2007, 96).

**Peruvian Case**

The Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission also dealt with the issue of Christianity as it sought reconciliation. Peru’s internal conflict began in 1980s when the Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso) revolted against the government, igniting an armed conflict. More than 70,000 indigenous peoples in the Andes were killed or disappeared as a result of the human rights atrocities at the hands of both the Shining Path and the government. After the conflict ended in 2000, the Peruvian government established its Truth and Reconciliation Commission or Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación (CVR) in 2001.

CVR consisted of twelve people, including academics, former political officials, professionals, as well as representatives of Christian religious organizations (Reisinger 2005).
Due to the fact that the majority of Peru was Christian (Pfeil 2016), this representation is not surprising, however, the Commission recognized that one faith community could not work alone in providing social reconciliation in a country that has multiple religions. The CVR also noted that Christian churches were not in the best position to assist in this process because of their inconsistent record of protecting the citizens (Pfeil 2016). This was a major religious concern in Ayacucho. During the conflict, Catholics attempted to seek shelter with their priests in the church. However, the surviving priests, who had not disappeared or killed, abandoned the church and refused to interfere with human rights concerns (Ortiz and Rojas n.d.). The Evangelical churches were welcoming, so the people of Ayacucho converted to this faith. Following the conflict, many of the Catholic Churches were abandoned and left in ruins, while the Evangelical churches were preserved and thrived (Ortiz and Rojas n.d.). Such mixed history of Christian churches made their facilitation of the reconciliation process questionable. Yet, religious figures remained on the CVR.

In June 2014, I traveled to Peru to participate in the EPAF (Equipo Peruano de Anthropología Forense) forensic field school. This opportunity was afforded to me as a result of my work as a graduate assistant on the Boot Hill Burial Ground Project, which is the focus of my dissertation. The field school in Peru, entitled “Transitional Justice in Practice: the Aftermath of the Internal Armed Conflict in Peru,” was a three-week program where we visited several communities in the Andes, surrounding Ayacucho, who were affected by the conflict. Researchers from all over the world attended the field school, including people from France, Brazil, Ecuador, and Israel. The purpose of this school was to “provide theoretical and practical training in themes of transitional justice, post-conflict development, and the application of forensic science in the investigation of human rights abuses” (epafperu.org/en/fieldschools). As
part of the field school, we spoke with victims of the internal conflict. We engaged with these families as they struggled to commemorate a past that is still strongly felt in the present.

The Peruvian government sought to memorialize the conflict following the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s findings. In Lima’s Museo de la Nacion, the “Yuyanapaq” (“to remember” in Quechua) exhibit is a commemoration that shows the horrors of the conflict through photography. The exhibit will be available until 2026. The government also created the “Eye that Cries” in honor of the victims of the conflict. Various communities in the Andes created their own memorials in response to the conflict, including community-sponsored museums as well as annual ceremonies at burials sites.

While at the field school, I focused on memorialization practices of the survivors. Religion was also an important part at these memorial ceremonies and in the testimonies of the survivors. I observed a memorial ceremony for the missing and deceased while at the field school. A local Catholic Church held a ceremony for mourning and healing. In testimonies given by survivors, several individuals explained that they are learning to forgive and not hold anger towards the perpetrators of the violence, even as they still walked among the community. The Evangelical Church encouraged this act of forgiveness and the need to move past this history of violence. They urged the parishioners to leave things as they are, including not disrupting the peaceful dead by finding additional burials. According to Equipo Peruano de Antropología Forense (EPAF) workers, Evangelical leaders did not promote truth and justice. Parishioners were not allowed to testify at hearings, meet with officials to identify clothing of the victims or provide DNA samples (Ortiz and Rojas n.d.). This religious perspective resulted in tensions with groups like EPAF that not only rely on interviews to find mass burials, but also aim to memorialize the deceased.
This case is important because it emphasizes the tensions involved in collective memory making practices and the need for counter-memory. The CVR attempted to create a unified collective memory of the past that would become the foundation for reconciliation. However, the CVR, which is a government-sanctioned committee, did make room for the multiple experiences, including the trauma and healing of the victims in its memorialization. This led to the development of counter-memorials, such as community-museums and memory walks. My experience at the field school in Peru compelled me to think about the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys case in Florida. Following the excavation of Boot Hill Cemetery on Dozier’s campus, the State of Florida took steps to create a collective memory of the school’s past. However, several groups engaged in the creation of counter-memories because they were not included in the dominant dialogue. I am interested in the role religion plays in the memory practices at the reform school. I am also interested in understanding the historic role religion played at Dozier.

Each of these chases highlight the religious nature of reconciliation and memorialization that is encouraged by state governments. In addition, they highlight a belief that in order to move past these issues, religion, Christianity in these cases, should be applied. However, I assert that this forgiveness and forgetfulness benefits the state more than victims of the atrocities, who may still be dealing with the pain of the past, which is not divorced from their present experiences. Restorative justice allows the state to move towards the future without any pressure of persecution or the need to provide reparations. This resonates in the case of Dozier School for Boys as some victims are still searching for some form of retribution, despite the apology and memorials that are planned.
Conclusion

History is a retelling of a past that no longer exists and is often a tool to tell the stories of triumph from a position of power. Werner Sollors argues that the word "history" implies the exclusion of oppressed peoples (O’Meally and Fabre 1994, 7-8; Sollors 1994). However, if history is considered solely as a narrative of the powerful, it suggests that marginalized groups do not have histories of their own worth academic acknowledgement (O’Meally and Fabre 1994). Memory is an avenue for critiquing and reconstructing history by accessing the subjugated discourses not included in dominant narratives. In this study, I will explore construction of collective and public memories in the case of Dozier School for Boys. Several stakeholder groups—the State of Florida, Marianna community, victims, families, and the White House Boys—have undergone a process of historical production and/or memory-making practices. For a reconciliation to occur, each of these groups, and others, will need to be included in the creation of a new collective narrative, one that equally respects the multiple memories.

As discussed in this chapter, authority and power are involved in the historical production as well as collective and public memories. The entity with the most control has power over the new narrative that is used for public memorialization. This undoubtedly creates new silences and the need for counter-memory and counter-memorials to capture subjugated voices and experiences. There is a need to explore ways of valuing coexisting memories. I focus on ways to recognize and arbitrate this process.
Chapter Three:
Methodology and Methods

My identity as a black woman has been a factor in conducting my research in critical and challenging ways. I was acutely aware of the racism that I might experience or encounter while collecting data. This was especially evident following the 2016 Presidential Election, which occurred during my research study. The 2016 election came at the conclusion of the eight-year presidency of Barack Obama, the USA’s first black President. Conversations intensified with respect to race and there was heightened activity and expressions of racism by those wishing to negate the power and position of authority that had been held by a black man. When I traveled around the state of Florida alone, I had to take precautions in protecting myself against possibility of being a victim of racial or gendered violence. This included collecting ethnographic research during the daytime hours and ensuring that members of my dissertation committee were aware of my location at all times. My personal and professional experiences in the field as well as anthropological toolkit used was informed by the black feminist anthropological methodology. I draw upon a black feminist methodology to help me critically interpret and utilize my experience and positionality to address my research concerns and to situate my positionality as a frame of knowledge.

In this chapter, I discuss the ways in which I employed black feminist ethnography as a methodological approach for this study. I explain how I utilized this framework in the application of my methods and the analytical process for understanding how religion operated as
a tool for social control in the case of the Dozier School for Boys. This chapter begins with a discussion of black feminist anthropology as a methodological approach. Next, I explain the multi-sited nature of this study and its social and historical context in relation to this study. This section is followed by a discussion of the ethnographic methods used in data collection and the analytical tools employed to identify themes that emerged from my fieldwork and the ethical dilemmas. I conclude this chapter with the ethical dilemmas I encountered in my research process.

**Black Feminist Anthropology as a Methodological Lens**

Black feminist anthropology developed from feminism and the black intellectual tradition. It also contributes to the production of feminist ethnography, a method of analysis grounded in feminist politics. According to Davis and Craven (2016), feminist ethnography involves focusing on marginality and differences in power such as gender, race, and class. It draws from feminist scholarship and aims to recognize power relations in the research process and challenges injustice and marginalization (Davis and Craven 2016, 11). Davis and Craven also argue that the scholarship developed from feminist ethnography to serve issues, communities, people, and individuals feminists study and support movement building (Davis and Craven 2016, 11). Feminist ethnographers produce knowledge that emphasizes power differentials by prioritizing the experiences of women and other marginalized groups (Davis and Cravin 2016).

Feminist ethnography emphasize the value of personal engagement and how it informs the research. It utilizes standpoint theory (Davis and Cravin 2016; Collins 1990; Haraway 1988) in its approach. Standpoint theory states that “knowledge is socially situated,” meaning that the research process is influenced by the researcher’s societal status (Brown 2012, 20; Davis and
Cravin 2016; Collins 2009). Therefore, researchers should be critical of their positionality and how it affects their data collection and analytical process. One of the main attributes of standpoint theory, and an important aspect of feminist ethnography, is reflexivity in ethnographic work, which refers to researchers stating their identity and how it impacts their work. Black feminist ethnography contributes to feminist ethnographic approach by speaking from a unique standpoint of Black women (Collins 1990). As argued by Patricia Hill Collins, “each group speaks from its own standpoint and shares its own partial, situated knowledge” (2009, 290). She further explains that individuals and groups who own their position are more credible than those who chose not to do so (Collins 1990). Based on this premise, I employ black feminist ethnography as a methodological lens as it speaks to my standpoint as a black woman and associated experiences.

Feminism, which is grounded in gender equality, has historically not been inclusive of Black women’s experiences. Even tracing back to the 1851 Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio, Sojourner Truth argued for women’s rights to be considered in combination with abolition (Davis and Craven 2016), encouraging her experience to be included in the dialogue on equal rights. “That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman?” (Truth, 1851). In this statement Sojourner Truth highlights the lack of inclusion of her status as a formerly enslaved Black woman in the conversations of gender equality. This would continue to be a trend as feminism gained traction in the United States.

The Combahee River Collective, a group of Black feminists formed in 1974, was committed to the inclusivity of Black feminists. The group created a Black feminist statement
that became the foundation for expanding Black feminism to incorporate the intersection of racism, sexism, and classism, which affected women simultaneously. Audre Lorde, “a Black lesbian feminist, warrior, poet, mother” (Esquilb 2006, 5), shared the same sentiment regarding lack of consideration for difference among women. In one of her notable works, “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House” (1979), Lorde argues: “It is learning how to stand alone, unpopular and sometimes reviled, and how to make common cause with those others identified as outside the structures in order to define and seek a world in which we can all flourish” (Lorde 2004 [1979], 442). Lorde called for academic feminists to acknowledge and understand the differences among women to achieve the liberation of all women, including those of us who are on the outside. In the same speech, Lorde stated, “For the master’s tool will never dismantle the master’s house” (2004 [1979], 442). This statement referred to the tendency of white academic feminists to use the same tools of the racist and sexist patriarchy to critique its system. Anthropology, with its colonial and imperialistic past, is dealing with a similar quandary.

In her chapter, “Theorizing a Black Feminist Self in Anthropology: Toward an Autoethnographic Approach,” Irma McClaurin (2001) suggests that Black feminist anthropologists use autoethnography as a methodological strategy that allows us to speak from our position as Black women. She argues that autoethnography is a practical method for Black feminist anthropologists to “theorize and textualize our situated positions and elevate our subjugated discourses” that are acknowledged by the discipline (McClaurin 2001, 56). She explains that, although leading scholars in anthropology thought all groups engaged in the research process in the same manner as that of a Western intellectual, due to our training, it is not the case in actuality. We bring our “situatedness” to our study as a form of critique of not only the discipline, but also to our research studies. By speaking from our subjugated discourses, we
combat the totalizing nature of anthropology (McClaurin 2001). Speaking from multiple and intersecting oppressions as a black woman, I am able to provide a unique vantage point for understanding and critiquing power differentials. My positionality influenced the methods I used, what I observed, the questions asked, how I organized themes, and the manner in which I wrote this dissertation.

Research Settings

This is a multi-sited ethnographic study that was carried out in multiple communities around the state of Florida, including Marianna, Florida (Jackson County); Tallahassee, Florida (Leon County); and University of South Florida (Tampa, Florida, Hillsborough County). These locations provide important historical, social, and political contextualization. In following section, I detail each location and its position in relation to this study and the Dozier School for Boys. These sites underscore relations of place, historical context, and the complexity of embedded in memorializing efforts at Dozier.

Marianna, Florida

Marianna, Florida (the county seat of Jackson County), the home of the Dozier School for Boys, is the one of the primary settings of my study. Located in the northwestern corner of the state, colloquially known as the Florida Panhandle, Marianna has approximately 6,102 residents within its 13.12 square miles (2010 Census). According to the “Visit Jackson County” website, there are more than fifty churches in the Marianna area, showing its religiosity. Based on the 2010 Census Bureau data, the largest racial groups in the city are White (53.3 percent) and Black or African American (42.0 percent). Marianna, founded in 1827, was affected by the Civil War, such as the Battle of Marianna, which is memorialized around the city. Once such marker states the following:
On September 27, 1864, Gen Asboth's force of 700 Federal cavalry from Pensacola arrived in the Marianna area to forage and secure Negro recruits. Confederate forces of a few hundred home guardsmen barricaded the streets of Marianna and withstood the first assault but Confederate casualties were 26, Federal about 55. Marianna was spared, but St. Luke's Church, situated in the middle of the battle, was burned.

This marker is near the Marianna courthouse and the infamous lynching tree.

One of the biggest cases of racialized violence that occurred was the lynching of Claude Neal, a twenty-three-year-old African American male murdered in Marianna, Florida in 1934 (McGovern 1982; Montgomery 2011). Neal, a farmer, was accused of raping and killing a twenty-year-old white woman, Lola Cannady. Once Lola’s body was found, it only took a couple of hours before Neal was accused and apprehended by Sheriff Flake Chambliss (McGovern, 1982; Montgomery, 2011). Neal was then taken to a jail in Marianna. However, the townspeople began to talk about lynching Neal, so Sheriff Chambliss decided to move him to another jail. Neal was moved to several different jails in Florida. A lynch mob was forming and followed the prisoner to the various locations (McGovern 1982; Montgomery 2011; Northeastern University n.d.). Eventually, Sheriff Chambliss moved him to Brewton, Alabama, which was more than 150 miles from Greenwood, Florida, the location of the Neal family property. During this time, Neal’s family had to move from their property to another location in Florida (McGovern, 1982).

Unfortunately, the lynch mob captured Neal from Alabama and brought him to Marianna, where he was tortured. A group of six men, who are known as the “Committee of Six,” tortured him for hours, which included castration and a hanging (McGovern, 1982; Montgomery, 2011; Northeastern University n.d.). Once the committee finished torturing and killing Neal, they allowed the Cannady family and other visitors to further brutalize his body. George, Lola’s father, shot into Neal’s body and her mother and sister slashed it with knives. Some people took
parts of his body, such as fingers, for souvenirs. His body was ultimately hung from the tree in front of the courthouse (McGovern 1982; Montgomery 2011).

Marianna is also the location of several meetings regarding the memorialization efforts of the Dozier School for Boys and the reburials of unidentified and unclaimed individuals buried at Boot Hill. One of the meetings for the reburial and memorialization of the remains was held in the Marianna City Hall. It is situated across from First Baptist Church-Marianna, which has two buildings: the main sanctuary and its Sunday School Building. The two entities face each other from opposite sides of Green Street, symbolizing the biggest powers in Marianna, religion and state. Another meeting occurred at the Jackson County Agriculture Center, a larger venue located further away from the downtown area of Marianna.

*Tallahassee, Florida*

Tallahassee, Florida, the state capitol, was the setting of another aspect of my study: State-level politics surround Dozier, a state institution. In order to fully understand the politics surrounding Dozier, it was necessary to attend meetings and sessions by the Florida Cabinet and Legislature, who were, and continue to be, the ultimate decision-making body regarding the future of the school. Several stakeholder groups, even those who are their own autonomous unit, were required to interact with the state to push for their own plan for Dozier and its victims. Once such stakeholder, the White House Boys, former juvenile inmates of Dozier, continuously petitioned the state for an investigation into the crimes at the school and for reparations for the abuse.

*University of South Florida*

Another important setting of this research is the USF Forensic Anthropology Lab (USF-FAL), established by Dr. Erin H. Kimmerle. The forensic anthropology team, with the assistance
of other forensic and archaeological experts, exhumed the burials at Boot Hill Cemetery. Following the exhumations, USF took custody of the human remains and brought them to the USF-FAL, where a complete bio-profile was completed for each individual set of remains (e.g. age at death, sex, ancestry, injuries and trauma, radiography, photography, chemical isotope testing, DNA sampling, and facial approximations. Testing for DNA was completed by the University of North Texas for identification results. Kimmerle and major crime detectives from the Hillsborough County Sheriff Office searched for and met with possible family members for DNA sampling to compare to the unknown sets of remains. The human remains and artifacts were stored in banker boxes (15.5x12x10 inches) in a secured evidence room within the lab.

The USF-FAL was also the center of communication between the researchers, various State agencies and legislators, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Interfaith Commission on Florida’s Youth and Children, Marianna residents and politicians, families of boys buried at Dozier, and the media. During the summer of 2015, I worked in the forensic lab and assisted the team in organizing the Boot Hill Burial Ground database, both electronically and physically, as well as the Dozier research and records assembled by Kimmerle. My position in the lab provided me with a unique vantage point to the interaction between multiple stakeholders in the Dozier case, including contacting families to collect DNA via buccal swabs, communication with Florida State officials regarding status of the human remains and artifacts, as well as the process of returning the identified individuals back to their families.
Research Questions

The research questions for this project centers on the role of religion and the memory-making practices of Dozier School for Boys. These questions aim to investigate the ways in which power is exercised through memory and memorialization through the use of religion:

1. How has Christianity been used to rehabilitate juveniles at the Dozier School for Boys?
2. How do faith-based organizations, such as the Interfaith Commission on Florida’s Youth and Children, employ Christianity when seeking to memorialize the unidentified remains of the Dozier Boys?
3. What are tensions of collective memory and memorialization and how are they experienced in the case of Dozier?
4. What lessons can be learned concerning navigating stakeholder communities in processes of memory and memorialization?

To answer these questions, I utilized a range of ethnographic methods: participant observation, interviews, casual conversations, digital ethnography, and archival research.

Ethnographic Fieldwork

Ethnography is the process of learning about a particular group’s culture, including its social and political institutions as well as its daily life (Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte 1999). An ethnography, as explained by Karen O’Reilly (2012), involves direct and continuous contact with humans over a prolonged period of time; pulls from a myriad of methods; changes as research progresses; recognizes the complex nature of the social world; and tells sensitive, credible, and rich stories (2012:11). James P. Spradley, a notable anthropologist, argues, in his book You Owe Yourself a Drunk (1988) that “the foundation of all ethnography lies in the complex relationship between researcher and his informants” (7). This statement is referring to
his experience in listening to the research participants, in his case alcoholics in Seattle, and being
in their environment in order to understand how they view the world and their experience.
Spradley’s point also speaks to the importance of understanding the researcher’s identity in the
complex relationship between researcher and participant.

*Positionality in the Field*

Before discussing how I conducted my study, I will first explain my positionality or Self, which is an important component in black feminist anthropology. Positionality within this context refers to the identity qualifiers that affect my relationships within the field. The intersection of gender, race, and class, has been integral to my ethnographic work. As a Black Christian woman and cultural anthropology doctoral student, my experience in the field was complicated by the multiplicity of my identity. My positionality was beneficial in having access to some groups and locations, yet it hindered me in other situations. I was constantly challenged while navigating the multiple spaces and stakeholders. In this section, I will discuss my identity and how it affected my interaction with my ethnographic field. I explain my experience in navigating multiple spaces and stakeholders involved in the Dozier School for Boys case.

As articulated in the USF research team’s study of Dozier, race (along with gender and class) was integral to the experiences of the youth who attended the school (Kimmerle, Wells, and Jackson 2016). Therefore, I was in environments where my identities, especially my racial background, were a component of my data collection, which affected not only the research participants’ reactions to me, but also my own personal feelings and experiences in white male-dominated environments. For example, when I traveled to different locations in Florida, especially if I did not have a cell phone signal, I would often be on high alert out of fear of racial violence that has been a historical dynamic in the United States, particularly in the South. In fact,
two of my research participants, a white man and a white woman, told me after an event that I should only travel to Marianna if someone comes along. They explained it would be dangerous for me to go up there because of the racism that still exists in that city.

The manner in which I navigated the field was also influenced by my major professor, Dr. Antoinette Jackson, who worked on the Boot Hill Burial Ground Project as a researcher and co-PI and her experiences as a black woman was a model for navigating race and gender in both a professional and personal context. While working as her graduate assistant, Dr. Jackson imparted knowledge about best practices to avoid dangers such as racial violence and I observed her defense mechanisms and situational awareness tactics in the field. For example, she only stayed in a specific hotel in Marianna for a few reasons including 1) USF researchers usually reserved rooms at this location so the employees were familiar with the group; and 2) the hotel was close to I-10, a main interstate that extends across areas in north Florida. If anything were to happen, she had easy access to I-10. Dr. Jackson also rented a car while traveling to avoid having any identifying information on her vehicle, from a parking sticker to the license plate. I employed several of these methods in my field experience, including staying at that specific hotel, which was known to be safe and welcoming, and renting a car. I also frequently contacted Drs. Jackson and Kimmerle during my fieldwork so that they would be aware of my whereabouts for safety reasons. I also learned from their gendered experiences in the field. For example, some men would comment on Dr. Kimmerle’s appearance, which made her more cautious of the attire she wore in the field as well as at meetings.

My identity as a Black woman was valuable in gaining access to groups and activities of groups that have been historically marginalized as well as subjugated in the memory-making practices of Dozier. For example, black men who attended Dozier would share, off the record,
their racialized experiences when dealing with other stakeholders with me cord. They felt comfortable speaking with me about issues of racism as they would often use phrases like “I know you know what I’m talking about.” One Black research participant explained to me and his friends that he was proud and happy to see an African American getting a doctorate degree, which made him more eager to share his experiences with me. After building a rapport with research participants, these interviews would include “insider” information that would likely not be told to someone who is not African American. This “insider” status as a member of the African American community has been beneficial to connecting with research participants, who would at times treat me as a member of their family. For example, I was invited to spend the night in one of my participants’ homes, in order to avoid hotel costs, as well as to have dinner with the family. Although I did not spend the night, we went to breakfast and one of the participants paid for my food.

In addition to race, my identity as a Protestant Christian was an important aspect of my positionality in this study. The majority of my research participants considered themselves Christian, either Protestant or Catholic. How devout in their faith each of the participants was varied. During several activities, my knowledge of Christianity gave me insight into the proceedings, including, for example, how I should participate in a religious service. I was also able to have conversations on Christianity during moments when I was the only black person in the setting.

As shown through these personal and intimate examples, my positionality affected how I collected my data for this study. It dictated my access to communities/stakeholders, interactions between research participants and I, as well as my own personal experiences and emotions in the
Methods themselves can be used by any anthropologist, but it is the situatedness of the researcher that impacts the manner in which these tools are chosen, implemented, and analyzed.

**Participant Observation**

One of the primary methods for collecting data on Dozier and the inner workings of religion in power structures was participant observation, a primary tool of Black feminist ethnography. Participant observation involves being amongst the population in order to build a rapport with the group and to allow them to become familiar with the researcher. It also gives the researcher the opportunity to understand the structure of the group, such as the social hierarchy, and the key informants and important individuals. Participant observations not only help inform interviews, but are also important in contextualizing information given in interviews or casual conversations with research participants. This is also a primary method for black feminist anthropologists as it is a manner in which anthropology can be transformed by directly addressing our identities and how they affect our research process (McClaurin 2001, 57).

I entered my research field as a participant observer throughout my preliminary work with Drs. Jackson and Kimmerle. This research field involved several settings, as outlined above, as well as several stakeholders who were associated with the Dozier case. These groups are the White House Boys, religious groups/organizations, political officials, families of Dozier’s victims, and the University of South Florida anthropologists. Due to the multiple stakeholders, my participant observation occurred in many different settings. One such setting occurred during my preliminary work, the Florida Cabinet meeting on January 21, 2016. The USF anthropologists, who were one group of many on the agenda, presented their final report to the Florida Cabinet, Governor Rick Scott, Attorney General Pam Bondi, Chief Financial Officer Jeff Atwater, and Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam. At this meeting, the White House Boys,
relatives of a Dozier survivor, a member of the law enforcement working on the Dozier case, a representative of the NAACP, and other political officials were in attendance. This gave me an opportunity to observe the power structures as they pertain to the Dozier School for Boys case. In addition, although it was not the first time I met some of the individuals in attendance, this allowed them to become more familiar with me as a researcher and a person involved with the Dozier Research Project. By the time this study began, August 2016, I had established rapport with several individuals and had become familiar with the structure and dynamics within and among the stakeholders.

I conducted more than fifty hours of participant observation at multiple activities from August 2016 to May 2018. These observations were done in the primary settings outlined above and other areas of Florida. These activities included a White House Boys reunion, legislative sessions, memorial ceremonies, funerals, and meetings with State officials, such as the Dozier Task Force meetings. The Dozier Task Force, which will be discussed in Chapter Seven, was a task force created to provide recommendations for the reburial of unidentified and unclaimed remains and memorialization of the deceased and living victims of Dozier. They held two meetings (August 23, 2016 and August 19, 2016), which were the first activities of my individual research process. At this time, I connected with several groups involved in the memory practices of Dozier, including the Black Boys of Dozier Reform School, an organization founded by a group of black men based on their shared experience at Dozier. I sat next to one member of the group who narrated the entire event from his perspective as a Black man who was abused at Dozier.

During participant observations, I would engage in informal interviewing. This type of interviewing, as explained by H. Russell Bernard, is “characterized by a total lack of structure or
control” (2011, 156). These are conversations that happen while in the field and they oftentimes occur extemporaneously, putting the burden on memory and fieldnotes instead of a recording. While interacting with individuals during participant observations, I conversed with them as we were participating, either actively or passively, in the activities. It was during these conversations that I was able to gather information that was not overtly available or discussed during the interviews.

I wrote detailed fieldnotes throughout my fieldwork experience as I conducted participant observations. These notes would be written during the event, if it was not obstructive, and afterwards when I had more time to write additional notes and reflections, which were written in different sections of my field notebook. In these fieldnotes, I documented the individuals and groups that were participating in the activity as well as the interactions between them. I made sure to note any person or group that I saw frequently at the activities and explained any observed patterns during one event or across different activities.

**Semi-Structured Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were a key component of data collection for this study. This form of interviewing is a hybrid form of structured and unstructured interviews. Structured interviews are a survey-style, non-flexible method of interviewing. The interviewee is asked a specific set of questions in a particular order (O’Reilly 2005; Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte 1999; Bernard 2011). Semi-structured interviewing involves having a question set, “but the answers to those questions are open-ended, they can be fully expanded at the discretion of the interviewer and the interviewee, and can be enhanced by probes” (Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte 1999, 149). This type of interviewing was appropriate for this research study. One of the characteristics of Black feminist ethnography is that based on our standpoint as a member of
a marginalized group and associated personal experiences, we are better positioned to ask questions that reflects power relationships than members of non-marginalized groups. Semi-structured interviews allowed me to expand on the original question set according to the interviewee and probe for additional information that may not be reflected in the initial answer but reveals information that was concealed or masked.

I drew from personal experiences for data collection, especially for interviews and casual conversation. For example, while I was conducting preliminary research in May 2015, my uncle, Charlie Lee Penn, passed away. Uncle Charlie took care of me and my sibling after the passing of my mother during our teenage years. Unfortunately, I did not know he was sick until less than three days before he passed away in Atlanta, Georgia. Unbeknownst to my sister and I, as well as other family members, he was sick for months. We had issues contacting him directly in the months prior to his death. It was odd as we would visit his home and call his phone yet did not get any information his whereabouts. We went through several measures, which resulted in us finding out about his sickness and death within days.

I was in Marianna, Florida and I could not get to my uncle’s bedside in time to see him before his death, due to travel and financial constraints. Over the next several days, our family made plans to bury my uncle, which was a contentious process as a few family members did not want him to be buried at our family cemetery to cut costs. However, he was ultimately buried with our deceased family members, but did not have a headstone for several months. My uncle grave was unmarked because of the same reason, to be reduce the amount of money spent on the burial. I must note that my uncle had life insurance that covered the burial. Yet, some people felt it was not necessary. We were able to get a headstone, but it was after a heated battle. Since my uncle’s death, I have not found closure due to the problematic manner in which his sickness was
concealed and his burial was controlled. Based on this personal situation, I asked questions about this subject during my interviews and casual conversations that I would not have been knowledgeable prior to this experience.

I conducted approximately fifteen semi-structured interviews with representatives different stakeholders groups—families of victims, former inmates, and law enforcement. The largest group of interviews was that of the White House Boys, specifically The Official White House Boys Organization (TOWHBO), a group of men who organized around a shared experience of being beaten at the white house on the reform school’s campus. After meeting and building a rapport with the president of the organization, Jerry Cooper, and his wife, Babbs Cooper, they accepted me into their community and were gatekeepers to other members of the group. Jerry invited me to TOWHBO reunion and introduced me to everyone. In addition, the Coopers spoke to members about my work and request that they contact me for interviews. I was also able to make my own connection with members via these events as well.

It was more difficult to get access to other groups who were active in the Dozier School for Boys case. For example, political officials were reluctant to speak with me about their role in the memorialization effort, which is largely due to not wanting to be on record. This was also the case with individuals who I met in Marianna or had moved from the city but wanted to be off-the-record. I was only able to formally interview two relatives of people who attended Dozier; however, I did capture a wealth of information via informal interviewing during participant observation.

**Digital Ethnography**

My study also involved over twenty hours of digital ethnography, a methodological approach to examining online communities. As electronic communication, i.e. social media and
emails, have increased and become important aspects of people’s lives, researchers have begun to examine the cultural and symbolic elements of these technologies (Hjorth et al. 2017; Born and Haworth 2017). Electronic communication was a large component of interaction between the stakeholders, especially within the Interfaith Commission on Florida Children and Youth and White House Boys group. During its formative months, the Interfaith Commission, led by Rev. Russell Meyer, communicated via email with each other about topics such as attending state meetings and supporting the University of South Florida researchers.

As part of this research, I have been included on Jerry Cooper’s White House Boys listserv since August 16, 2016. This listserv provided information on White House Boys events and legislative activities involving the group. It also gave me insight into the agenda and goals of the organization. Cooper’s wife has also sent information along this listserv. However, this listserv provided information only from the perspective of the Coopers. It did not represent the organization as a whole, as it was only an avenue for the Coopers to communicate to the group on the listserv. During an interview, one of The Official White House Boys Organization members told me about the White House Boys Family and Friends Facebook page. The member, who has been interviewed, explained that the Facebook page is one of the main forms of communication with the entire White House Boys group. This page provides more insight into the group than the listserv, as there is more communication on this forum. As of July 2018, there are 444 members of the Facebook group, which is public and closed. Anyone can visit the page; however, you must get approval from the administrator to join. I followed the Facebook page as a public viewer since the interview in February. In April 2017, I created a Facebook profile, separate from my personal profile, in order to be more involved on the page, which includes notifications of new posts and events. WHBs and their family and friends often post their
opinions on several issues/activities. The White House Boys Family and Friend page included sensationalized accounts of the White House Boys experiences, especially regarding conversations about compensation. Many of the White House Boys on the site often equate their experiences to the Rosewood Massacre to elicit more support for their campaign for reparations.

**Archival Research**

This study also involved archival research in order to gather information about the history of the Dozier School for Boys. Archival data refers to information gathered from raw facts, sources that have not been interpreted or analyzed that are stored in their original format (Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte 1999). Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte explain that archival data are items that were “originally collected for bureaucratic or administrative purposes that are transformed into data for research purposes” (1999, 202).

I examined five hundred archival records to examine not only religious practices but also the social and historical context of the school. Due to the fact that Dozier was a state institution, many of its business and administrative records were given over to the State Archives of Florida. From these records, I had access to the biennial reports that included records of the reform school’s budget and activities, including the religious instruction offered at Dozier. I was also able retrieve emails from recent years (October 2008 - February 2009) between Dozier’s superintendent and administration and White House Boys representative. There are also newspaper clippings in the files that speak of issues that were discussed in the public sphere, such as the “problem” of homosexuality in the school (“Juvenile Home Plagued with Homos, Doctor Says,” *Panama City Herald*, 9/11/69). The University of South Florida Forensic Lab also has valuable raw materials that were beneficial to my study. Erin Kimmerle, one of the Principal Investigators of the Boot Hill Burial Ground Project and leader of the forensic team, was given
materials for the lab’s archives from various stakeholders, e.g., a box of documents from a relative of an individual buried at Boot Hill and donated items from a former Dozier inmate.

One important aspect of my archival research was examining *The Yellow Jacket*, Dozier’s newsletter. The State Library of Florida digitized 482 issues of the newsletter, from 1933 to 1973. I examined approximately 80 newsletters for this study. *The Yellow Jacket*, which was created and published on the reform school’s campus, included news on the activities that occurred at Dozier, such as holiday events (Christmas and Easter). This newsletter also features content regarding administration changes, athletic achievements, cottage updates, as well as special highlights of students who have been promoted in ranking. In addition, *The Yellow Jacket* would often have one or more columns on religion and religious activities, which gave me insight into the religiosity of the school.

Although these documents are useful in understanding the historical development of the school and the daily activities, I applied a critical lens when reviewing these records, another benefit of using a black feminist approach. As emphasized by Carr (1986), history is a selection of facts based on the historian. Historical narratives as subjected to the social and cultural context of its time. Therefore, historical documents are not pure versions of the past and should be interpreted as such. When examining the archival documents, I was critical of the narratives presented about Dozier based on my lived experience, previous literature, my own ethnographic encounters, as well as my theoretical framework for this study. For example, *The Yellow Jackets* provided a positive image of the school, including pictures of boys participating in activities. It emphasized how the boys showed improvement at the school based on the opportunities afforded to them by the institution. However, based on the research of Kimmerle, Wells, and Jackson (2016), the newsletters were a part of the public media regime to counter the negative reports
from the legislative committee and public opinion. Also, the newsletters have even been used by supporters of the institution as evidence against the negative reports from USF. The final report by Kimmerle, Wells, and Jackson (2016) also spoke of the discrepancy in the number of deaths recorded (31 recorded) and the number exhumed from Boot Hill Burial Ground (55 burials). In addition, as noted article “Exhuming the Dead and Talking to the Living: The 1914 Fire at the Florida Industrial School for Boys— Invoking the Uncanny as a Site of Analysis,” Jackson explains that one of the methods of racial segregation was the administrative records, such as the ledgers that were segregated (white and black/ “colored”) (2016, 167-168). Based on these examples as well as my lived experience, theory, and ethnographic research, I viewed these documents from a critical lens that questioned the production of these materials.

**Qualitative Data Analysis**

My collected data included fieldnotes (and personal reflections), semi-structured interviews, archival documents (such as Yellow Jackets newspaper clippings), and digital media (i.e. emails and social media posts). To organize and code the gathered information, I used both manual coding techniques and MAXQDA, a digital software used for qualitative and quantitative data analysis. MAXQDA had multiple benefits for this project. I was able to upload all of my documents and audio files into the software. This allowed me to keep all of my information centrally located for coding.

The first step in analyzing my research was identifying recurring themes. Based on preliminary research and delving into scholarship around my research, I developed general themes for this study. However, I was open to emerging themes in the field. I identified themes and patterns for this study during fieldwork, which were written in the back of my fieldwork journal. The list of themes continued to be revised as I progressed in my research, with more
attendance at events and meetings as well as connecting with additional individuals. Identifying themes while conducting research was helpful when I needed to revisit a topic with informants, especially if I noticed a gap in information. At the conclusion of my data collection, I had a list of general themes and patterns that I observed in the field.

These themes were further modified as I organized my research data when I completed data collection, beginning with transcriptions. I transcribed all of the interviews for this study, without the assistance of another transcriber. This made me very familiar with my research and helped to identify themes that I did not notice while collecting research. Some of these themes became subthemes to the preliminary list. I also went through the digital correspondence and archival documents, including Dozier’s biennial reports and Yellow Jackets. Data yielded from these methods provided context to several themes that had previously emerged, some of which led to additional subthemes. For example, one of the main themes was “religious education.” While reading the archival documents, I found that the individual rating system was used to evaluate “development of the right moral concepts in the delinquent” (Biennial Report, 1930-1932, 14). Therefore, “rating system” became a subtheme, which was useful in my analysis as a few research participants spoke about their rating at Dozier.

After organizing a list of themes, I created codes that were added to the code system in MAXQDA for coding my research documents and audio files. This software made it easier to code across document groups. For example, one of the codes used for this study was “religious holiday celebrations/Dozier.” All documents with that code would be queued, such as an interview document and/or a newsletter, making it simple to reference during the writing phase. Once all of the codes were included in the code system, I proceeded to manually go through several documents (transcripts, Senate and Hearing bills and resolutions, Florida Department of
Law Enforcement files, as well as audio files) and began to electronically code. I was also able to run lexical searches, which made it easier to code large documents sets such as *The Yellow Jacket* newsletters.

**Ethical Considerations**

*IRB and AAA Guidelines*

In order to conduct this study, I had to receive approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB, established as a result of medical experimentation of the Nazi regime and the American Tuskegee experiments, evaluate research projects to ensure they are ethically sound (Whiteford and Trotter 2008; Fluehr-Lobban 2013). There are several conditions in which the IRB evaluates the research project for approval: 1) the research design should yield legitimate results; 2) the project must maintain confidentiality of participants; 3) there must be equal treatment of subjects; 4) it must explore and mitigate the risks and benefits associated with the project; 5) there must be research oversight; 6) the participant must provide informed consent; and 7) the participation in the study should be voluntary (Whiteford and Trotter 2008; Fluehr-Lobban 2013). As a part of a university system, anthropologists, including myself, must go through this process of approval before conducting research. There have been some critiques of the IRB process by anthropologists, particularly the fact that IRBs are unfamiliar with the ethnography and other qualitative methods. For example, it may be difficult to get written informed consent when dealing with vulnerable populations, such as those who are illiterate or have other social and political concerns that would jeopardize their safety if information were documented (Whiteford and Trotter 2008).

Another issue with the IRB is its emphasis on protecting the institution over the participants. Whiteford and Trotter (2008) note that it is useful for anthropologists to inform and
negotiate with IRBs regarding methods and other anthropological traditions. This negotiation could be accomplished particularly because the IRB is a localized ethical review system. There is not a national or international oversight body for the IRB, giving researchers the ability to develop creative solutions to dealing with IRB obstacles.

The American Anthropological Association (AAA) Code of Ethics (2012) offers a list of guidelines for anthropological research. The primary code is to do no harm, which refers to dignity as well as bodily and material well-being. Anthropologists should avoid harming their research subjects, especially vulnerable populations. In doing so, anthropologists should maximize benefits and minimize risks. We should also be open and honest about our research with the research participants. After explaining the nature of the research, anthropologists must obtain informed consent or any other necessary permission for conducting research. The AAA Code of Ethics require that anthropologists weigh different ethical interests between the various stakeholders involved in the research project, with primary interest on the vulnerable populations (AAA 2012). Results from the research should be made accessible in a timely fashion not only to the academic community, but to the research participants as well. The code requires the preservation of records to maintain the confidentiality of research participants and prevent the misuse of raw data collected in the field. The last AAA ethical code refers to maintaining professional relationships. Anthropologists must maintain respect for their colleagues and not exploit individuals, animals, or cultural or biological materials in the process (AAA 2012).

These ethical guidelines are important to consider; however, they can also be too restrictive in the research field. One of the main ethical practices emphasized by both the IRB and the AAA is informed consent. Kristen Bell (2014) has explained several challenges associated with this practice. Although informed consent was useful in biomedical research, it is
not an appropriate frame for anthropological research. She argues that getting informed consent is disruptive and intrusive as it inserts the legality of the institution into the relationship between the researcher and the informant (Bell 2014). In other words, this disruption of the research field complicates the spontaneous dynamics of the research by interrupting the ongoing dialogue between the two parties in order to obtain consent. Once the informed consent has been obtained, the ethnographic moment then becomes scarred and more rigid as it is less free flowing and more controlled. Bell (2014) also argues that informed consent creates the “subject,” the one that the study is being done to, which stands in opposition to the researcher, creating unequal power dynamics.

Participant Observation and Informed Consent

There were several ethical concerns that I encountered while conducting research on religion and memory in the case of the Dozier School for Boys. As outlined in the ethical guidelines, it was important that I was clear about my status as a researcher and open about my research. Most of my research population was familiar with me as a researcher because of my preliminary work with the Boot Hill Burial Ground Project. In addition, if I engaged anyone in a conversation at an event, I would be sure to remind them of my status as a researcher to maintain transparency. However, this was not always a straightforward process, especially when conducting participant observation. As discussed by Bell in her analysis of informed consent, I was mindful not to interfere with ethnographic moments by announcing my status as a researcher and introducing informed consent. This was especially the case during memorial ceremonies when people were emotional and/or grieving the loss of a loved one. In these moments, I observed and allowed ethnographic moments to organically develop without being intrusive, even when someone would engage in a sensitive conversation with me. Most of the time, people
were aware that I was a researcher prior to the event as they had seen me in multiple settings. If someone did not know that I was conducting research and they had a conversation with me during an event, I would make sure to give them my card and speak to them at the conclusion of the ceremony. At that point, if they were interested in being interviewed, I would take their information and begin the formal process of informed consent.

Another ethical concern I encountered was the need to ensure that the identities of the research participants remained confidential because of the sensitive nature of this study. As will be discussed in the subsequent chapters, the reform school is shrouded in controversy, especially as multiple groups with competing interests and differential degrees of power argue over its past, present, and future. Some people were nervous about sharing their perspectives on Dozier out of fear that they would experience some form of retribution. For example, when speaking with people in Marianna, it was clear that a few of them were apprehensive about telling their stories as it may lead to social consequences, including being ostracized by their community. To minimize any risk, I made every effort to protect the anonymity of research participants. Participants were given alphanumerical codes in my data. The codes were stored in a separate location from identifying information. In addition, pseudonyms were used in the writing of this dissertation to prevent identification of research participants. I also had to be careful with the information I chose to include in this study in order to not inadvertently provide identifying material. I only used the actual names of individuals in cases where the information was public knowledge, such as any televised proceedings and data from the Internet.

*Sexual Harassment in the Field*

Feminist ethnographers are acutely aware of the gendered dynamics of fieldwork and the ethical dilemmas it may present. In the introduction of their anthropology *Women Fielding*
Danger: Negotiating Identities in the Field (2009), Martha K. Huggins and Marie-Louise Glebbeek explains that being a woman shapes ethnographic encounters with research participants. Women, as Higgins and Glebbeek argues, are transformed from a researcher status to a culture’s idea of mother, daughter, and even “sex object” (Higgins and Glebbeek 2009, 5). I experienced a situation in during fieldwork where I was not seen as a research professional, but as a “sex object.”

Garrett, an African American who has been active with the Dozier case since the time of my preliminary work on the project, was familiar with me as a researcher working under Drs. Jackson and Kimmerle. During a couple events centered on Dozier, Garrett and I have had conversations about his experience as a black person in Florida. My insider status as a black person made him feel comfortable speaking with me. During a phone call as a follow-up to an interview request for a Saturday in October 2016, Garrett asked that I spend the night with him and then have lunch the next day to talk about his involvement with the Dozier case. He proceeded to tell me that he wanted to “treat me” as a thank you for all the work that USF has done. I firmly told him that I would not be interested in spending the night or being treated to lunch. Garrett was not pleased with my rejection of his requests and continued to encourage me to stay with him. He would then state that he was single, had a lot of money, and was well connected and that I should reconsider. After refusing again, I decided to no longer engage with him and politely said goodbye. The next day, I called Garrett and stated that I was unable to meet with him for the previously scheduled interview. During this conversation, Garrett said, “I may have come off too strong,” but he indicated that he would still like to speak with me. In addition, he stated that, “I had to try you as a man,” but respected me as a researcher, and “we should
move on past it.” I refused to speak with him after that conversation and decided not to follow-up, despite the text messages he sent to my phone.

Unfortunately, I would continue to see Garrett at various events/locations and he would continue to reference the previous situation and make sexually suggestive remarks. When I saw him at another function, a couple of months after the phone call, Garrett attempted to sit next to me, which I thwarted. However, he followed me to my car, trying to have a conversation with me. He stated again, “We can move on past that,” yet added, “but we can go back to it.” As repeated several times, I explained that I am not interested and did not want to have an interview with him. Fortunately, we were in a well-populated parking area, which provided some comfort. As I was getting in my car, he asked me to have coffee with him. I declined and proceeded to get on the road. I drove the opposite direction than intended to ensure he was not following me. In order to avoid any further contact with him, I made the decision not to pursue other possible participants who may be affiliated with him in any manner. This type of intimate and unwanted attention impacts data collection and shows the challenges associated with being vulnerable and engaging. This is currently an underrepresented dialogue in research methods that I believe deserves more attention.

**Conclusion**

This was a qualitative research study that engaged a Black feminist ethnographic frame of analysis for exposing the power dynamics of memorialization. I used ethnographic methods and archival research to explore the power structures as well as the formation of collective memories. A black feminist anthropology methodological approach to understanding collective memory is advantageous in examining multiple forms of oppression: race, class, and gender. It is useful in informing the investigation into the pervasive nature of racism and sexism in the past,
even as it pertains to the different forms of abuses that may be silenced or excluded from the dominant collective memory. My goals were to address silences that sometimes occur when experiences are too terrible to remember or forget (Climo and Cattell 2002). In addition, the silence and erasures are created when the marginalized groups remain in the periphery even as members of a larger disenfranchised group. Accessing the memories of the marginalized group is necessary when using memory to critique conditions of oppression and exploitation. Such memories reconstruct a history that excludes marginalized people.
The first stop after arriving on Dozier’s south campus was the church. As people left their cars and the charter buses, they began taking pictures of the church and surrounding areas. Many of the White House Boys stood outside and shared stories about when they were students. After a few minutes, we were all ushered into the building by the state officials. People continued taking pictures of the church once we were inside and as we headed to our seats.

Babbs Cooper, secretary of the Official White House Boys Organization and wife of Jerry Cooper, stood in front of the pulpit, as others who would speak, and began the meeting at the church. She explained how she was happy to be there with all of the white house boys to help them find closure. Babbs was visibly emotional as she thanked everyone who helped make this possible, especially her husband. She then thanked and introduced David Clark, Deputy Secretary for Land and Recreation of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Clark requested a moment of silence for the boys who died while at Dozier and the ill men who were unable to make it. Clark talked about how the victims’ stories touched him. Clark became a bit emotional explaining how he is invested in this case, mentioning his own family dynamic in his reasoning. After this moment, he then thanked various state officials, including James Dean, the City Manager of Marianna. Clark also acknowledged Rivertown Community Church in Marianna for clearing the debris and greenery at Boot Hill Cemetery, allowing for the passage of vehicles and for people to look around the area that once included burials. He ended his speech showing appreciation for Jerry Cooper’s hard work. Clark then asked Cooper, the president of The Official White House Boys, to say a few words.

Cooper received a large round of applause as he walked up to the front of the church. He talked about how it was a difficult process getting the approval to come on campus and thanked everyone who helped. He then gave a special acknowledgement to his wife who did a lot of the work making this event possible. Cooper recognized Robert Reid for making sure there were accommodations for the White House Boys and their guests, such as water, snacks, and bathrooms. Reid was given the opportunity to say a few words. He
said to the audience, “God bless each and every one of you.” Afterwards, we were dismissed back to our vehicles, with “Amazing Grace” playing in the background as we walked out of the church. [Author Fieldnotes 4/6/18]

Collective memories belong to particular groups of people and are influenced by the social, political, and historical context in which they are constructed. They are also shaped by issues of power and identity. Collective memory is something that is usually protected within a group. On the other hand, public memory is shared with others and often commemorated through objects, such as memorials. However, public memory can be closed even in its promotion to outsiders by excluding groups, such as racial/ethnic minorities, in its production. The State of Florida, which was the governing body over the reform school, has been in the process of creating a shared narrative of the school’s history since the University of South Florida presented its Boot Hill Burial Ground Project research findings in January 2016. This narrative attempts to accommodate the collective memories of various groups, including the State itself, in efforts to transform this narrative into a public memory that is accepted by all. However, these memories are often conflicting due to such reasons as different perceptions and experiences of Dozier’s past, varied interests in this memorialization, and power and authority.

In this chapter, I profile the multiple stakeholders involved in the development of the Dozier narrative: media, University of South Florida, families of victims, City of Marianna community, faith-based organizations, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the State of Florida, and former inmates of the reform school.¹ There are many additional groups and individuals who play a role in the creation of Dozier’s collective memory. However, this discussion will focus on the primary stakeholders that I identify as having the most influence in the public memorialization process. I begin with a discussion of the media. The

¹ Due to the complexities of the White House Boys, the organization has been given its own chapter.
next stakeholder that will be discussed is the University of South Florida. I will follow this section with the families of victims who were buried at Boot Hill Cemetery. After this discussion, I proceed with an examination of the City of Marianna community. Another important set of stakeholders are faith-based organizations, such as the Interfaith Commission on Florida’s Youth and Children and the Florida Council of Churches, as well as the NAACP. These groups were engaged by the State and USF to help with the reinternment and memorialization plans for the victims of Dozier. The last stakeholder that will be discussed in this chapter is perhaps the largest and has been given the most authority and power, the State of Florida, specifically the Governor, Florida Cabinet, and Florida legislators.

**Media**

Mass media operates as an institution of power in the United States due to its influence over social, political, and economic conditions. The ability to produce knowledge and disseminate information to the public, even as a vessel for other institutions, such as the government, gives it power that has been unshakeable. Media has also been used as an avenue to disrupt other institutions of power by revealing information that has been meant to remain concealed. One example of this disruption occurred when *Washington Post* investigators Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein were instrumental in uncovering the Watergate scandal, which involved Richard M. Nixon and his campaign committee stealing secret documents and bugging the phones of his opponents. Media also contributed to the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment being terminated when Peter Buxtun leaked information to the *Associated Press* in 1972. The media has played a similar role in the Dozier School for Boys case. On October 19, 2008, Carol Marbin Miller of the *Miami Herald* exposed the abuse at the Florida State Reform School in the article “Reform School Alumni Recount Severe Beatings, Rapes” (*Miami Herald*). In this article, Miller
explained the history of the institution with the inclusion of narratives from former students who were abused. Miller’s publication led to additional state, national, and international media attention on the reform school.

The media became an important outlet for making the public aware of the research and political activities regarding the school. The White House Boys (WHB), a group of former students who were abused at Dozier, often elicited the assistance of the media to tell their stories, recruit other men who were mistreated at the school, and advocate for political action from the State. When the WHB were first requesting the state to conduct investigations into the school, they held a press conference on the steps of the state capital, inviting different media outlets around Florida and on the national scale, such as the Miami Herald and the Associated Press.

USF also held press conferences to share information on research developments. Initially, the research was intentionally not made public. After the Boot Hill Burial Ground Project was established and the initial phase of fieldwork was completed, USF researchers held a press conference. At that point, the research findings contradicted the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) and USF was pressured to stop the work. Public support was critical for the continuation of research or the project would have been shut down.

In sharing the information, the Tampa Bay Times, began to construct its own public memory, developing a narrative from the multiple voices that would incite public interest and readership. Ben Montgomery, reporter of the Tampa Bay Times, followed the Dozier story since its exposure in 2008. On April 19, 2009, he published “For Your Own Good” (with Waveney Ann Moore) that included stories of multiple former students who were abused at Dozier. This news series involved investigative reporting with documentaries that ranged many topics. Montgomery and a full staff of journalists spent years gathering information for this story, which

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2 The White House Boys will be discussed in Chapter Five.
is rare. While the school was still open, he investigated the reform school and issues of juvenile
justice in Florida. Montgomery’s reporting led to the closure of the reform school. In addition,
that story gave him privilege in gaining access to different groups as the case developed.
Montgomery was viewed fondly by the WHB as the result of the initial publication and was
invited to their events. He also was present at political activities that involved any decision
making on Dozier, such as the Dozier Task Force meeting. Montgomery became almost the
official journalist of Dozier with exclusive insight. His status became so pronounced that he was
given a plaque from a White House Boy that was placed on the White House during the closing
ceremony. Montgomery’s work and his own prominence as a result of this case made him an
important stakeholder.

**University of South Florida**

In 2011, Kimmerle met Montgomery and Robert Straley, a member of the White House
Boys, at Straley’s book reading. From that meeting, Kimmerle learned the extent to which the
state denied the WHB’s claims and that the burials could be located and investigated for the
families. Kimmerle recruited co-worker Richard Estabrook, an archaeologist with the Florida
Public Archeological Network (FPAN) at USF, to initiate field work to locate the burial ground
and establish the number of burials. Permission was given from the Department of
Environmental Protection (DEP), which enabled researchers to get an archeological permit. The
fieldwork conducted by Kimmerle and her team in 2012 resulted in approximately 50 burials, not
the 31 that school officials and FDLE reported. During this time, Jackson and Wells, along
students, were all a part of the multidisciplinary team. Upon the findings, USF had the first press
conference to present their findings. Permission was sought to exhume the remains and identify
the individuals. It was denied repeatedly. Eventually, it went to the Florida Cabinet and Governor and permission was granted on August 6, 2013.

Boot Hill Burial Ground Project provided the empirical evidence that informed the public memory of Dozier. Information that was once forgotten or hidden was given a public spotlight, particularly as the exhumations generated headlines on the reform school. Families, former students of Dozier, community members, and organizations around Florida followed the story through direct engagement with the research process or media as the groups created narratives of the past within the social and political contexts of the present. Due to the researchers’ efforts, they, particularly Kimmerle, were held in high esteem by several stakeholders, i.e. families, White House Boys, media, faith-based organizations, and the State of Florida. However, despite the fact that the results of the Project were the catalyst for the State’s public memorialization and re-interment discussions, researchers from the Boot Hill Burial Ground Project were intentionally excluded from the Dozier Task Force (see Chapter Seven).

Families of Victims

Families of boys who died while under the supervision of the reform school were significant to not only the Boot Hill Burial Ground Project but the entire Dozier memorialization process. By the time of this study’s conclusion, the USF forensic team had identified, via DNA, seven of the boys who were buried at Boot Hill Cemetery: George Owen Smith (White), Thomas Varnadoe (White), Earl Wilson (Colored), Sam Morgan (White), Loyd Dutton (White), Grady Huff (White), and Robert Stephens (Colored).\(^3\) The Smith, Varnadoe, Wilson, and Stephens families have shared their testimonies with the media and researchers regarding their deceased relatives. Three of the families, the Smiths, Varnadoes, and Stephens, have actively participated

\(^3\) The racial categories are based on how they were described in the ledgers that lists the boys’ attendance at Dozier.
in the public memory politics of Dozier through their engagement with the state and federal government.

The Varnadoe family, whose memorialization is detailed in Chapter Eight, were strong advocates of the USF Boot Hill Burial Ground Project, especially Glen Varnadoe, nephew of Thomas Varnadoe who died while at Dozier. Glen engaged with state and federal officials to reopen the case in 2012 after promising his sister, on her death bed, to make sure he found his uncle. Varnadoe even filed a temporary injunction to stop the sale of Dozier’s property in order to ensure that the anthropologists would have access to the campus for research. Although his advocacy was based on finding Thomas Varnadoe, Glen continues to support USF by starting a fund in honor of his uncle. He has not, however, been active in the public memorialization process following the return of Thomas Varnadoe’s remains.

Robert Stephens’ family has been involved in the Boot Hill Burial Ground since USF researchers began the exhumation of Boot Hill Cemetery during Labor Day weekend in 2013. The family was invited to the research site and they brought minister to pray before the exhumation began, which was their request. The Stephens family provided DNA for identification, inviting USF researchers to be involved in the reburial and memorial ceremony for their deceased relative. One member of the Stephens family would eventually become an active participant in the State memorialization efforts.

City of Marianna, Florida

Dozier School for Boys is located in Marianna, Florida. Any activity that occurs regarding the Dozier property requires the input of the community representatives. During the planning for the school, Marianna provided the largest amount of land and money to have Dozier built in its city. The community was heavily involved in the school activities, from providing
religious support to visiting the campus for special events. Staff members would sometimes take students off campus with them to church. Good students could go off campus to an event or to work. At times, staff members would bring them to and from their jobs off campus. Several employees of the school lived in the community, some of whom were upset at the school’s closing. According to an African American former employee and resident, black people in Marianna were upset about losing their jobs. Based on the connections between the community and the reform school, Marianna has a vested interest in Dozier’s public memory politics, particularly as it affects public image of the community and its residents. According to Dale Cox, a lay historian of Jackson County, “It is a shame that so much negative publicity was heaped on the facility and our community. It is a shame that so many reporters did not bother to look for the truth behind allegations before airing or printing their stories...Goodbye Dozier and the jobs you provided” (Cox 2011). This concern about the image of Marianna is primarily about the tourism that would be affected by negative publicity on the community.

Several community representatives have been vocal about their perspectives on the reform school’s memorialization. Before and during the time of this study, conversations about the school’s property ensued. As the USF Boot Hill Burial Ground Project was underway, the research team encountered issues with the state as the property was in the process of being sold. It took the activism of the families of Dozier’s victims and other stakeholders, such as USF, to halt the sale of the property for research purposes. However, the sale of the property was always an unspoken, yet overt interest of the Marianna representatives throughout the Dozier memorialization process.

At the January 21, 2016 Florida Cabinet meeting, a group of Marianna representatives, including Elmer Bryant, the first African American mayor of the city, expressed their support for
the redressing Dozier’s past. Marianna City Manager James Dean and Jackson County Commissioner Eric Hill have often expressed their concerns about having a memorial and/or the reburied remains on their property often during the meetings. Bryant explained to the Cabinet that the community would like the property returned. In fact, according to an article in the Jackson County Times, Marianna City Commission unanimously passed a resolution on April 5, 2016, a few months after the Cabinet meeting entitled “A joint resolution by Jackson County Florida, the City of Marianna, and Chipola College agreeing to a cooperative planning effort by the three entities for the return of the North Florida Youth Center and surrounding associated lands to the community and potential redevelopment.” The goal of the resolution was to determine the future development of the Dozier School for Boys. The resolution explained that the land would again “provide career opportunities and stimulation of the local economy.”

Conversations surrounding the Dozier property would come up frequently during meetings focusing on the memorialization of the school.

The topic of property was mentioned during the Dozier Task Force meetings. The commissioner and city manager were adamant about not re-interring the remains on the property. They were also very apprehensive about the type of memorial that will be on the campus and demanded that any memorial not go beyond the White House. Elmer Bryant, who is also the a representative of the Jackson County NAACP, echoed the city manager and county commission with his public request to the Task Force that the land be returned to the city, not specifically referring to the memorials. Although Dozier School for Boys was a state reform school and it is the responsibility of the State of Florida to determine what happens to the property, the Marianna representatives believe the community is entitled to the land. Controlling the property would give
this stakeholder authority in revising the collective memory of Dozier and the Marianna community articulated by the school’s victims.

**Faith-Based Organizations**

Faith-based organizations played a significant role in the constructing of a public memory that would lead to redressing of the school’s past. Representatives from faith-based groups were recruited at different phases of the project for the purpose of providing advisement for the re-interring of unidentified remains and the creation of a memorial for Dozier’s victims. These groups aimed to help facilitate the reconciliation process by encouraging truth-telling, forgiveness, apologies, and the inclusion of multiple experiences in a new collective memory that would not only redress the past but speak to the issues of juvenile justice in Florida.

Following a meeting on May 16, 2014 at the University of South Florida of approximately seventeen faith leaders around the Tampa Bay area, the Interfaith Commission on Florida’s Children and Youth (ICFCY) was created. It included representatives from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and faith groups such as Lutheran, Baptist, Catholic, Universalist Unitarian, and Islam. The leader of ICFCY is Rev. Dr. Russell L. Meyer, a Lutheran pastor. The goals of the commission involved “extending due regard and memorialization of the youth whose bodies have been recovered, engaging in community conversations that address how we should remember and care for Florida’s children, and considering recommendations as to the historic preservation of significant structures on the site” (Email correspondence with ICFCY members, 2014). ICFCY were to consider how religion was used to support what happened in the past. However, they were not interested in blaming anyone for the injustices. Instead, they were to focused on healing, remembering the past, but ensuring it would not happen again. Although several members stopped being active after the
initial meeting and a few email correspondences, the ICFCY did support USF intermittently. The group attended a meeting with state officials, USF researchers, and lawyers regarding plans for a memorial for unidentified remains recovered from Boot Hill Burial Ground and the surviving victims of Dozier School for Boys. The group also performed a memorial ceremony for the symposium “Research & Remembrance: 100 Years After the Fatal Fire at Dozier,” which will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

The Florida Council of Churches was also called upon to be active in the Dozier memorialization process. According to the Facebook page, Florida Council of Churches aims “to be a catalyst for Christian unity and a witness to an inclusive and equitable Florida.” This Christian organization was mandated by law to be on the Dozier Task Force to assist in discussions on re-interring the bodies and creating a memorial. Rev. Dr. Meyer is the Executive Director of the organization and represented the group on the task force. Based on his positions, he has become the primary voice of the Floridian religious community in the Dozier narrative.

**National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**

The NAACP has been a leading organization in the fight for justice on behalf of African Americans since its founding in 1909. Based on its mission statement, the NAACP is focused on ensuring social, economic, political, and educational equality for all people as well as ending race-based discrimination (NAACP 2018). Dale Landry, the President of the Tallahassee branch of the NAACP followed a similar path as that of Rev. Dr. Meyer. He was a member of the Interfaith Commission and then was the Florida NAACP representative on the Dozier Task Force. Landry, a Lutheran, sought counsel from Meyer during the Dozier memorial process. In fact, his arguments on the task force were primarily religious in nature.
Although the NAACP has been an active force in the achievement of justice historically, Landry, as a representative, did not have much influence over the memorialization process. As part of the task force, he engaged with multiple stakeholders regarding the reinterment of the remains and the location of a memorial on the task force. However, the main decision body was ultimately left to state officials, including the politicians from Marianna. In addition, Landry did not actively communicate with the Jackson County NAACP-Marianna about the memorialization process, which would have earned him more respect among the black community in that area.

**State of Florida**

Due to the fact that Dozier was a state reform school, the State of Florida has been held accountable for the abuses that occurred on its campus. In addition, the property of Dozier is under the control of the State, which decides what should happen to the area now that the school is closed. The other stakeholders involved in Dozier, the White House Boys operate within the power of the State, the ultimate decision maker. As will be explained in different scenarios in this study, various stakeholders often petitioned, presented to, and/or received permission from the State at different points in the construction of public memory. The State of Florida is comprised of several agencies with different functions. For the sake of this study, this section will focus only on the agencies that were involved in the Dozier School for Boys narrative—Florida Governor and Cabinet, Department of State, Department of Environmental Protection, and Department of Juvenile Justice.

The Florida Governor and Cabinet played a significant role in the public memorialization of the reform school. According to the state constitution, the Florida Cabinet has equal influence over the decision making process. During the time of my study, the Florida Cabinet consisted of the following:
USF Anthropologists received permission from the Florida Cabinet to exhume the unidentified remains from Boot Hill Cemetery after being granted permission by DEP to conduct archeological fieldwork (see “University of South Florida” section in this chapter). The Department of State houses the Secretary of State (Ken Detzner) as well as the Florida Division of Historical Resources. The Department of State assisting USF in finding and contacting the next of kin for identifying unidentified remains. This agency is responsible for the reimbursements or payment for the funeral expenses of the deceased boys.

The Department of Juvenile Justice, which falls under the executive branch of the state government, was also involved in the public memorialization of the reform school. It is responsible for institutions dealing with juvenile delinquency. In order to enter the Dozier grounds, one had to communicate with the Department of Juvenile Justice representatives and obtain their permission and to have access to the buildings on the South Campus of Dozier.

Conclusion

Several stakeholders have been involved in the construction of memory of the reform school, each with varying interests and investments. As argued by Halbwachs (1992) and Shackel (2003), memories, collective and public, are products of the present social and political climate. Since the media’s exposé of the abuses at the school, each stakeholder began their process of memory-making influenced by their current interests as well as their position in Dozier’s past, such as a victim, perpetrator, or community member. In addition, the stakeholders’
position in the construction of Dozier’s narrative is also influenced by current social and political status. For example, the State of Florida has the most control of the public memory and dictates the groups that are included in the narrative, which depends on the interests of the State.

In the next chapter, the White House Boys and its subgroups will be explained in relation to collective memory of these groups. The White House Boys is a stakeholder group made up encompasses former students of Dozier who were been abused. As each subgroup grew in membership, they began to form as collective narration, often conflicting with another White House Boy organization due to different experiences. As Bartlett argues, people’s memories are contextualized within their own experiences. The black inmates dealt with racial discrimination that not only led to the increased possibility of incarceration, but unequal treatment on the campus. Therefore, their memories of the past were different than that of the white experience. The next chapter will further explore the complexities in forming a dominant narrative by examining the formation of the White House Boys and the process of memory creation.
Chapter Five:
The White House Boys

On January 21, 2016, USF anthropologists presented their final report to the Florida Cabinet. Drs. Erin Kimmerle, Christian Wells, and Antoinette Jackson provided brief (no more than five minutes) summaries of their research to state officials. Kimmerle discussed the forensic work that was done with the research project, including the exhumation of 55 burials as well as the 7 identifications that occurred. Wells spoke of his archaeological work, specifically regarding his GPR work in looking for burials as well as testing the soil. Jackson ended the anthropology presentation with her research on the living and their experiences with the school, outside of the Boot Hill burial ground in response to claims of a second cemetery, as well as advocating for the memorialization of the school. She asked the pivotal question, “What’s next?” Pam Bondi, Gov. Scott, Atwater, and Putnam listened intently to the findings.

While the anthropologists were speaking, the White House Boys and their relatives were sitting in the audience, murmuring to one another in affirmation to the findings as well as to what they would say when it was their turn.

After a five-minute break, David Clark announced that ten members of the "White House Boys" wanted to speak about their experiences. Bill Haynes began by abdicating his time to the other boys for the sake of time. Jerry Cooper, TOWHBO President, then approached the podium requesting the reinternment of the unidentified and unclaimed remains to not be returned to the school. He stated, “A lot of these children were not buried in a Christian manner. They were never recognized, no cemetery kept for them” (4:15:55). Charlie Fudge, a member of TOWHBO followed with a few words on continuing to search for an additional graveyard on the Dozier campus. Bill Price echoed the previous sentiment regarding the reburials but encouraged a memorial. Robert Straley, reading his written speech, advocated for a memorial as well as a change in policies to improve the juvenile justice system. Peggy Marx, wife of a White House Boy, requested that the State continue to look for the remains. Andrew Puel asked for the State to open the student ledgers for independent researchers. Cooper ended the round of speakers with an acknowledgement of the WHBs who
did not speak or could not be present at that time. [Author fieldnotes entry, January 21, 2016]

The Dozier School for Boys has been under investigations for 111 years. Despite its positive intentions, reports of brutal punishments——such as inmates being beaten with wooden paddles or locked in dark rooms for isolation—surfaced throughout the school’s history (Edwards 1968; Fisher 2010; Kimmerle et al 2012). In its early years, six legislative committee reports revealed cases of young children being subjected to harsh punishment, such as being in chains at a young age and being unjustly beaten. The White House Boys (WHB), former students of Dozier School for Boys and the Okeechobee School for Boys, have been publicly sharing their stories of abuse with the media, researchers, as well as politicians. According to one White House Boy,

We are called the White House Boys because right up to about 19 and 68, the White House was closed by Governor Kirk and O.J. Keller and we’re the ones that basically suffered the horrific punishment inside that building, including sexual, beatings, mental, the worse kind of abuse you could possibly do inside of one small building. And that’s how we got our name, the White House Boys; it’s from that building. And the reason it’s called the White House is because it was painted white and got the name White House (Interview with author, January 13, 2017).

As more men joined the group, tensions rose within the organization, leading to the creation of multiple subgroups: the White House Boys Organization (WHBO); the White House Boys Survivors Organization (WHBSO) The Official White House Boys Organization (TOWHBO), and the Black Boys at Dozier Reform School (BBD). Although the original organization has split into multiple groups, each with their own official name, the members all refer to themselves colloquially as the White House Boys.
The narrative surrounding the White House Boys is a great example of how power is infused in collective memory. Collective memory is a social phenomenon where individuals have shared experiences or recollections of the past. The White House Boys is a group that has formed around a shared experience of abuse that occurred on the Dozier School for Boys campus. However, as characteristic of collective memory, this shared experience is nuanced due to the varied social, historical, and political situations of the past as well as the present, including issues of race, religious background, and political and economic goals. In this chapter, I will discuss the development of and schisms between the White House Boys. I explain how power is exercised through collective memory, and ultimately public memory, as different groups within the White House Boys attempt to control the narrative of Dozier's abusive past.

The Original White House Boys Group

According to Roger Kiser, a former Dozier inmate, he created the group The White House Boys Organization in 1998 (Kiser 2016). In the beginning stages of the organization, Kiser reached out to other former inmates via the Internet (using sites such as Classmates.com) as well as having interviews with news outlets, such as the Early Show Monday Morning (email correspondence, Kiser, December 17, 2008). Kiser received several inquiries from people who had been abused by Dozier's staff. The original members of this group consisted of four individuals: Roger Kiser, Robert Straley, Dick Colon, and Michael O'McCarthy. In 2008, the group continued to bring national attention to their stories, including a news exposé by Carol Marbin Miller of the Miami Herald ("Reform school alumni recount severe beatings, rapes," October 19, 2008). As stated on Kiser's White House Boys Organization website (thewhitehouseboys.com), "We hope to create a national outcry and outrage that will change the
manner in which children are treated in the facilities." One member of The Official White House Boys Organization explained how he became involved after seeing the group on CNN:

I’m out in the yard one day and she [his wife] comes out and gets me and says, you gotta come in here. I say what’s the matter? She says you gotta come in here...CNN. So, I came in and Dick Colon and Roger Kiser were on CNN talking about their story and issues that they had at the Florida School for Boys, again AKA Dozier. And I immediately, at that time, told my wife some of the details and horrid things that had happened there. And I immediately became involved through the Internet with all the White House Boys (Interview with author, November 18, 2016).

The media efforts of the White House Boys were successful in not only gaining additional members, but also getting political officials to take notice of their cause.

The original White House Boys were soon able to garner the attention of the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). According to the “White House Boys Timeline” created by Roger Kiser, Michael O’McCarthy and Robert Straley, the White House Boys had constant communication with Gus Barreiro, a political official working with the DJJ, in regard to having the White House memorialized. After initially wanting to demolish the building, DJJ agreed with the demands of the WHB members, including having an open press conference and a memorial (Kiser, O’McCarthy, and Straley n.d.). However, the caveat to this agreement was that the DJJ public relations team would organize the press conference.

The White House Boys would soon find out from Barriero that the DJJ did not want the event to be a full press conference; they wanted to make it limited, restricting it to only Miller and the Miami Herald. The White House Boys reached out to the Associated Press and CNN to cover the ceremony. The DJJ continued to be heavily involved in the proceedings of the memorial service by organizing, with the collaboration of O'McCarthy, the events of the day (Kiser, O’McCarthy, and Straley n.d.). It was during this press conference and memorial service,
which occurred on October 21, 2008, that the DJJ officially sealed the White House and placed a plaque of its closing in the entryway, which stated:

"In memory of the children who passed these doors, we acknowledge their tribulations and offer our hope that they have found some measure of peace. May this building stand as a reminder of the need to remain vigilant in protecting our children as we help them to seek a brighter future. Moreover, we offer the reassurance that we are dedicated to serving and protecting the youth who enter this campus, and helping them to transform their lives."

The Whitehouse Officially Sealed by the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice October 21, 2008

The White House Boys thought that once the building was sealed, they would have closure. However, soon after this event, the State took back the plaque. To the White House Boys, this symbolized that the fight for justice was not over and they needed to mobilize. This event was also the beginning of the State's influence in the group's memory politics.

In the weeks following the memorial ceremony, the original White House Boys began to split due to divergent agendas. Roger Kiser and Dick Colon would become the White House Boys Organization (WHBO), which then became represented by Masterson Law Group. Robert Straley and Michael O'MCarthy formed the White House Boys Survivor's Organization (WHBSO), which also had a different website, www.whitehouseboys.com. The WHBSO was very active in its early years, including planning the press conference that led to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement investigation into Dozier. Straley and O'MCarthy, with Robin Gaby Fisher, would also publish a book The Boys of the Dark: A Story of Betrayal and

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4 The plaque was removed from the White House by the Department of Juvenile Justice, who then gave it to Robert Straley. Straley then requested that Ben Montgomery from Tampa Bay Times remain in possession of the plaque. Montgomery later gave the plaque to the USF-FAL, for inclusion in the archive and material collection, which USF is curating, with the intention it would become part of an exhibit or memorial once those activities were established. At this time, they are still not resolved.
Redemption in the Deep South (2010). Based on my research, there have not been any additional members of this group. Unfortunately, Michael O'McCarthy died in 2010. The White House Boys Survivors Organization’s website is now a repository of media archives, which includes updates on recent issues regarding Dozier.

The White House Boys Organization continued to receive inquiries and stories from other men who attended Dozier after the split between the original White House Boys. The stories were posted on the WHBO website (thewhitehouseboys.com), primarily monitored by Roger Kiser. The stories are still available via the active site. As stated on the group's website, The WHBO grew to hundreds of members. In 2009, the White House Boys Organization had its first reunion, which was organized by Roger Kiser, in Brunswick, Georgia. The purpose of the reunion was to bring together all of the members as well as get their stories on film, which was made into a documentary by Kiser. The WHBO organized three reunions during that year in March (Brunswick, GA), May (Kissimmee, FL), and September (Orlando, FL). At this point, Kiser presented himself as the main arbiter of the Dozier narratives by not only publishing a book on The White House Boys (Kiser 2009), but also gathering the narratives of the members and documenting them on his website (thewhitehouseboys.com) and creating a documentary. This documentary became an important historical tool for TOWHBO members. For example, after conducting an interview with a member and his spouse, they discussed the documentary Kiser created as depicting their experiences and that of other members. However, Kiser’s historical materials were created based on his interests of maintaining his control over the group and the public’s perception of the White House Boys.

Despite the growth of the WHBO and its success in gaining national attention, another split occurred. Some of the men became disillusioned with the agenda of one of the
organization's founder, Roger Kiser, and decided to start another group, The Official White House Boys Organization (TOWHBO), whose first president was Dick Colon.

![Organizational Chart](chart.png)

**Figure 5.1: White House Boys Organizational Chart**

**The Official White House Boys Organization**

The Official White House Boys Organization is the largest of the White House Boys subgroups. In order to separate itself from the WHBO, it created its own website ([www.officialwhitehouseboys.org](http://www.officialwhitehouseboys.org)). However, The Official White House Boys Organization still has remnants of its previous organization. Most of the new group's members were a part of the WHBO, with their stories still posted on the website. During one of my interviews, one member of TOWHBO and his wife explained the transition from WHBO to this organization in this way:

Janice Miller (JM): My first exposure [to the White House Boys Organization] was when we learned about the first reunion and we went together and then [Bill] told me more about it and everything...
Bill Miller (BM): Actually it wasn't this organization as we know it now. It was Roger Kiser. You probably hear his name. So he was the head of the organization.
JM: I think it was called the White House Boys Organization. White House Boys, and then this The Official White House Boys. So it's a different group running it.
Kaniqua Robinson (KR): Why is it different? Why is there a separate organization?
JM: Well, Roger had been fighting for children, to stop [the abuse of] children a lot of his life. And so, somehow he found the people and let them know that he was gonna try to bring these men together that have been in Florida reform schools. And so he had that first meeting in [Brunswick], Georgia. I don't remember what year it was though. And so
he kind of was the head of everything for a couple of years and then there was kind of a changing of the guard. I don't know what happened. BM: We don't know how all that happened. JM: Yeah, but there was kind of a changing of the guard and Roger kinda went off to the side. For a while, they were like parallel groups and then after a while, Roger went off and Jerry and everybody kinda ran with it. BM: So, now, it's pretty much this group as the stronger, cause there's another fella in [St. Petersburg, Florida]. So, he's pretty involved. He didn't have his own; I wouldn't say he has his own group. JM: No. And Dick Colon used to be the President before Jerry...And so, there may still be--Roger, may still have a website, but he had a lot of, I think he had a lot of physical things and a lot of situations in his life were happening (Interview with author, December 5, 2016).

TOWHBO has a very active online presence, which is evident by their Facebook page (White House Boys Family and Friends). A TOWHBO member stated, "That’s our weapon right there is the Internet." I was informed of the Facebook page at the end of an interview with a member of The Official White House Boy Organization, who told me that this page is one of the main channels for connecting with the other people in the group. In addition, there were individuals in the organization that he only communicates with via this social media outlet. White House Boys Family and Friends Facebook page is a public group, yet in order to post, you must join the page. This "closed" feature was activated because they wanted to control who can post on the site. An administrator manages who joins the group and who is blocked. The group currently has 389 members, with usually only one person as an administrator at one time.

The White House Boys Family and Friends Facebook page functions as a necessary outlet for members to disseminate information that ranges from personal updates to legal activities regarding the group. This page is filled with postings of news articles about Dozier as well as the White House Boys. It also includes postings of members' personal activities (birthdays, an interesting food dishes, and holidays), reflections on the group's events, and next steps. There are often dynamic discussions in the comment sections following a post, which can
range from positive to aggressive responses. This forum is also a useful platform for updating members on the Masterson, Hoag, & Smith Law Firm, the law group that has represented the White House Boys since the original group, work with the State and other activities requiring TOWHBO to participate in some capacity. For example, when there was a hearing on April 4, 2017 in Tallahassee, Florida, a member of the Facebook group posted the events, as relayed to him by the law firm. Members then discussed when and how they would travel to the hearing (i.e., carpooling and booking hotel rooms) and the plans for when they arrived, including meeting with Senator Darryl Rouson (D-Florida). The Facebook page ensures that all the members are aware of the activities of the group. However, if a TOWHBO member does not have access to Facebook their relatives would most likely request to join the group. In addition, not every member has computer skills or access to electronic devices to be on Facebook.

TOWHBO has created personalized items for members to show their affiliation with the organization. Most of these items include the colors red, white, and black, each with its own meaning: red stands for the blood that was shed at Dozier; white represents the White House Boys; and black stands for the stolen childhoods and the lost children. One of the most worn items, a baseball cap, includes ribbons of the symbolic colors. The black baseball cap also has "The White House Boys" printed on the front. Members are seen with this cap at many different events, including their reunion, the Dozier Task Force meetings, and Senate hearing. At times, members give individuals who are not "White House Boys" a baseball cap as a way of bringing them into the family of members. I received a hat and a marble after an interview to show that they are including me in their community. During the October 5, 2016 TOWHBO reunion, the president, Jerry Cooper, gave boys who attended Eckerd Kids, a state-sanctioned juvenile justice
program, baseball caps as a way of showing the organization's support for helping the children improve their lives.

Another important item that symbolizes TOWHBO is their flag. Sergeant-at-Arms James “Harley” DeNyke and his wife Betty created the flag in honor of the organization. One of the members of the White House Boys Family and Friends Facebook page explained that the flag "... carries the Love and, [Honor] and Remembrance of all [those] that have passed and those that have gone lost as well as the Survivors." On the flag is a picture of the White House building in the upper left corner, with red and black outlining the image. The initials of the White House Boys, "WHB," are printed on a red background in a diagonal line from the picture to the lower right corner. Large black and white strips are printed alongside the letters. This flag is usually brought to major functions in honor of the members and other victims of Dozier.

The Official White House Boys Organization also places special significance on a marble to symbolize the victims of the reform school. During the excavations at Boot Hill Cemetery, Dr. Erin Kimmerle, forensic anthropologist at the University of South Florida, and her team discovered a stone marble in one of the burials. According to the Report on the Investigation into
“One spherical stone marble was found in Burial 24, near where the left side pants pocket would have been. The marble measures 19.3mm in diameter and is composed of swirled white and burgundy glass" (Kimmerle, Wells, and Jackson 2016, 57). TOWHBO's marble is transparent with a white swirl, which is different from that found by the forensic team. This item represents the victims of the school's abuse and the family-oriented nature of the organization. The marble also binds them to those who died. Members of TOWHBO often pull out their marbles at events. Most of the members have a marble in their possession to show their allegiance to the organization's cause in getting justice for those who experienced abuse at Dozier and to each other. For example, at the funeral of Nate Dowling, African American and former Vice-President of The Official White House Boys, James "Harley" DeNyke and Bill Price placed a marble on both of his shoulders (Facebook Post, March 1, 2015).

Figure 5.4: This is a picture of the White House Boys with their marbles at an event.
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As more men pass away, the aging members of The Official White House Boys Organization are cognizant of their own mortality, especially in their fight to seek justice in their
lifetime. A member of the TOWHBO executive board stated that "...You know what? There's 460 of us still here, 461 right now that are left alive out of 550-something" that were on the original claims bill (SB 46) for the lawsuit against the State for reparations. "Now you saw a small crowd at this reunion. I've had up to 200 at a reunion. The last few years, these men are ill, their spouses are ill, or they can't travel that far...we're all up elderly." The health concerns of the members, including cancer and heart disease, of the members have increasingly become a motivator in pushing for State action on behalf of TOWHBO. During a conversation on the legal activities at the October 2016 reunion, one of the members said that the law firm and TOWHBO members "got to make a move soon or there will not be many of us left." Aging, and the concerns associated with it, is a ubiquitous presence that has come to characterize the organization and influence its actions.\(^5\)

Although the organization is centered on the abuse of men who attended the institution, women play an important role in the affairs of TOWHBO. Babbs Cooper, the wife of the organization’s president, is the secretary of TOWHBO and is responsible for communicating with all of the members via Facebook, email listserv, and phone. Members call or send her messages to ask questions about various issues involving the group, including the political activity regarding the apology and compensation. Babbs also does courtesy checks on the men and their families, especially if someone has been ill and/or going through surgery. She is the major lifeline of the organization, ensuring that all of the members are informed and connected. Peggy Marx, the treasurer of TOWHBO and wife of deceased member Frank Marx, has also been instrumental in the management of the organization. She manages the finances of the group and works with Babbs to plan TOWHBO events, such as the reunions. In addition to these

\(^5\) Since the conclusion of this study, the Vice President of The Official White House Boys Organization, Bill Price, and a member of the Original White House Boys organization, Robert Straley, passed from cancer.
organizational roles, Peggy and Babbs were both supportive of their husbands as the group navigated the collective and public memorialization processes of the reform school.

Women (wives and daughters of TOWHBO men) were often present during this study as the men told their stories and participated in memorial practices. These women have been actively supporting their spouses and fathers throughout the existence of the organization. Several men, such as the president, often gave credit to their spouses for the support. During interviews, the men would often have their wives and/or daughters present as they told their stories. The wives, and sometimes daughters, would help the men remember stories and provide context when necessary. There were two interviews where the wives asked probing questions to their husbands, using insider knowledge to help their spouse tell their story in more depth. The women were also a source of comfort if the White House Boys became emotional during interviews or conversations.

In addition, wives and daughters would participate in TOWHBO events and activities. For example, the daughter of the oldest living TOWHBO member attended events with and without her father, who was experiencing health issues and had difficulty traveling. When the father could not be present, she came to the events with his picture, in honor of her father. The daughter, who travels often with her husband, would inform her father of the activities and other information regarding the White House Boys. Women have been an important aspect of the TOWHBO, even though the focus is on the men who were abused at Dozier.

Some of these women have also endured abuse by their spouses or fathers who attended Dozier. In the article “Abuse leaves deep scars” in the *Tampa Bay Times* (Moore 2009), women openly discuss the verbal and physical abuse of their spouses. Peggy Marx, for example, discusses how her husband, Frank Marx, physically abused her during the first five years of her
marriage. Two of their five children no longer speak to their parents. Babbs Cooper, wife of TOWHBO president, explained in the article that her husband has a bad temper and that anything could ignite his anger. Her husband, Jerry Cooper, explained that his anger has caused problems with his family (Moore 2009). Women of the group speak to each other often about their relationships, at reunions or other gathering places. As Diane Fudge stated in the article, “she’s learned a lot about men’s common personality traits from discussions with other wives” (Moore 2009, 4B).

One of the most notable attributes of TOWHBO is its Christian nature. Several members are affiliated primarily with Protestant or Catholic traditions. Despite the differences among denomination, the membership utilizes the Christian faith for healing, memorialization, and for spiritual guidance in daily practice. On TOWHBO Facebook page, members frequently post Christian phrases to encourage and uplift members in their daily lives, i.e. “God Bless our Survivors” (Facebook post, July 1, 2018). Christian rhetoric is also used in the Facebook group when sending well wishes to a sick member or recognizing the recently deceased individual, which would usually consist of prayer request and responses. It is also common for members to employ Christian rhetoric in daily conversations. For example, when I have asked a TOWHBO member and/or their wives and daughters how they are doing, would usually receive a response recognizing and honoring God in some manner. This occurred often prior to an interview or during a TOWHBO event.

Another significant characteristic, or rather point of contention, for the group is the conversation about race. In an essay entitled "What is a White House Boy," written and submitted by "Bornacracka" on TOWHBO website, the White House Boys are described as

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6 As will be discussed in later chapters, The Official White House Boys Organization would include prayer in their memorialization services.
"white, black, brown, strong, weak, tall, short...." However, the majority of the group members, which include both men and women (wives and daughters), are white. On the White House Boys Family and Friends Facebook page, it is mainly the white men and women who post their comments and pictures; black people in the organization rarely post unless in regard to happy birthday wishes or updates on an ailing member. This is also evident in TOWHBO activities, such as their reunions and Christmas events at Eckerd Youth Center, where the main demographic present was the white men and their relatives. This emphasizes the misunderstanding of the organization's moniker, White House Boys, which is assumed to consist only of white men who attended Dozier. The men of color's experiences and perspectives are not included in the dominant narrative on Dozier that has been disseminated by TOWHBO.

**Black Boys at Dozier Reform School Group**

In general, the experiences of blacks at Dozier differed from whites as do their memories of the past. Black juveniles also received different treatment than their white counterparts. African American juveniles mainly worked on the farm all day, with limited academic training in comparison to the white students. Based on a 1912 Joint Investigative Committee report, the black children had to work the entire day and were only in the classroom for a short period (Lundrigan 1975). The next year, another report explained that the “colored school” only had one teacher, who was a 75-year old white man, for the 97 boys and 5 girls, which would make it very difficult to provide optimal academic training (Lundrigan 1975).

The Black Boys at Dozier Reform School (BBD) is an organization that developed as a counter-narrative to that of The White House Boys Organization and The Official White House Boys Organization. BBD were formed based on their experiences as black boys while at the reform school. The Black Boys at Dozier Reform School group aims to share their experiences
with the public, which were different from their counterparts, including what led them to Dozier as well as their activities. Although the group wants to share the stories of the black students, they do not speak to all of the black experience. As characteristic of collective memory, there is not a single coherent narrative of the Black experience at Dozier.

Initially, a few of the BBD members were affiliated with the White House Boys Organization and would attend their activities, including the 2009 reunions. However, several of the men felt their experiences were rendered invisible behind the stories of the White House Boys, which is comprised mostly of white men. The WHBs would have press conferences and other interactions with the media, but according to a member of BBD, the black men were neither invited, nor asked about their experiences. He even criticized the media, particularly a journalist from *Tampa Bay Times*, for not reaching out to the black men. Mary Champman (pseudonym), white woman and relative of a TOWHBO member, said that when Nate Dowling, a deceased White House Boy, was the Vice President of the group, he helped to bring black men to the organization. Once he passed, Champman said the black men left. She has tried to contact and invite them to TOWHBO events, but they do not attend.

The Black Boys at Dozier Reform School have made efforts to share their experiences with the public with the assistance of a manager. Antoinette Harrell, a journalist as well as "genealogist, historian, and peonage researcher" (Harrell 2013), shared stories with the public through radio and publications. Harrell, host of the radio show “Nurturing Our Roots,” was introduced to black former Dozier inmates through Roger Kiser, one of the founders of the original White House Boys (Harrell et al. 2013; Huntly 2014). Once this connection was established, she became their agent. According to TOWHBO member, "that woman came in and next thing you know, divide and conquer." Harrell published a book entitled *Dark Days of*
\textit{Horror at Dozier: Rapes, Murders, Beatings & Slavery} (Harrell et al. 2013); she is listed as the first author. This book chronicles the Dozier experience of black men who decided to separate from the White House Boys and create the Black Boys at Dozier. She played an important role in the development of the group. Harrell helped to create and update their Facebook page, containing information about their activities and organized press conferences.

As the BBD agent, Harrell was instrumental in organizing their activities as a group including a candlelight vigil to the victims of Dozier and a press conference in Marianna. According to one of the BBD members, they were the first to have a vigil on the Dozier School for Boys campus. On one of Harrell’s live shows, members of the BBD, which was not yet officially formed, mentioned wanting to have a memorial for the victims of the school. As stated on the website of Richard Huntly, president of the BBD, the White House Boys were not very supportive of this memorial ceremony. The WHBs disagreed with the idea of a vigil and said, “If we [Black Boys at Dozier Reform School] returned to the campus, we were no longer a part of that group. We were informed not to use anything belonging to the ‘White House Boys’-- name, flag or anything else. We were own our own” (Huntly 2014). This response from the WHBs further led to the establishment of a separate organization. The Black Boys at Dozier Reform School is disconnected from The Official White House Boys Organization because, according to a BBD member, TOWHBO does not have respect for the black boys. Despite the negative response, the Black Boys at Dozier Reform School held a candlelight vigil on June 15, 2013 in front of the Jackson County courthouse in Marianna to honor the victims of the school. Later that year, in August, they held a press conference on the North Campus, the black side of the school.

Harrell later resigned as their agent, ending all legal ties to the group (Huntly 2014). Despite releasing ties with the group, she has continued to be active online with the Dozier story.
is shown via her personal Facebook page and her digital news article on BlackNews.Com, "Hundreds of Black Boys Say They Were 'Modern Day Slaves' at a Recently Closed Reform School," which was posted on May 1, 2017. In this article, she speaks of helping to create BBD and "bring their plight of abuse and modern day slavery to the eyes of the public" (Harrell 2017). She further discusses her role in garnering national and international attention for their stories. Harrell only mentions one member of the BBD, Johnny Gaddy, who, according to Huntly's website (www.blackboysatdozierreformschool.com), is no longer a part of the organization. Gaddy and Harrell also published a book, They Told Me Not to Tell: Dozier Reform School Was A Living Hell (2015), about his personal experiences at Dozier.

During the time of my research, the Black Boys at Dozier Reform School did not have any formal or informal group gathering like those of The Official White House Boys Organization, which could be due to the lack of public relations help given by Harrell. The Black Boys at Dozier Reform School Facebook page only contains news articles on the topic of the Dozier, but not the activities of the BBD group. However, one of the members has been semi-active in the White House Boys Family and Friends (WHBFF) Facebook group since the BBD and WHB split in 2013. He has provided updates regarding ailing Dozier inmates and has commented on other posts on the page. It is also important to note that although the group has a separate Facebook page from that of TOWHBO, the group still includes www.officialwhitehouseboys.org beneath their name on their cover photo.

Members of the Black Boys at Dozier Reform School made an appearance at a Dozier Task Force meeting on August 19, 2017. The Official White House Boys Organization has argued that the white boys had the same experiences as that of the black inmates. At the Dozier Task Force meeting, Jerry Cooper, a TOWHBO representative, stated
I don't care if you're green, brown, blue, purple, you all White House Boys and we all endured together. Some of the most horrific treatment this country has ever known, I'm saying the United States of America. It's been stated by the major news corporations, one of the most abusive situations of child abuse that has ever occurred in this country, it includes me, it includes, these black people that are here today. This is not a civil rights issue. This is something that happened to all of us. It was just as bad for me as it was for thirteen-year-old black boy Billy Jackson (Dozier Task Force meeting, Part 1, August 19, 2016).

While the representative was speaking, a member of the Black Boys at Dozier Reform School and his friend, both of whom were sitting next to me, were shaking their heads, gesturing a “no,” and looked down, refusing to acknowledge what was said. The friend explained that the stories of the black people were different than that of white people. Based on these recent experiences as well as those during the earlier days of the WHB's organization, the Black Boys at Dozier Reform School sought to add their experiences to the dominant dialogue, which has been suppressed by the narrative that all of the boys at the school had the same experiences despite racial differences.

While the organization has not been represented at events held by other organizations, the BBD continued to make appearances at other events, such as the Senate hearing and press conference regarding the apology bill. These events, which were geared toward The Official White House Boys Organization narrative, gave members of the BBD access to political and community leaders as well as the press. During the lunch break at the second DTF meeting, a BBD member went to a few members of the DTF and took pictures. In addition, he approached an anchorwoman and began talking to her and the crewmembers. I saw this same member at the Senate hearing. He went to the pre-meeting with Senator Rouson (D-Florida). After the meeting, he asked me to take a picture of him and Senator Rouson (D-Florida) as they were heading into
the main area of the senator's suite. He subsequently followed the senator back into his office, as others were leaving for the hearing, to give Rouson his card and information about his book. As shown by these examples, the BBD, despite wanting to branch away from TOWHBO, has gravitated back to the organization in order to gain access to the public and politicians in a manner that has not been afforded to them.

Conclusion

The collective memory making process of the White House Boys is dynamic and contentious. The original WHB founder, Roger Kiser, aimed to bring attention to the abuse endured at the Dozier School for Boys. As stated on Kiser’s website, he has been trying to expose the beatings, rapes and abuses which took place at the Florida Industrial School for Boys at Marianna for almost 17 years. No one would listen. No one could possibly believe that such atrocities could possibly occur in the United States of America (Kiser 2016).

In his quest to bring national attention to the abuse that occurred, Kiser organized a group of men who attended the reform school to document their stories and share it with the public. This shared experience brought the men together, forming the White House Boys; however, the group subsequently split into four organizations due to varying social and/or political interests.

One of the important aspects of collective memory is its bounded nature, which in itself is often contested. According to Johannes Fabian, politics of memory does not only occur when in the realm of the political, but also in collective memory, just as that of public, can possess its own regime. The Official White House Boys Organization, the largest group, is the most active in the current collective memory efforts. Their visibility in the public arena, due largely to their legal representatives (Masterson, Hoag, and Smith Law Firm) as well as their leadership’s interaction with the media, has elevated the group to a position of authority in regard to the
collective memory of the abused youth who attended Dozier. For example, the Dozier Task Force bill (Bill No. CS for SB 708) stated that one of the members should be a “representative who promotes the welfare of people who are former wards of the Dozier School for Boys appointed by the Chief Financial Officer.” The individual chosen was the president of TOWHBO, who would represent the “former wards” in discussions of a memorial for Dozier’s victims and the reinternment of the unidentified remains excavated from Boot Hill Cemetery. Such visibility and authority given to TOWHBO led to members of the other groups to merge with this organization in order to be heard on the public stage. However, as characteristic of collective memory politics, the possession of this memory by TOWHBO has resulted in the erasure of experiences, as one version of the past has become the dominant narrative.
Chapter Six:

Christianity And Dozier School For Boys

“I begged for Jesus Christ, God, over and over. God, help me Jesus, help me. It didn’t do any good.” [A former white youth of Dozier School for Boys describing his response to being beaten at the White House]

The central focus of this chapter is to discuss the multifaceted role of religion in Dozier’s history. It provides insight into how religion was used at this institution. The first section situates Dozier within the broader movements of moral training and education, specifically the Native American boarding schools and the child-saving movement. I then examine the development of religiosity at the school. In its early history, the reform school had difficulty fulfilling its religious goals, but following an investigation, it quickly improved and increased its religious activities. This section is followed by a discussion of religious holiday celebrations. Holiday events, specifically Easter and Christmas, highlighted the religious nature of the campus and was an important component of community engagement. Marianna residents visited and supported the school during these events, including bringing gifts for the boys or engaging in the activities.

The next section explores the burials and memorial processes at the school. Several boys died while at the reform school. They were buried at Boot Hill Cemetery, located on the North campus, which was designated for the black children. In the early 1900s, there were no markers for the deceased; however, after the 1960s, crosses, a Christian symbol, were placed in the cemetery in honor of the boys. This chapter ends with an examination of the school’s individual rating system, which was created to evaluate the moral development of the youth offenders.
Historical Context of Moral Reformation of Youth

Prior to Dozier and the child-saving movement, the U.S. government emphasized Christian education in their efforts to control the indigenous population. Upon their arrival in the New World, European settlers sought to gain control over the indigenous population for their own economic gains. Indigenous groups occupied the lands that were of interest to the settlers (Zinn 2013). The White settlers considered themselves as superior, intellectually and culturally, to the native groups, who they referred to as "savages." According to David Adams, Whites believed that Indians practiced pagan religions and "were disdainful of private property and wealth, and generally lived out their lives in pagan ignorance of all things civilized, they were culturally worthless" (1988, 10). Europeans were interested in "civilizing" the group, which included instilling in the Indians a Christian way of living. This Christian civilizing effort would include accepting not only the faith, but also the values of private property, individualism, and industry (Adams 1995, 15). Their Christianizing efforts, which began during the Colonial era, were to help with their interest of taking the land and resources from the Native peoples (Adams 1995; Fuchs and Havighurst 1972).

The "Indian Problem" was centered on the clash of economic interest and culture between European settlers and Indians. The newly formed USA wanted to expand its border to the west coast (Adams 1971; Fischbacher 1967). However, the indigenous groups, who were settled on the lands, complicated this expansion. The US government considered the Indians and their territories as foreign nations, providing the grounds for the settlers to go to war and make treaty agreements with the Indian group (Adams 1988; Adams 1971). As the forced removal of Indians occurred across the territory through battles, the US government was concerned with the future of the native populations. According to Adams (1995), white settlers were questioning the role of
Indians in the American empire. This led to more governmental interest in the education of Indians.

The Congress passed the Indian Civilization Act of 1819 in order to provide political and financial support for Native American schools, continuing the missionary and government work during colonialism (Trafzer, Keller, and Sisquoc 2006; Fischbacher 1967). The statute states, "That for the purpose of providing against the further decline and final extinction of the Indian tribes, adjoining the frontier settlements of the US and for introducing among them the habits acts of civilization..." (Indian Civilization Act of 1819, Chapter 82). The President of the United States is authorized to hire instructors of "good moral character" who can teach Indians reading, writing, and arithmetic as well as agricultural practices appropriate to their setting (Indian Civilization Act of 1819; Trafzer, Keller, and Sisquoc 2006). Thomas L. McKenny, Superintendent of Indian Trade and Chairman of the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs chose missionaries to instruct Native Americans (Trafzer, Keller, and Sisquoc 2006). The act allotted $10,000 annually to fund Indian schools (Fischbacher 1967). There were twenty-one Indian boarding schools and day schools in 1824, most of which were controlled by Christian missionaries, a trend that was established during the colonial period (Trafzer, Keller, Sisquoc 2006).

Religion and moral education were also important in the child-saving movement, which influenced the juvenile justice system in the United States. During the Progressive Era (1850-1920) supporters of reform and reformers aimed to alleviate the social and economic injustices and human suffering that developed as a result of urbanization, industrial growth, and other new ways of life (Jaycox 2005, viii). The effort to improve conditions was done through a myriad of ways, including the juvenile justice system. According to Anthony M. Platt (1969a), child savers,
who were a product of this era, was a “group of ‘disinterested’ reformers who regarded their cause as a matter of conscience and morality, serving no particular class or political interests” (1969a, 3). They considered themselves as humanitarians who had to save those who were less fortunate.

Child savers highlighted and invented new categories of youthful misconduct (Platt 1969a). Reformers of this movement were concerned with imposing sanctions on the behaviors of youth and preventing them from enjoying the privileges of adulthood (Platt 1969b). The youth were treated as being dependent and in constant need for supervision (Platt 1969a). Child savers wanted to protect children from the moral and physical dangers of the urban and industrialized society. They believed that criminals were “conditioned by biological heritage and brutish living conditions” (Platt 1969a, 45). Child savers thought that there were biological and environmental origins of criminality, which is the result of European criminology as well as the anti-urban sentiments associated with the rural and Protestant ethic (Platt 1969a, 1969b).

The reformers felt that the delinquent youth should be saved and reconstituted through reformatory system, which was supposed to change the delinquents into law-abiding citizens. Platt explains that the reformatory plan included the following points:

1. Youth offenders were to be separated from adult criminals in order to not be influenced by the negative behavior;
2. Offenders were to be removed from their home environment and imprisoned for protection and their own good. The guarded reformatories should offer guidance and love, yet the restraint and firmness;
3. The delinquent youth does not need a trial and they should have limited legal requirements in getting assigned to the reformatories because due process was not necessary. The reformatories did not aim to punish, but to reform;  
4. The sentences for the offenders should be indeterminate so that it would encourage the youth to be complicit in their own reform. Recalcitrant youths are not allowed to resume their criminal careers.  
5. Reformation is not sentimentality. When all other methods have been exhausted, punishment is required if it is good for the youth;  
6. Through physical exercise, military drill, and constant supervision, the offenders needed to be shielded from luxuries and idleness;  
7. These reformatories should be located in the rural areas and designed based on the cottage plan, which emphasized individuality and family responsibility. Cottages should also have a Christian man or woman who function like a parent for the youth;  
8. Reform was based on education, labor, and religion. Youth offenders should not receive more than an elementary education and the emphasis should be placed on agricultural and industrial training; and  
9. The inmates should be taught the significance of industry, adjustment, sobriety, prudence, thrift, and practical ambition (Platt 1969a, 54-55).  

The child-saving movement and the reformatory plan aimed to save white children from delinquency.  

While the child-saving movement focused on white children, as argued by Geoffrey K. Ward, black children were considered a “lost cause” because they did not have the moral,
physical, and intellectual capacity needed for normalization according to religious, academic, legal, and lay communities (2012, 39). During slavery and post-Emancipation, white supremacy ideology consider black youth “as a strange species of rigid or inflexible human clay, a categorically incorrigible group, more suited to neglect and exploitation than to attempts at normalization and civic integration” (2012, 41). While white youth were considered possible assets in society, black youth were thought to be unsalvageable (Ward 2012; Abrams 2014). As the juvenile justice system peaked during emancipation, Reconstruction, and Progressive era, Jim Crow laws were established, creating an intersection of reactionary and progressive reform where black adult stakeholders and youth were constructed to be politically and cultural inferior and undeserving of the “white-dominated parental state” (Ward 2012, 38). This Jim Crow juvenile justice system was deliberately designed to deny black dependent and delinquent children their humanity (Abrams 2014).

One of the goals for Dozier School for Boys was to provide moral rehabilitation of youth by preventing additional criminal behavior and ensuring that the inmates could be restored into the community. As explained in Florida Statute Chapter 955, section 955.03 (1959), the children at Florida Industrial School for Boys were to “receive careful physical, intellectual, and moral training, be reformed and restored to the community with purposes and character fitting for a good citizen, and honorable and honest man, with trade or skilled occupation fitting such person for self-maintenance.” As shown in the general trend of education in the United States, Christianity was an important component in the moral rehabilitation of the youth offender. In the next section, I speak specifically of the religious practices on the campus and how it was developed.
Religious Activities

Initially, FIS had difficulty providing a solid religious program. The only religious teaching that was available was through the teachers from their own perspectives. FIS did not have an established chaplain nor churches during its beginning years and needed to rely on the larger Marianna community for assistance. However, according to the 1909 Legislative Committee’s report on the reform school, the religious groups from the community refused to go to the reform school. Based on the report, the superintendent at the time was willing to provide transportation for the preachers of different denominations to travel to and from the reform school. The Committee explained that there were no activities scheduled for Sunday morning and so they asked a teacher to devote an hour to teaching the children about the Bible on that day. In order to enhance this aspect of the school, the committee recommended that a reasonable amount of money should be taken from the appropriation fund to pay ministers to preach several times over the month.

After the review by the Legislative Committee, the school implemented several religious activities for the youth offenders. In the 1921 to 1923 Biennial Report, M.S. Knight, former Superintendent of FIS, stated, “We are endeavoring to hold a high standard of citizenship before them at all times, and we also give them religious training in Sunday School and other religious exercises.” He continued to speak about the “good ladies and Christian workers” of Marianna who went to the school to talk with boys and bring them treats. Sunday School became a regular activity on Sunday morning, even before churches were built on the campus. The religious services on campus, including prayer meetings that occurred, were considered non-denominational (Lundrigan 1975). Yet, the Bible was considered the main text, reinforcing the Christian nature of instruction (Lundrigan 1975). Earlier in the school’s history, these services
were primarily conducted by outside religious officials, as FIS lacked its own chaplain. Some boys were even baptized at churches in Marianna.

Religious leaders from different denominations were active in the religious activities at the reform institution. The leaders came from the following Christian denominations: Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, Episcopal, and Catholic. Based on *The Yellow Jackets*, some of the most active churches from the Marianna community were Methodist Church of Marianna, First Presbyterian Church (Marianna), Marianna Baptist Church, St. Luke Episcopal Church, St. Dominic’s Church of Panama City, and St. Anne Catholic Church in Marianna. Arthur G. Dozier was elected senior warden of the Episcopal parish in 1948 while he was Superintendent of the Florida Industrial School. The Protestant preachers would alternate weekly services during the week, usually on Thursday nights (see Figure 6.1). Catholic services were offered for children of that faith and sermons were offered at different times or at the same time but in a different building than the Protestant services.

In addition to Sunday school, Florida Industrial School for Boys added other religious activities/programs to its administration. Bible Study was a regular activity at the school. Students earned “attractive certificates” after completing each unit of the course (*The Yellow Jacket*, December 24, 1938). In the 1940s, a church orchestra was formed from the band. It was a voluntary group that would perform during religious services (*The Yellow Jacket*, April 11, 1942). The school also offered students the opportunity to participate in contests centered on religion, such as the essay contest on “The Lord’s Prayer.” For this particular activity, the Academic Department at Dozier dedicated time for students to work on their essays. Their essays were submitted to Dr. C.B. Toombs, the first full-time Chaplain of the school.
Dr. C.B. Toombs was appointed as chaplain by Arthur G. Dozier, former Superintendent of the Florida Industrial School in 1935. Toombs was the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Marianna when he took this position. He was responsible for managing the religious education program at the school. Toombs also created the Bible Study course for the school. The hiring of a full-time chaplain was important to successfully implement a religious program. Prior to that time, the school relied on voluntary cooperation from church workers and religious leaders from Marianna, which was not consistent (The Yellow Jacket, November 16, 1935). This program was later referred to as the Department of Religious Education.

Figure 6.1: Excerpt from the April 11, 1942 issue of The Yellow Jacket, Dozier newsletter, which refers to the Religious Advisory Committee and the Ministerial Association of Marianna. Newsletter downloaded from State Library and Archives of Florida: Florida Public Documents Collection.
The reform school also developed the Religious Advisory Council of the School (also referred to as the Religious Advisory Committee), which was composed of various religious figures of Marianna, to help enhance the religious education program. The Religious Advisory Committee gave the youth an opportunity to request a personal meeting with one of the ministers (The Yellow Jacket, April 11, 1942). A writer for The Yellow Jacket wrote: “Much good work has been done here since the program was inaugurated and a large number of boys have become church members through their association with the ministers” (The Yellow Jacket, April 22, 1944, 1). This committee played significant role in creating religious ties with the larger Marianna community.

However, not all of the youth went to church on Sunday nor were they required to attend a service. One of Dozier’s former white students, Larry Wilson, who grew up in the Baptist tradition, stated, “We weren’t required to go to church.” Larry, currently a Christian within the Baptist denomination, explained that he was not a Christian at that time, and he would question God after being beaten at the White House. “How can God allow this?” This sentiment was expressed by several former wards of Dozier. Another former white inmate of Dozier, John Sams, said he did not attend church on Sunday. He was on the baseball and football teams and practice was held on the weekends, which did not give him an opportunity to go to church. John was raised Pentecostal, and considers that religion today; however, he lost his faith while at the school. He explained: “I shouldn’t ask God questions but why has God allowed this kind of thing to go on with all of these children there for years and years and years. What did we do?...I just lost my faith…it killed my religion. It killed it. It was that bad there.”
In addition to the religious programs on campus, staff members often took boys to their own church if they were good. Richard Smith, a former African American staff member, brought a few of the youth, white and black boys, with him to his own church:

I’ve carried them to church, and they, it was funny, they say, we ain’t been to no church Mr. [Smith]...Do you know, this just goes to show you, two things, that people need the opportunity and to be trained to take a chance at that opportunity. Ok, opportunity. So don’t tell me how great you are. Just talk with me and I ain’t never had the opportunity-- I could have been greater than you. And these kids started off trying to learn how to raise a hymn. You know in them old country churches, they have hymns like “Father I Stretch My Hand to Thee”... then you [sing] the short meter, the long meter, whatever, you raise it. And then the other congregation joins in and sing. And that was fascinating to them boys because they ain’t never seen nothing like that.

And I showed them the picture of the [Ten] Commandments. I had to run them out of class! They wanted to see them over and over and over. “Did that really happen?” I said yeah, that really happened just like that and they couldn’t believe that when they saw what Moses got done to the Red Sea, the Red Sea parted...and then when the chariots got through, the Sea closed back over the Pharaoh and his group. “Mr. [Smith], did that really happen?” I said, yeah, that really happened. And I made the mistake of teaching them the books in the Bible...Then they got so they can rap them. They got so they can say them backwards. I can’t say them backwards. I’m not kidding! But it’s showing that you can do things if you have the chance to be trained and get exposure, a chance to do it (Interview with author, December 17, 2016).

Staff members would also bring boys to other places in Marianna, such as to jobs they may have in the community. These jobs and other activities outside of Dozier were permitted for the good kids, those of a higher rank in the Individual Rating System.

Religious Holiday Events

The community also participated in holiday events, particularly the Christian holidays of Easter (Jesus’s resurrection) and Christmas (Jesus’s birth). Easter was celebrated yearly at the reform school. For this holiday, the campus would have Sunrise Service, which would be
arranged by the chaplain, early on Sunday morning and outside on the campus lawn. According to a newsletter covering the event, “The ceremony is one of striking beauty and reverence with the setting on a beautiful stretch of lawn surrounded by stately pines and other greenery” (The Yellow Jacket, April 9, 1955). The Ministerial Association of Marianna, which included religious figures from churches in Marianna, co-sponsored the Easter events with the Florida Industrial School.

Christmas was a festive time of the year for the school, which was shown through the organization of several programs. During the season, The Yellow Jacket would laud the Christmas performances, celebrations, and decorations of the youth and staff. For example, the December 31, 1933 issue discussed a Christmas celebration that lasted from Saturday at noon until Christmas night, that following Monday. This celebration involved visitors from Marianna who performed carols, readings, and even a pageant. There was also a “Negro Minstrel,” cast with “the very best negro imitators,” that occurred Saturday evening. In the December 13, 1958 issue of The Yellow Jacket, which has a festive first page, the elaborate Christmas decorations were highlighted with the headline “CAMPUS IN BEAUTIFUL CHRISTMAS ATTIRE AS SEASON NEARS.” This issue stated that students, staff, and visitors were in a happy mood based on the Decoration Program, which started in December 1950 and became a tradition. For this program, awards were given to the cottage with the best decorations, encouraging the boys to participate. In December of 1955, approximately 58,000 visitors who drove through the campus to see the decorations (The Yellow Jacket, January 14, 1956). Although visitors were allowed on campus, the parents were not invited on campus on Christmas due to the “elaborate Christmas program for the students” (The Yellow Jacket, December 13, 1958).
Burials

Nearly 100 boys died while incarcerated at the reform school, and many of them were buried at Boot Hill Cemetery, located on the North Campus, the designated black area. Prior to the 1960s, the cemetery did not have markers for the deceased boys. Some graves had indentations that marked a grave, but the site was mainly overgrown. During his time as director of training on the North Campus (beginning in the 1960s), Lennox Williams ordered the black Boy Scout troop to clean up the cemetery and place 31 crosses in the area to honor the deceased boys. (FDLE 2009). He believed the boys deserved a proper resting place, hence the crosses. Williams requested that the maintenance crew create 31 crosses made of concrete and rebar for the cemetery. However, other staff people stated to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement that there were wooden crosses at Boot Hill before the cement crosses. Williams did not know the exact number of deaths but heard that 31 individuals were buried at the cemetery (FDLE 2009). The cement crosses were broken by heavy equipment when the Department of Corrections took over the farmland. These crosses were replaced in the 1980s by Superintendent Danny Pate. The new crosses were made with metal pipes and were painted white (FDLE 2009). Despite the possibility that the deceased boys may have celebrated different religions, the staff chose a Christian symbol to honor them.

The funerals of the deceased boys would be managed by a religious figure, either on campus or from a church in the Marianna community. For example, Thomas Varnadoe, a white student, died of pneumonia at the age of 13 on Tuesday, October 26, 1934 (The Yellow Jacket, November 11, 1934). Dr. C. B. Toombs, who was the Pastor at the First Presbyterian Church in Marianna at the time, officiated the ceremony (The Yellow Jacket, November 11, 1934). Thomas
was buried at Boot Hill Cemetery, without the consent of his family, who were actively involved in the USF Boot Hill Burial Ground Project in hopes of having their relative returned.

Another white student, George Owen Smith, ward of Dozier, was found deceased at a private residence on January 24, 1941, according to the February 1, 1941 issue of The Yellow Jacket, after running away. On that very same day, according to a letter written by Reverend V.G. Lowery of the Episcopal Church of Marianna to the Smith family (January 25, 1941), he was buried at 3:30pm. The funeral was officiated by Rev. Lowery, Superintendent Davidson’s pastor, with only staff members present. The letter explained that he was buried in a plot at the school’s cemetery that is nicely kept and “the last rites were tenderly and considerately performed” (Lowery, 1941) However, as explained by Smith’s sister, this family also did not get any information regarding where their relative was buried. They had been searching for George until Dr. Erin Kimmerle notified the family of his positive identification.
Individual Rating System as a Moral Evaluation System

In 1931, Superintendent Milliard Davidson, with the assistance of the Supervisor of Boys Jack A. Davis, established the Individual Rating System to develop the morality of the youth at FIS (Lundrigan 1975). The Individual Rating System became a critical aspect of the reform school’s moral training. In the 1930-1932 Biennial Report, Superintendent Davidson explained that the institution could not rely solely on religious instruction to instill moral concepts in the youth. The purpose of the rating system was to recognize “desirable qualities, successes, and
pleasant experiences as well as undesirable qualities, failures, and unpleasant experiences”
(Lundrigan 1975, 191). Davidson explained in his report that the system was useful in keeping records of the youth and their behavior, which would be marked on their permanent records. The wards would be rated each week by staff members who were in contact with them.

Their progress was rated on a scale of 0-5, with five being the highest grade. A rating of “0” is given to a boy who has been troublesome, such as using profanity, stealing, lying, abusing the property, smoking, or running away. A student gets a “1” when they have violated a rule two or more times in class, cottage, or in any other manner at the reform school. Boys received a “2” when they violated a rule once (Edwards 1968, 24x). When a student gets a rating of “3,” they exhibit such qualities as being trustworthy, punctual, and industrious; however, they are not exceptional in their attitudes and personalities. In order to receive a rating of “4” and “5,” the boy must show “cheerfulness, trustworthiness, friendliness, courtesy, neatness, obedience, industriousness, and punctuality” (Edwards 1968, 24x). The difference between the ratings is that a boy who receives a “4” sometimes falters in those traits, while a “5” means that he possesses all of them and is a “thorough gentleman” (Edwards 1968, 24x-26x; Lundrigan 1975). As the boy went higher in ratings, his rank improved, and he earned additional privileges, which was meant to encourage boys to continue developing moral traits.
Figure 6.4: Excerpt from the September 8, 1934 issue of The Yellow Jacket discussing the Individual Rating System. Newsletter downloaded from State Library and Archives of Florida: Florida Public Documents Collection.

The system included several ranking positions: Punk, Rookie, Pollywog, Pioneer, Pilot, and Ace. A ranking of “Rookie” was given to a boy upon entering the institution. At this stage, the boy was adapting to the school’s programs. If he earned at least a three each week for a month by every staff person who was evaluating him, he would advance to Polliwog. However, if he did not achieve the score by not meeting the standards, he would be reduced to “punk”/”grub.” A Polliwog earned the privilege of using the library books and playing cottage games. He could also go with a supervisor to restricted areas around campus. If the Polliwog earned a “four” OR for a month, he will become a Pioneer. This position included the added privileges of going to the movies in the community and other places off-campus. If the student continued getting a rating of four or more for two months, he will become a “Pilot,” which brought even more privileges because the staff had more trust in the student. The highest rank was “Ace,” which is given to the boy if he maintained his status as a Pilot for a month. The “Ace” group were given more liberty than the other rankings. They were able to go off campus in groups of two or more in civilian clothes. This group was also able to walk around the campus.
freely (1930-1932 Biennial Report; Edwards 1968, 24x-26x; Lundrigan 1975). This group developed the moral concepts as outlined by Superintendent Davidson. When the students achieved a high ranking, especially if receiving a ranking of “Ace,” they would be mentioned in the campus newsletter.

During audio recorded interviews, several former students of Dozier discussed their rankings and associated experiences. Rick Williams, an African American male, had his sentence extended because he continued to be rated “0,” remaining a “Grub.” He stated that when boys were beaten at the White House, they would fall in their rankings. Rick Williams explains:

I learned how to drive tractors, I wasn't afraid of alligators. I wasn't afraid of snakes. So my boss man wanted to keep me around so every time it got ready for me to go home, I got in trouble. And I had a rank I was telling you about was a grub zero. And every time I got a ride, I had to get a spanking and it took me three months to get out of that grub, just to get back to the rank to come home was nine months. Then I got in trouble again. Fighting, fighting, fighting. See I didn't-- we call home boys, homeboys. You might had heard the word homeboys, homegirl. That's somebody from your hometown. That's what we use the word homeboy. But, see, I only had two boys from [West] City out of all of them thousands of boys only two from [West] City. So I didn't have, I had to fight all the time. So I don't know why they caused them boys to mess with me.

But whatever happened, I had to fight and every time I had to fight I got wrote up and I had to stay a little bit longer and she asked me, she said [Mr. Williams] you heard the white side of the story? I said yeah, I listen at them lies they telling. She said, what? I say I’ve listen at them lies they telling. And she say why you call them lies? I ain't never seen a white guy on the farm. I ain't never seen-- I've seen white directors over them, the crew, but I ain't never seen the boys did any work on the black side, no more than come over there and fix a tractor or something like that. And I say I'm listen at they lies. How many times they got spanked. You know we had to use the word spanking. We couldn't say whooping or beating. We had to say spanking (Interview with author, October 16, 2016).

Rick’s experiences highlight the issues of abuse that occurred in the White House. Members of the White House Boys, including The Official White House Boys Organization and the Black
Boys at Dozier Reform School, have been outspoken about being abused at the White House. A few members have stated they received about 100 lashes at the White House by staff members.

According to the 1930-1932 Biennial report, the Individual Rating System dealt with bad behavior by reducing the ranking of the student and taking away privileges to prevent the need of corporal punishment. It further explains that there were “rare cases” where disciplinary measures outside of the rating system were necessary. Yet, the staff was “fully cognizant of their responsibilities and desirous of being absolutely fair and psychologically right in their administration of punishment” (“Biennial Report” 1932, 39). Unfortunately, many former Dozier youth have politically and legally shared their experiences of abuse, specifically the White House Boys.

**Conclusion**

As discussed in this chapter, Christianity was used in several roles at Dozier, from educational activities to its disciplinary methods. Christianity was an important component to the U.S. educational system during that era. It was also used to oppress groups of people. For example, the Native American boarding schools used Christianity as a tool for controlling the indigenous populations, making them renounce their culture and become complicit and indoctrinated into white society (Berkhofer 1965; Kennedy Report 1969; Adams 1971, 1995; Trafzer, Keller, and Sisquoc 2006. Dozier, being situated within this historical dynamic of religion and control, employed Christianity to moralize and reform its juvenile population. However, recent conversations regarding the school’s memory rarely includes this narrative of religion as an oppressive force.

Yet, instead of Christianity being considered as a source of discipline and control, it has been given a passive role, one that is considered to be complicit in the dynamics of abuse;
however, not one that had authority. For example, a member of the Dozier Task Force criticized the Marianna religious community for not being active in renouncing the institution when the school was open: “And the fact that this deeply religious community [Marianna] doesn’t understand that what the school has been is their history and want to hide that fact when all the world can read the newspaper and can see otherwise.” This criticism implicates the religious community for being supportive of the institution, but does not directly rebuke them, such as the Marianna Ministerial Association, for their governing role in the school. In addition to the role Christianity played in the school’s past, this faith was employed by the state and other stakeholders in the memorialization process of Dozier School for Boys. In the next chapters, I will discuss how this social institution has been included in the memorialization processes by different groups as they engage in their own collective memory politics.
We pray together, God, Our Father, We thank you for this moment and for this time, We’re honored to be alive and to be here. We thank you that this is the day that you have made and we will rejoice and be glad in it. During the time of serious work, I pray for my fellow colleagues on this task force that we would operate with wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, pray for the attendees of today’s meeting, sincerity of our hearts. We pray for Jackson County and for the serious matter that is before the Dozier Task Force. I pray that we would be sensible as well as be serious about the business. I pray that you would lead us God and to orchestrate our steps, our thoughts, and our tongues. We thank You for this...this...this assignment. We pray that in moving, going forward would be through Your will and through Your way. And we honor You now. Amen.

[Darrick McGhee, Sr.’s prayer at the start of the August 19th Dozier Task Force meeting]

Collective apologies, as argued by Michel Trouillot (2000), is a relatively modern phenomenon. There has been interest since the 1980s for the redressing of past wrongs, including acknowledging and apologizing for what occurred in the past. However, Trouillot suggests that such collective apologies are abortive rituals; they fail to fulfill their purposes of redressing the past. These apologies are not successful because the apologetic rituals are not as transformative as initially intended. This process, which involves the creation of two temporal planes (the pastness and the present oriented towards the future) is a multistep exercise that is steeped in such issues as the historical situations of both planes as well as the identities of those involved in the crime. Although Trouillot is speaking in a global sense of collective apologies, this
discussion builds on his theoretical understanding of reconciliation through an analysis of the
Dozier School for Boys.

The reconciliation process can be very complex when dealing with institutions of power. Reconciliation is difficult when stakeholders have multiple interests when engaging the past. For example, some stakeholders—primarily the USF, the media, NAACP, families of victims, and faith-based communities—are interested in retrieving the past through history in an attempt to understand what occurred and why it happened. However, other stakeholders, such as the White House Boys, are focused on not engaging the past for fact-finding purposes, but for an apology and compensation. On the other hand, the State of Florida is concerned with memory as a future-oriented practice, one that does not aim to gather information from the past. Reconciliation and memory reconstruction happen on multiple levels (individual, community, and state). This process is slow and influenced by collective memory, social identity, and intergroup interaction (Androff 2012; Fletcher and Weinsten 2002). In a religious sense, reconciliation primarily refers to the restoration of fractured relationships, both among humans and between people and God (Amstutz 2005). This chapter focuses on the memorial and reconciliation efforts from the position of the State of Florida. It outlines the steps that the State has taken to reconcile the past. This discussion begins with an examination of the complicated nature of, as Trouillot acknowledges, recognizing the perpetrator and the victims involved in the Dozier case and if abuses did occur. This section is followed by a discussion of the Dozier Task Force, the group that was formed to provide recommendations on memorials and reburials to the Florida Cabinet. After explaining the complex formation and activities of this group, the chapter proceeds with the subsequent Senate and House hearings that voted on an official apology. It concludes with a discussion of the State’s reconciliation process. To understand how religion functions as a form
of social control in memorialization, I argue that the inclusion of religious perspectives and action was instrumental in the State’s collective apology.

**Collective Apologies**

Trouillot (2000) suggests that collective apologies can be understood as rituals, a stylized, regulated, and repetitive process that has expressive and transformative characteristics. The transformative nature of rituals require the change from one temporal plane to another. However, for this transformation to take place, the individual must be understanding of the change in identity that occurs across these temporal planes in becoming anew. Collective apologies are transformative rituals that aim to address the past wrongs in efforts to achieve reconciliation. These rituals involve several steps to fulfill their transformative purpose. First, a wrong had to occur, such as stealing a cell phone. At this point, pastness, one temporal plane, has been created. At this point, there is a need for an apology. Numerical identity between the perpetrator and the apologizer develops, followed by that of the victim and addressee. These acknowledgements of the numerical identities are necessary for linking the two temporal planes (pastness and present oriented towards the future) and the transformation process. Following these steps, there is some form of remorse or apology made, leading to a partial or total erasure recognized by both sides.

When considering these collective apologies, it is important to situate the collective subjects within their historical context. In other words, how do these collective entities, the perpetrator/apologizer and victim/addressee, become the parties involved in the apology. Trouillot (2000) explains that there are three steps in this process: 1) how did the perpetrators become responsible for the wrong committed; 2) what is the social context of the perpetrators today; and 3) can a numerical identity be demonstrated between the perpetrator and the apologizer. These steps should be repeated for the victim/addressee. In the case of Dozier, the
State of Florida is the perpetrator and the apologizer. As discussed in the previous chapter, the reform school was a state entity, an aspect of its juvenile justice department. The State has been identified as the perpetrators by the White House Boys (and its subgroups) and other stakeholders. Therefore, they have been tasked with the duty to apologize. This process of apologizing was not a given, it involved several actions on the part of the state, including investigations into the reform school.

State Investigations into the Reform School (Pre-2008)

Since the first years of the school, the State of Florida has been engaged in controlling the public narrative of the institution, particularly in response to multiple investigations into the school, allegations of abuse, and the corruption by the administration. Six legislative investigative committees were formed between 1903-1913 to investigate operations at the reform school (Kimmerle, Wells, and Jackson 2016). They found that the school was putting the children in chains, that they were unjustly beaten, hired out for labor, and had neither proper nor adequate education, food, and clothing (Kimmerle, Wells, and Jackson 2016). The committee also discovered that the medical care was not adequate, issues with overcrowding, and the administrative and financial records were not properly maintained (Kimmerle, Wells, and Jackson 2016). For example, In 1909, the committee discovered that the school was in poor condition and the inmates did not have any desks (Edwards 1968). The committee also found that the inventory list on previous biennial report was falsified and President of the Board of Managers, W. H. Milton, had accrued a large debt and was detaining boys past the age of 18, possibly for labor (Kimmerle, Wells, and Jackson 2016; Lundrigan 1975). In the 1911 investigation, the committee was displeased that children were “unnecessarily and brutally punished” with a leather strap that was attached to a wooden handle (Edwards 1968).
The investigation conducted in 1913 by the legislative investigative committee led to the first rebranding of the school. As a result of the investigation, the committee found that there was overcrowding, especially on the “colored” side. There were 170 inmates at the school—50 white boys, 2 white girls, and the rest of the population was colored (Kimmerle, Wells, and Jackson 2016). The committee also discovered that the windows on both campuses (black and white) were heavily barred like prisons and had only one door leading to a hallway and stairs, which were wooden (Edwards 1968). If a fire broke out, the boys on the second and third floors would not be able to escape. Children were also hired out to pick cotton and other activities. After the investigation, the superintendent resigned and the State Legislature passed Chapter 6446 and 6529 of the Laws of Florida that was signed into law on June 5, 1913 (Edwards 1968). These chapters appropriated $43,000 to the reform school and changed the school name from State Reform School to the Florida Industrial School for Boys (Edwards 1968; Kimmerle, Wells, and Jackson 2016). The school’s name changed again in 1957 to the Florida School for Boys at Marianna. The bill that changed the name also added the Division of Corrections, the Division of Child Training Services, Division of Mental Health. Florida School for Boys changed its name for the last time to Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys in 1967, after the superintendent Arthur G. Dozier died of a heart attack. The name changes of the school reflected the need for the school to rebrand itself after the findings of the legislative committee.

In addition to the rebranding, Superintendents at Dozier granted access for researchers from Florida State University to conduct research on these institutions. These students (i.e., Morris 1949; Edwards 1968; and Lundrigan 1975) conducted ethnographic research into the school, including conducting interviews with employees (Kimmerle, Wells, and Jackson 2016).

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7 On November 18, 1914, a fire broke out in a dormitory on the white campus (Kimmerle, Wells, and Jackson 2016). The number of deaths varied based on the historical document (Kimmerle, Wells, and Jackson 2016). Lundrigan (1975) stated that 2 employees and 8 boys were killed.
They were able to get first-hand information on events in the school’s past such as the 1914 dormitory fire. Superintendents Millard Davidson, Arthur G. Dozier, and Lenox E. Williams gave the researchers permission to conduct these studies that became the main historical documents on the school (Kimmerle, Wells, and Jackson 2016). These narratives discussed the issues of the reform school in its early years, but they also spoke of the transformation of the school into a better institution as some of the old ways were abandoned. For example, Dozier told Morris that the practices such as isolation jail were no longer employed at the institution (Kimmerle, Wells, Jackson 2016; Morris 1949). Despite this emphasis on change, the school continued to receive negative reviews as a result of the beatings and maltreatment of children. Trouillot (1995) notes that power does not enter the historical production at one point, but it comes from different angles and times. It comes before the narrative is written and influences the creation and interpretation of the narrative (Trouillot 1995). E. H. Carr states that before we examine the facts, we should study the historian (1986, 17). We have to be critical of how facts are selected in the creation of narratives to trace how power is exercised (Trouillot 1995; Carr 1986). Due to the fact that the superintendents granted researchers access to the institution, provided their own narratives of the school, and likely influenced the data collected, they played a role in the selection of facts as well as the documents that were created.

As the school moved into the 1950s and 1960s, it continued to receive negative reviews from the community at large, state legislative committees, and congressional hearings due to the reports of maltreatment, brutal beatings, and isolation of children. The reform school hired a media relations specialist, Addie Summers, in 1957 to assist in curving the negative perceptions of the institution. Such examples emphasize the ways in which the reform school attempted to control the narrative in the media, which continued in current efforts of memorialization.
State Investigations into the Reform School (Post-2008)

It is important to identify the State of Florida as a subject, not just an agent in this historical process; these two positions in the historical narrative imply different functions. As an agent, the state can offer some form of historical reparation due to its structural position. However, as a subject active in the wrong committed, it must take a different kind of accountability, one that must apologize for the offense (Trouillot 1995). The State of Florida, including the Governor and the Cabinet as well as the Department of Juvenile Justice, have taken several steps to acknowledge that a wrong was indeed committed, beginning with the two investigations conducted by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). The Original White House Boys (Roger Kiser, Robert Straley, Michael O’McCarthy, and Dick Colon) initiated the investigations when they held a press conference on the steps of the State Capital in Tallahassee, petitioning for the governor (Charlie Crist) to look into the deaths and abuse allegations of the former youth.

Governor Charlie Crist directed the Florida Department of Law Enforcement to conduct an investigation on Boot Hill Cemetery on December 8, 2008. He wanted FDLE to 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 (FDLE 2009).

This investigation included reviewing and analyzing The Yellow Jacket, the Florida Department of State Library and Archives, local and national newspapers, school ledgers, witness testimonies and the Florida Department of Health Division of Vital Statistics. However, as the report noted, the material collected was not a complete account of Dozier’s history, due to issues such as the conditions of documents, poor record keeping, and the passage of time. The investigation ended on May 14, 2009. FDLE concluded that commissioners appointed by the Governor and The
Board of Commissioners of State Institutions were in control of the school. In addition, the investigators stated that all thirty-one of the boys buried at Boot Hill were identified with official documentation and there were no evidence of Dozier staff contributing to or attempted to conceal the deaths (FDLE 2009).

Following this initial investigation, Governor Crist requested that the FDLE examine the abuse allegations brought forth by The White House Boys Survivors Organization that occurred from 1940 through 1969. FDLE was also tasked to “determine 1) The person or persons responsible and 2) If said abuse rises to a level that would warrant criminal prosecution” (2010, 1). FDLE conducted over one hundred interviews with former Dozier staff members, students, and relatives of the incarcerated youth during the investigation. An FDLE crime laboratory analyst was also employed to provide a forensic examination of the White House building, which yielded negative results for blood. The report concluded that corporal punishment was used to encourage obedience; however, there were discrepancies regarding the number and severity of the spankings received by the youth. In addition, Troy Tidwell, a former staff member who has been cited by several White House Boys as being abusive, denied physically or sexually abusing the former inmates. There were also inconsistencies regarding the long-term psychological abuse endured by the students who attended the reform school. Ultimately, there was no tangible evidence that supported or denied the abuse allegations, mainly due to the passage of time.\(^8\)

These FDLE investigations ultimately did not acknowledge a perpetrator nor did they emphatically establish that a wrong occurred. Despite the fact that the initial investigation identified State of Florida as being in control of the school, a point that was previously known, the conclusions were largely in favor of the State, even with the inclusion of testimonies from

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\(^8\) From 2010 to 2011, the United State Department of Justice Civil Rights Division evaluated Dozier School for Boys and the Jackson Juvenile Offender Center in Marianna, Florida. The investigative body found several issues with both institutions.
former youth who alleged to have been abused. These results were largely due to the biases in the data collection process. The FDLE investigators relied heavily on materials submitted to state entities by the Dozier staff, the records kept by the school, and *The Yellow Jacket*. These materials were created by the people accused of the wrong and, especially in regard to the newsletters, tend to show the positive work of the school. Any forms of abuse or negligence were not likely to be included in these materials, creating silences in the process and erasing experiences in this historical production. The FDLE did interview people, including former youth, in understanding the full story. However, based on Florida Statutes, as noted in the reports, there was not enough evidence to prove, or deny, that anything happened that warranted criminal prosecution. The White House Boys continued to challenge these results by appealing to the media, including the *Tampa Bay Times*. The work of the media would soon get the attention of University of South Florida anthropologists.

**Establishing the Perpetrators and Victims: The Florida Cabinet Meeting**

On January 21, 2016, the future of the Dozier School for Boys and its memorialization were discussed at the Florida Cabinet Meeting. The Florida Cabinet consisted of Governor Rick Scott, Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi, Commissioner of Agriculture Adam H. Putnam, and Chief Financial Officer Jeff Atwater. This was also the moment in which the State claimed responsibility for the wrong committed and began the apology process. This discussion, one of many on the meeting’s agenda, included the findings of the USF anthropology final report, the perspectives of the White House Boys, and community and political leaders. Erin Kimmerle, Christian Wells, and Antoinette Jackson began the proceedings with a presentation on their Dozier research findings, which was one of the objectives established prior to the research. These presentations were integral in establishing a pastness, the first temporal plane, which
acknowledged the victims and the perpetrators. By providing forensic, archaeological, archival, and ethnographic evidence, the researchers acknowledged that a wrong occurred and that the State should be concerned with what should happen next.

Following the USF anthropologists, the White House Boys focused on the reinterment of human remains exhumed from Boot Hill Cemetery. Several members, including the president and vice-president of The Official White House Boys Organization and the sole member of the White House Boys Survivors Organization, expressed the need to properly rebury the boys. According to Jerry Cooper, “a lot of these children were not buried in a Christian manner,” and, as emphasized by Bill Price and Peggy Marx (wife of a White House Boy), they should not be reburied at Boot Hill Cemetery, or in Jackson County at all. Charlie Fudge, a White House Boy, also suggested that there may be another cemetery on campus and more work should be done to search for this other burial ground. As noted by Jeff Atwater, the White House Boys did not harp on their experiences of abuse, but instead spoke about the future of the remains. Robert Straley took it a step further by championing the need for reconciliation. He stated: “What happened in the past cannot be undone. Now is the time for reconciliation.”

Other stakeholders in the Dozier School for Boys were present at the Cabinet meeting and also presented their perspectives regarding the future of the property, reburial, and memorialization. Dale Landry, an NAACP representative, advocated for a mausoleum in the church on the South Campus for the human remains. He explained that “we need to look at a place that we can sanctify, that will be a sanctuary place to hold these remains until they can be identified.” Landry also pushed for a memorial as well as money for the families of victims for their relative’s burial. James Dean, City Manager of Marianna, Florida, offered assistance to the State of Florida “in any way that we might be able to bring closure to this process.” He was
followed by Elmer Bryant, former African American mayor of Marianna, who petitioned for the return of the Dozier property to Marianna and mentioned the positive aspects of the city, including providing scholarships to its black citizens. In addition, he contributed to the discussion of reconciliation with a Christian proclamation: “We’re gonna have a[n] upper room prayer [ring] and I’m gonna call for the men of these and other 50 more that we go in the upper room and pray for those mistakes that our forefathers made.”

After the presentations, the Florida Cabinet shared their views on the school and its memorialization. A main theme of their responses was to put these abuses in the past and focus on healing efforts, with all parties working together. Bondi recognized the “unspeakable atrocities” that the White House Boys experienced and thanked them “for helping us as a state to put this in the past and move forward with Marianna county [sic]. It is a beautiful county [sic].” Atwater built on this sentiment: “You gave us the green light to heal. You have said it’s time and you have spoken unselfishly.” Putnam was the only one to say he was sorry “for what these generations of boys endured while wards of the state.” He further explained that there was a need to memorialize what occurred at the school, but it could not be done that day. Putnam said, “I think we need to put the right people in the room and it needs to include Marianna, it needs to include Jackson County, it needs to include White House Boys representatives, it needs to include Department of State, Department of Environmental Protections…” Echoing Landry, he stated that the church building could be used to memorialize the victims “and turn all of our eyes heavenward.” Governor Scott, who concluded the remarks, explained that he was “proud that the state shut down Dozier” and encouraged the stakeholders to work together. He said, “It’s a very good day for our state ‘cause, as you see, we’re heading in the right direction.”
The Cabinet meeting signaled the beginning of the collective apology and memorialization process for the Dozier School for Boys. It publicly set the stage for a need for an apology, which was not formally given at that time, despite Putnam’s statement. A spouse of a White House Boy explained her response to the verbal apology:

Oh we got it. We got it on camera. We got it visually... They came down out of their seats. They hugged them. They shook their hands. Pam Bondi had her make-up on every shirt in the house. But I gotta tell you something. It has to be in writing (Interview with author, November 18, 2016).

While it was not delivered on this date, the responsibility of an apology, and subsequent memorialization, was placed on the State of Florida. During this meeting, the victims were identified by the State as the White House Boys, as emphasized by their inclusion in memorialization efforts stated by Putnam. The State did not discuss or consult other victims who may not belong to the White House Boys group. Although the White House Boys, especially TOWHBO, have considered themselves representatives of all the victims, including the boys exhumed from Boot Hill, they do not represent the perspectives of everyone abused at the school. For example, the differences in experience based on race would complicate the memorialization efforts as the State proceeds in their apology process. Religion, specifically Christianity, was also introduced to this process in the Cabinet meeting, which would be an important topic of discussion for the Dozier Task Force.

**Dozier Task Force**

The next step in the collective apology process of the state was the passing of the Dozier School for Boys bill (CS/CS/SB 708) on March 30, 2016. Arthenia Joyner (Senator, D-Florida) and Ed Narain (House Representative, D-Florida) sponsored this bill, which authorized several actions to be taken following the USF Dozier Research Project. According to this bill, the next of
kin of a child exhumed from Boot Hill is entitled up to $7,500 for funeral expenses. All unidentified remains and artifacts exhumed from the cemetery were to remain in the custody of the University of South Florida. The anthropologists are to work with the Department of State in locating and identifying next of kin. The Department of State is responsible for communicating with the next of kin regarding payment or reimbursement of funeral expenses.

This bill also established the Dozier Task Force (DTF), a nine-member group that provided recommendation for the creation and maintenance of a Dozier memorial and a site for the re-interment of unidentified or unclaimed remains (CS/CS/SB 708). The Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives asked Kimmerle, USF anthropologist, to provide them with recommendations for the Dozier Task Force and to edit the legislation. Based on the amendment provided by the USF researchers (see Amendment E), the Dozier Task Force should consist of:

1. One representative from the University of South Florida Institute of Forensic Anthropology and Applied Science appointed by the President of the University of South Florida, who shall serve as the task force chair.
2. One member appointed by the President of the Florida Chapter of the NAACP.
3. One representative of the Florida Council of Churches, Youth Services appointed by the Executive Director of the Council.
4. One family member of the deceased buried at the Dozier School appointed by the Attorney General.
5. One representative of an organization that promotes the welfare of children who are former wards of the Dozier School appointed by the Chief Financial Officer.
6. One member appointed by the President of the Senate.
7. One member appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate.
8. One member appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.
9. One member appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives (CS/SB 708 and CS/HB 533, Amendment).

Despite submitting the amendment to the Speaker of the House, the final version of the bill about the formation of the Dozier Task Force included members of the group were based on the following stipulations:

- The Secretary of State, or his or her designee, who shall serve as the chair;
- One person appointed by the President of the Florida State Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People;
- One representative of the Florida Council of Churches, appointed by the executive director of the council;
- A next of kin of a deceased ward buried at the Dozier School for Boys appointed by the Attorney General;
- One representative who promotes the welfare of people who are former wards of the Dozier School for Boys appointed by the Chief Financial Officer;
- One person appointed by the President of the Senate;
- One person appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
- One person appointed by the Jackson County Board of County Commissioners; and
- One person who represents a youth development organization that promotes the welfare of at-risk youth, appointed by the Commission of Agriculture (CS/CS/SB 708).

A tenth member was subsequently added to the force as a historical advisor; however, this was a non-voting position. The task force was to submit its agreed upon recommendations to the Department of State by October 1, 2016. It was also given to the Governor and the Cabinet; the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President of the Senate, as well as the Minority Leaders of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

The final iteration of the Dozier Task Force did not include a representative from USF Institute of Forensic Anthropology and Applied Science. This purposeful omission of USF in the Dozier Task Force was an attempt by the State to control the dominant narrative and memorialization of the reform school. As discussed in Chapter Five, the Boot Hill Burial Ground Project always had a contentious relationship with the State, especially as the research revealed information that contradicts previous reports and investigations on the reform school. There were several attempts to stop or halt the research project, from issues getting permission to the almost being shut down if it was not for the public support. Their omission from the Dozier Task Force was another mechanism to silence USF and their work as well as control the memory of the reform school.
The first Dozier Task Force (DTF) meeting was on August 3, 2016 at Marianna City Hall, located in the downtown area of the city, across from the First Baptist Church-Marianna. The meeting room was small, with only a few chairs for audience members. Several of the chairs were removed to make room for the media. The limited space for non-official persons (individuals not affiliated with the DTF, state officials and staff, and media outlets) showed a lack of public interest. However, according to a state official, the purpose of the location was to acknowledge the importance of Dozier’s history to the country and the city. Marianna wanted to have the meetings in their area, particularly as the topic was important to the local people. Yet, for this meeting, there was not much physical space for public involvement, a concern that would be raised during discussions of the second meeting location. In addition, as stated in the second meeting from several White House Boys, some of the Dozier victims did not want to return to Marianna, the place of their victimization; however, they were not consulted.

The public was formally introduced to the Dozier Task Force during the first meeting. The members were:

- Dr. Timothy Parsons  
  Florida Department of State; Director, Division of Historical Resources  
  Secretary of State Ken Detzner (Appointee)

- Mr. Dale Landry  
  Tallahassee Branch, NAACP  
  Florida State Conference, NAACP (Appointee)

- Dr. Russell L. Meyer  
  Executive Director, Florida Council of Churches  
  Executive Director, Florida Council of Churches (Appointee)

- Mr. Stephen Britt  
  Nephew of deceased ward of Dozier  
  Attorney General Pam Bondi (Appointee)

- Mr. Jerry Cooper  
  President, the Official White House Boys Association  
  Chief Financial Officer Jeff Atwater (Appointee)
• Mr. James Dean  
   City Manager, City of Marianna  
   Senate President Andy Gardiner (Appointee)  
• Rep. Ken Roberson  
   Florida House of Representatives; Funeral Director  
   House Speaker Steve Crisafulli (Appointee)  
• Mr. Eric Hill  
   Jackson County Commissioner  
   Jackson County Board of County Commissioners (Appointee)  
• Mr. Darrick McGhee, Sr.  
   Johnson and Blanton, LLC  
   Pastor of Bible Based Church in Tallahassee  
   Agricultural Commissioner Adam Putnam (Appointee)  
• Dr. David H. Jackson  
   Non-voting historical advisor, Professor of History, Florida A&M University  
   Secretary of State Ken Detzner (Appointee)

Each member of the task force had the opportunity to introduce themselves and how they were appointed to the task force. As evident in this listing of task force members, religion was an important component to the Dozier Task Force proceedings. Three of the members are from a faith-based organization. Dale Landry is a representative from NAACP, a faith-based civil rights organization. Darrick McGhee is a pastor of the Bible-Based Church in Tallahassee. Rev. Dr. Russell Meyer is the Executive Director of the Florida Council of Churches and pastor of St. Paul and Faith Lutheran Churches. During the introductions, Rev. Dr. Meyer explained to the public that he was brought into the Dozier narrative by USF researchers “to help provide some consultation on funeral practices, memorial practices, and reconciliation.” He further explained that “The churches...and other faith organizations have great resources in how we can look at a terrible history, find redemption, and find a way in which all people can be honored in the future in a way in which we can say we’ve become better angels.” His comments speak to the fact that the State’s manner of memorialization is religious, and, in this instance, Christian.
During this task force meeting, religion’s dual role in the Dozier narrative becomes apparent. Dale Landry repeated his stance on the memorialization of the unidentified and unclaimed remains he made at the Cabinet meeting. He suggested that the church on the South Campus be used as a mausoleum for the children. However, Jerry Cooper, a White House Boy, argued against using the church because based on an FDLE investigation, former students were sexually assaulted at that church. Landry, who is a “Christian by faith,” expressed that despite what may have occurred in that church, it is still a holy place. He stated:

If we chose not to go places where people did sinful things, we would never go back to Calvary to visit the place where they crucified Jesus and put him up on the Cross...my point I make is this, the power of our Lord, of God, and the love of Jesus Christ and the essence of the Holy Spirit that pervades the walks of that church, it’s powerful to cleanse anything that was ever done in that church (Dozier Task Force meeting, August 3, 2016).

Landry would not be challenged on his perspective again by Cooper following that statement.

However, this would become an important topic in the next meeting.

The next DTF meeting, which occurred on August 19, 2016, was located at the Jackson County Agricultural Center in Marianna, Florida. This building had a larger space for public attendance. There were approximately 54 guests present at the second meeting, and only eight at the initial meeting. This meeting had a large media presence similar to the first time.

At the start of the meeting, Dr. Parsons said that Secretary of State Deztnier requested that McGee begin the meeting with a prayer. McGee agreed and proceeded with the words. Many of the people in the building bowed their heads during this time. Once he completed his prayer, people in the building replied with a resounding “Amen.” After the prayer, Dr. Parsons asked everyone to stand and say the Pledge of Allegiance. [Fieldnotes 8/19/16]
The introductory prayer would set the Christian tone of the meeting, even as DTF members would suggest that religion be excluded from memorialization efforts. It was riddled with religious rhetoric, from the proposals to the discussions among the Dozier Task Force. In the last meeting, DTF members were asked to submit proposals for the memorial and re-interment of the unclaimed and unidentified remains and present to the public. The recommendations varied; some members wanted the remains to be reinterred in Jackson County (including Dozier’s campus), others preferred outside of the area, such as in Tallahassee, and the majority of the members suggested a mausoleum format for the remains. Despite the varied proposals, religion was an important theme articulated during the presentations. James Dean and Dr. David H. Jackson recommended that no religious iconography be present on the memorial because no one knows the religious background of all the victims and it would take away from their memory.

Other members would highlight religious symbols and tenets in their proposed memorials. Kenneth Roberson and Jerry Cooper included Christian imagery and words in their proposed memorial. On Roberson’s proposed monument for the re-interment of remains, are the words “REST IN PEACE O’ YE CHILDREN OF GOD.” Cooper’s monuments (three structures) ideas were as follows: a standing woman angel with a bird on her right arm; an angel crouched over a monument as if it is weeping, with face down and arm crossing the head; and Jesus standing in front of his cross with his arms outstretched. Eric Hill, Jackson County Commissioner, inserted his religious backgrounds in his discussion of Dozier and the Marianna community. During his presentation, he said “if there was something wrong done before my birth,” but explained that Dozier did help some boys who did not have homes. To stress the positive aspect of the school, Hill stated: “I was reminded by a church member that worked at
Dozier that there was good there.” Explicitly stating the “church member” implies the unquestionable and affirmable status of Christianity. Hill would also later compare DTF to Solomon in the Bible—two mothers, one child, and two different opinions—suggesting that the group will make the right decisions regardless of differing opinions.

Landry, on the other hand, did not explicitly speak of the Bible or other specific religious parables, but still employed religious symbolism in his discussion. He suggested that various buildings, including the White House, be memorialized. Landry said he “can feel the essence of spirits still not resting” on the campus. During the discussion, he expounded on this perspective. Landry argued that the spirits were still active on that campus, which is sanctified due to the blood that was on it. Meyers expressed the same sentiment at that point when he stated that the “blood cries out for justice to the God Almighty.”

Meyers employed Christian rhetoric and symbolism throughout the meeting. Meyers’s presentation focused on both a memorial and reconciliation. He explained that it is important to remember in a way that truly honors the memory of the unidentified or unclaimed human remains from Boot Hill as well as other possible victims who were not found on Dozier’s property. His Dozier Task Force Recommendation Form stated:

That the main chapel on the White campus become the welcome site and historical museum of the school; that unclaimed victims remains be housed in a fitting crypt in the [sacred] area of the chapel; that the families who so wish be allowed to re-inter their family member remains in Boot Hill as a perpetual cemetery; that the White House & other structures of extreme punishment on both campuses be maintained; and that a meditation trail be created to link them together (Department of State 2016).

This memorial must involve reconciliation or it would be incomplete; it needs to be a living memorial. In his argument for such memorial, Meyer used a Biblical example of Sarah’s death
and subsequent burial (Genesis 23 NRSV). He explained that Abraham paid a large sum of money to bury her in a foreign land, so there would not be any question about the quality of memory at his wife’s burial. Using this example, Meyer emphasized the Biblical understanding of having a place to remember. He later discussed why reconciliation is needed, including citing Desmond Tutu. Meyer agreed with Tut’s statement of “there is not future without forgiveness” (Tutu 1999). This forgiveness, according to Meyer, was to “release the perpetrators from the rightful claims of justice and release the victims from understandable resistance.” Meyer’s overt expressions of Christianity exemplified the religious-redemptive narrative, which was employed by Desmond Tutu in the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The second Dozier Task Force meeting also included responses from the public. The majority of speakers were members of The Official White House Boys Organizations and the Black Boys at Dozier Reform School and their relatives. With only three minutes allotted to speak—several exceeded the time limit—the White House Boys briefly spoke about their experiences at Dozier and their wishes for the remains. The African American men in attendance, Pastor Johnny Gaddy and Richard Huntly, mentioned the racial differences on campus, diverging from the narrative that all of the victims experienced the same form of abuse. Members from the Marianna and Florida community-at-large gave their arguments for the memorials and reinternment.

The presentations emphasized forward thinking, resolving the past and focusing on the future. Dean and Hill even emphasized the fact that Marianna is a good community and is ready to move past this negative mark on its history. During the discussions, this focus on the positive was reinforced by the strong support of Cooper’s belief that the remains are not returned to the campus. Dean, as underlined and bolded in his typed speech, only wanted a modest monument in
Jackson County. Elmer Bryant, former African American mayor of Marianna and current NAACP Area Director for Marianna, supported Dean’s and Hill’s positive image of Marianna. Bryant worked at Dozier and said “all wasn’t bad there.” Bryant even mentioned how the boys who were sent to the school were not all good youth. He ended his presentation emphasizing the need for forgiveness and that “we in Marianna want to move on.” Hill clearly showed his support of Bryant, and his disagreement at times.

_While Bryant was speaking, Hill was staring at him. At one point, Hill shook his head from left to right in tiny movements, fast yet secretly. He watched Bryant with his eyes wide and his hands clasped, with elbows on the table. Towards the end, Hill winked his eye at Bryant [Fieldnotes 8/19/16]_

These perspectives from officials of Marianna and Jackson County underscored the avoidance of vengeance, such as giving the community a bad name, and instead encouraged a redemption narrative, one that shows the Marianna community assisting in the memorialization process.

In accordance with the bill, DTF agreed on three recommendations for the memorials and re-interment of unclaimed and unidentified remains. The victims of the 1914 dormitory fire were to be re-buried at Boot Hill Cemetery on Dozier’s property. The other remains will be reinterred at a location in Tallahassee. Lastly, there will be two memorials: one in Jackson County and the other in Tallahassee. They will be dedicated to the memory of the youth who lived and died while at Dozier, including the 1914 dormitory fire victims. DTF was disbanded following the second meeting as their services were no longer needed.

DTF and Collective Apology

Trouillot argues that a collective apology operates as a transformative ritual that depends on the numerical identities (perpetrators/apologizer and victim/addressee) that operate across two temporal planes. The difficulty in this ritual is the establishing of the identities, which was an
issue with the Dozier case. The Florida Cabinet members apologized individually; however, as stated previously, there was not an official apology given. Meyers and members of the White House Boys explained that an apology establishes the wrong and the perpetrator, which is critical in a reconciliation. Jerry Cooper, during his presentation in the second meeting, pleaded for an official apology by the State. At a 2016 White House Boys reunion, one of the members explained that they might not get an apology because it would mean that the State is guilty of the crimes. Eric Hill, Jackson County Commissioner, did give a half-hearted apology during his talk, but mainly emphasized the positive nature of the school and community. James Dean, mayor of Marianna, also focused on the image of Marianna and was interested in the property:

In the end the investment made by Jackson County to the State of Florida, for a Specific [sic] intent, should be returned to the Citizens of Jackson County and close to the same condition it was transferred, so that something productive and good can become of the property that the entire State, the WHB, and Jackson County can be proud of (Dean qtd. in DTF Report 2016)

Although the Florida Cabinet accepted responsibility for memorializing the victims and the future of the property, it, nor Jackson County officials, explicitly declared itself as perpetrator, functioning more as an agent and not subject of the Dozier narrative.

The identities of victims/addressees are complicated in the Dozier case [see Chapter Five]. Cooper was recommended to represent the wards of Dozier and is the president of The Official White House Boys Organization. He, as well as other TOWHBO members, have said that the group is the family of the unidentified and unclaimed victims buried at Boot Hill. Landry, on the other hand, stated during the second DTF meeting that the NAACP has been contacted by families and others who consider their organization as their representatives. As stated previously, there are also victims of Dozier who are not White House Boys. Yet, the focus
of the State, as seen in the Cabinet meeting and the DTF, is the White House Boys, specifically TOWHBO. The bill asked for “one representative who promotes the welfare of people who are former wards of the Dozier School for Boys appointed by the Chief Financial Office” (ch. 2016-163 Law). CFO Atwater chose Cooper in this spot, showing his support for TOWHBO as the main representative body for the victims. Dean also only referenced the White House Boys in his remarks to the DTF. As explained in Chapter Six, the victimization that occurred at Dozier was different along racial lines. Therefore, by not acknowledging the racial differences among people and experiences, the apology and the memorialization process as a whole is not inclusive and creates erasures.

The Dozier Apology

At the April 4, 2017 Senate hearing on the Dozier apology bill, I sat behind a White House Boy who was going to speak today at the hearing. He didn’t feel important enough to speak or sit next to so many important people, particularly the people sitting to our right. They were politicians. We talked about God and how He doesn’t make mistakes. Then he said the scripture: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” [Author Fieldnotes 4/4/17]

On March 10, 2017, Senator Darryl E. Rouson (D-Florida) introduced a bill that apologized for the atrocities that occurred at Dozier School for Boys. The bill aimed to accomplish the following: “First an acknowledgment of what happened, then an apology for it and then an expression to be ever vigilant so these atrocities never happen again in our society” (Rouson qtd. in Gregory 2017). The Official White House Boys Organization was invited to a Senate hearing on April 4, 2017 to share their experiences with the Senate as they discussed the bill. Several members of the organization were chosen to speak during the meeting. When I asked a political official how TOWHBO and certain members were chosen to speak at the hearing, she said that they were chosen by Senator Rouson and Masterson Law Firm because
they have been active publicly. The Official White House Boys Organization also has a public relationship with the politicians involved with Dozier. If members of TOWHBO wanted to speak, they had to inform Jerry Cooper, who would then tell the lawyers. A member of the Black Boys of Dozier attended the hearing and participated with The Official White House Boys Organization.

The April 4th meeting was the initial presentation of the bill to the Senate. After Senator Rouson presented the bill (SR 1440)\(^9\), the White House Boys spoke on their experiences and the need for an apology. The politicians were silent as they told their stories and responded to the presentations with heartfelt apologies. Immediately following this presentation, all of the politicians, lawyers, and others affiliated with the Dozier case as well as the WHBs rushed to another building for the press conference showcasing the passing of the bill. This media event was to celebrate the passing of the bill, even though it was not official at that time. Before it began, two of TOWHBO members questioned this celebration of the bill because it had not passed the Senate and House. One of the posters on display included snippets of the bill (SR 1440/ HR 1335), acknowledging “the wrongdoings that took place at the Dozier School for Boys and the Okeechobee School.” (The other poster had the words “Florida’s Forgotten Boys of Dozier and Okeechobee” and pictures of the White House, boys who attended, Boot Hill Cemetery, and a building on Okeechobee campus.) These posters were printed prior to the Senate hearing, implying that the bill will be passed without any obstacles.

Several politicians spoke at the press conference: Senator Rouson (D-Florida), Representative Tracie Davis (D-Florida), Representative Richard Cochran (R-Florida), Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi (R-Florida), Representative Janet Cruz (D-Florida), Representative Chris Sprowls (R-Florida), and former Governor Bob Martinez (R-Florida). All of the White

\(^9\) House Bill 1335 on Dozier’s apology was presented that following Thursday (April 6, 2017).
House Boys, and some relatives, in attendance stood behind the speakers and listened intently on what was said. A few of them shifted during the presentations in order to become visible within the camera frame. A crowd of reporters from various media outlets stood in a semi-circle, making sure they had the best angle and sound system for the conference. The politicians expressed their satisfaction with the bill. Representative Cruz stated, “Only through confronting and acknowledging these sins can we prevent these types of atrocities from ever, ever occurring again.” Representative Cochran also spoke about the discussions concerning the plans for the memorial and re-interment of unidentified and unclaimed remains.

Other stakeholders in the Dozier narrative had the opportunity to speak about their perspective on the Dozier apology bill. Erin Kimmerle spoke about the courage of the men in sharing their stories and “the courage of our state leaders” for “acknowledging what happened and making this apology.” Three members of The Official White House Boys Organization and one member of the Black Boys at Dozier Reform School were given time to share their feelings about the apology to the public. Each of them (Bryan Middleton, Jerry Cooper, Don Stratton, and Richard Huntly) spoke briefly about their abuses and satisfaction with the bill. Stratton stated that “So this message is for the people in Marianna, Florida, a beautiful little town, a beautiful little city, with great churches and great schools, please let’s let this thing go, let’s, today, let’s get it over with and the Sunshine State welcomes the town of Marianna.” Once the press conference ended, other White House Boys and their family members, many of whom had not seen each other for months or just met in-person, were happy about the bill and what it meant to them.

Members of The Official White House Boys Organization have been anticipating an apology from the State of Florida as acknowledgement of abuse, paving the way for
compensation for the victims. A few weeks after the Senate and House hearings, one of the WHBs who attended all of the meetings told me that the State of Florida should give reparations because it was the state employees that caused the abuse. He further explained that he was debt-free and owned his own home and land, but many of the men are living on social security. This request for financial reparations has also been a topic of discussion on TOWHBO Facebook group, “White House Boys Family and Friends (WHBFF).” Several members argue that if the victims of Rosewood received compensation for the atrocities they endured, then the White House Boys should get reparations for their experiences. The group have been advocating for the claims bill due to the fact that the statute of limitations prevents any judicial action against the perpetrators (Letter from Holland and Knight to John G. Van Laningham, Esq., 2011). In the article “Bob Martinez takes up fight to get reparation for Dozier Victims,” Gov. Martinez (Holland and Knight Law Firm), who has been working with the Masterson Law Group, representatives of WHBs, explained that it is best to follow the strategy of Rosewood in order to ensure compensation for Dozier’s victims. Although the lawyers and the WHBs have not received reparations, Rep. Davis and Senator Rouson introduced a bill (SB 1780/HB 1315) that aims to certify victims of Dozier in January 2018. The passing of this bill may be a step in the direction of receiving reparations.

**Conclusion: Collective Apology as a Religious Practice**

As argued by Trouillot (2000), a collective apology operates as a transformative ritual that depends on the numerical change across temporal planes. Rituals are series of formal and repetitive actions that symbolize a group’s set of beliefs (Guest 2014). They are social acts that provide a sense of cohesiveness and belonging. People who participate in these rituals believe in the common moral and social order that goes beyond their individual position. For a collective
apology, the participants, perpetrators/apologizer and victim/addressee, are willing parties who accept the purpose, morals, and actions of this ritual. The moral order that functioned as a sacred canopy in the Dozier collective apology process was religion. As described above, this State’s religious process of achieving an apology was shown through its emphasis on forgiveness and reconciliation. The State aimed to achieve reconciliation through forgiveness, which means a focus on restorative justice not retributive justice. To help with this goal, Christian leaders and groups were brought into the conversation, even though they did not have any direct affiliation with Dozier.

Public meetings and deliberations regarding Dozier were characterized by the State’s focus on reconciliation and forgiveness, exemplifying the religious-redemptive narrative argued by Richard A. Wilson. According to Wilson, “the religious-redemptive narrative pursued a substantive notion of reconciliation as a common good, defined by confession, forgiveness and redemption, and the exclusion of vengeance” (2001, 109). Prior to the Dozier proceedings, the White House Boys had meetings with their lawyers or other political officials, such as David Clark, to organize what to say and how to present their experiences. For example, prior to the Senate hearing on April 4, 2017, the lawyers, including Gov. Martinez, met with the White House Boys in Senator Rouson’s office to talk about how the presentations would happen. During this meeting, a White House Boy tried to hand the former governor a document about abuse cases in Okeechobee that needed to be addressed. However, a lawyer from the Masterson Law Group took the paper from him and said it was not the time to deal with that and to focus on the positive nature of the day. Such preparation ensured that the proceedings were centered on forgiveness and reconciliation instead of anger and frustration.
It is too soon to state whether this collective apology is an abortive ritual. The process is not complete, particularly as the finalized plans for the reinternment and memorialization of unidentified and unclaimed remains are still underway. There is also a possibility for financial reparations. However, despite the fact that many of the White House Boys have shared their dissatisfaction at various points in the process, they still adhered to this ritual in order to get the apology. The Christian nature of the proceedings also aligned with their own group beliefs and healing processes, which was supported and unquestioned. Therefore, due to the religiosity of the State’s efforts and that of the White House Boys, the recognized representative group for Dozier’s victims, this ritual may not be considered abortive to some groups. Yet, it must be considered that not all experiences, especially regarding race, were given equal weight in this apology.
Chapter Eight:
Counter-Memory

“Well, you got Trump saying blue lives matter, maybe we can get him to say White House Boys matter.” [A member of The Official White House Boys Organization]

Collective memory is a social phenomenon that involves a shared recollection of the past, and it is defined by the social, economic, and political conditions of the past and the present. Collective memory is constantly revised in the present to accommodate situations and views of the present. These memories are shrouded in issues of power and identity as it is negotiated, revised, and contested. Memory, both collective and public, can operate as a political tool to legitimize narratives, groups of people, and individuals (Wale 2016, 1193).

Counter-memory centers on the narratives and memories that are not integrated in the official narrative (Medina 2011). This version of counter-memory is based on the Foucauldian genealogical critique that emphasizes an “insurrection of subjugated knowledges” (Foucault 2003, 7; Medina 2011). Michel Foucault (1980) considers subjugated knowledges to be historical contents that have been disguised or buried by those in power in order to mask the effects of conflict and rupture. These knowledges have also been “disqualified as inadequate to their tasks” or “naive knowledges, located low on the hierarchy” (Foucault 1980, 82). These “local, discontinuous, disqualified, or nonlegitimized knowledges” are positioned against the authorized/official knowledges that hierarchize these memories and perspectives in favor of one unified and “true body of knowledge” (Foucault 2003, 9). Foucault calls for an insurrection of
knowledges that challenge hegemonic and conventional perspectives (Medina 2011). Counter-memory is the insurrection of the subjugated knowledges that have not been equally considered in the construction of an official narrative.

As the State of Florida worked to create a new narrative of restorative justice and reconciliation, particular groups and perspectives were privileged and certain narratives of the past were given consideration if they did not fit in the collective memory that would be memorialized. While waiting for the State of Florida to recognize the past wrongs committed at Dozier, several groups associated with the school and/or the investigations and research into the institution engaged in counter-memory practices as forms of resistance and/or to memorialize the politically and socially subjugated peoples and perspectives. This chapter discusses the counter-memorials to Dozier’s victims, created alongside the official memory and memorialization planned by the State of Florida. It explores how different stakeholders associated with Dozier sought to emphasize subjugated knowledges through various memory and memorialization efforts. Through an examination of the memorialization events, this chapter also explores how religion was used to help facilitate the counter-memory and counter-memorializations of the victims.

**Commemorative Services**

*Memorial Service for the Victims of the Dozier School for Boys*

The White House Boys and its subgroups have been very active with the media, researchers on the Boot Hill Burial Ground Project, and the State of Florida in order to share their experiences in hopes of achieving restorative justice and reparations. Although the State eventually acknowledged the atrocities that occurred at Dozier after the Boot Hill Burial Ground Research Project, the White House Boys held their own memorials in honor of the living and
deceased victims of the school. One of the first memorial services dedicated to the victims was hosted by the Unitarian Universalist Church of St. Petersburg with the White House Boys on Sunday, April 13, 2014.

Unitarian Universalism is not centered on one belief system: it accepts all faiths in its church. It is not a global religion like that of Christianity. Instead, Unitarian Universalism varies from region to region based on that site’s history, outside leadership, and situated practices (Greenwood and Harris 2011, 3). Historically, Unitarian and Universalist were Christian traditions, but now they are combined with multiple faiths, including Eastern and Western philosophies and traditions (Unitarian Universalist Association 2018a; Greenwood and Harris 2011). Unitarian Universalist congregants are guided by seven principles:

- 1st Principle: The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- 2nd Principle: Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- 3rd Principle: Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- 4th Principle: A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- 5th Principle: The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- 6th Principle: The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- 7th Principle: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part (Unitarian Universalist Association 2018b).

Their principles in social justice and acceptance of multiple religions made this church a suitable host for the memorial service. The Official White House Boys Organization is a largely Christian group that employs the faith in their memorial practices, which was welcomed by the Unitarian Universalist Church in St. Petersburg.

Reverend Kathleen Korb, who was church leader at that time and who also attended the first meeting of the Interfaith Commission on Florida’s Youth and Children the following May (2014), decided to host the event after Reverend Pierre William of the Unitarian Universalist
Church of St. Petersburg held a petition drive to reopen the criminal investigation of the reform school. In the petition summary that was on the Change.org website, Williams stated that

> The Governor of Florida is respectfully requested to impanel a grand jury and proceed in an act of fairness. This diabolical tragedy does not serve the victims, their families, and the state of Florida or our nation well as a democratic institution. This petition is important to those who have no voice; now let us in a united way speak for them (Williams 2013).

One hundred people signed Williams’s petition, which was also supported by the Social Justice Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Church of St. Petersburg.

Jerry Cooper and his wife Babbs Cooper were instrumental in the planning of the event. On March 15, 2014, Babbs sent an email to The Official White House Boys Organization listserv, which includes members of The Official White House Boys Organization and other associates, inviting the group to the service. In that email, she explained that if anyone wanted to give a presentation, either of a song, poem, or a speech, they had to reach out to the Coopers. Additionally, the Coopers had to be notified of anyone who would be in attendance, including any family or friends who were interested in going to the event. Based on the email correspondence from TOWHBO listserv, Jerry, and a planning committee comprised of TOWHBO members, met with Reverend Williams to outline the proceedings of the service.

The event, entitled “Memorial Service for the Victims of the Dozier School for Boys,” located at the Unitarian Universalist Church of St. Petersburg and an adjacent park, was split into two ceremonies. The first service involved several parts: an introduction by Reverend Korb, readings from a selection of writers, a song (Danny Boy), three speakers (including Jerry Cooper), a naming of deceased victims exhumed from Boot Hill Cemetery, additional readings, and benediction. Attendees could leave donations for the White House Boys following service,
before the second ceremony. In the vestibule of the church, there was a memorial created by TOWHBO of deceased men who were former students of Dozier. After the memorial service, there was a candlelight vigil for the deceased boys. The program required people to “quietly leave the church and cross over to the park in front of Mirror Lake” with lit candles. The vigil was planned to last 30 minutes.

This memorial service was one of the first dedicated to the deceased and living victims of Dozier School for Boys. During that time, the Boot Hill Burial Ground Project was still in the process of gathering information and had not presented the findings to the State. However, the State had previously conducted investigations by that point, which, as stated in Chapter Seven, did not yield any results that would lead to retribution or reparations for the victims. In addition, a memorial or a need for a new narrative was not being recognized by the State. Instead, the dominant narrative of the school’s success was acknowledged. This counter-memorial event allowed The Official White House Boys Organization to offer another narrative to the public that recognized the victims of the school whose stories were denied and/or rendered illegitimate by the State of Florida. The Boot Hill Burial Ground Project would also participate in counter-memorial practices through not only their research, but also through events held in commemoration of Dozier’s youth.

*Research & Remembrance: 100 Years after the Fatal Fire at Dozier*

The University of South Florida anthropologists on the Boot Hill Burial Ground Project has been actively seeking to achieve justice and engage various groups, including community organizations, state entities, families, and former Dozier youth, in the construction of public memory and memorialization since the beginning of the exhumation in 2013. The exhumation of Boot Hill Cemetery set in motion memory processes that forced a hidden past to be resurrected.
It became a *lieux de mémoire*, a site of memory in order to limit forgetfulness. Families of victims, the White House Boys, State of Florida, and the Marianna community began to construct their narratives of the past as a result of the exhumations and the Boot Hill Burial Ground Project as a whole, especially as the exhumed remains were memorialized and reburial rituals were planned and enacted. The Boot Hill Burial Ground Project was more than the exhumations. It involved understanding the political, social, historical, and economic conditions that led to the incarceration of the youth and shaped their experience while at Dozier. The youth at Dozier were disenfranchised in a multitude of ways, based on race, gender, and class. The Project aimed to understand the varied experiences of students at the school and the oppression imposed by the institution.

One of the ways in which the USF research team aimed to make visible the experiences of the boys was to organize a conference entitled “Research & Remembrance: 100 Years after the Fatal Fire at Dozier” to bring attention to the boys who perished in the Dozier fire of 1914, to discuss the work of the Project, and to “provide a critical discussion about civil rights, juvenile justice, human identification, cold cases, media, and advocacy” (Kimmerle, Jackson, Wells 2014). In her article, “Exhuming the Dead and Talking to the Living: The 1914 Fire at the Florida Industrial School for Boys— Invoking the Uncanny as a Site of Analysis,” Antoinette Jackson (2016) states that:

… the 1914 fire at the reform school and the exhumation reveal: 1) systemic processes and the effects of unchecked institutional power on groups that are marginalized or considered throwaway for larger purposes; 2) means of racial segregation and practices of isolation and control, as articulated through the lens of social and spatial geography as expressed in black and white; and 3) concerns associated with memorialization and “social justice as critical aspects of community engagement, advocacy, identity, representation, public memory, and heritage preservation (Jackson 2016, 163).
The “Research & Remembrance: 100 Years after the Fatal Fire at Dozier” conference critically engaged different groups in the construction of public memory of the 1914 fire and its victims.

The day-long conference was held on USF’s Tampa campus on November 18, 2014, the hundredth-year anniversary of the 1914 fire. Among the people in attendance were journalists, lawyers, law enforcement, historians, religious leaders, anthropologists, former Dozier youth, and families of victims buried at Boot Hill Cemetery who were identified, and a representative from the NAACP. The conference topics included as the human identification process, investigative journalism and advocacy, as well as civil rights and activism and social justice in the USA (see Jackson 2016, 170-172). The keynote speaker for the event was Dr. Michael Blakey, the lead anthropologist on the African Burial Ground Project. Blakey argued that burial has been an act of resistance to dehumanization. For the African Burial Ground project, he explained that the exhumed individuals from the burial ground were reburied in coffin-like boxes made in Ghana. Blakey stated that community engagement is important in the memory and memorialization of Dozier, similar to that of the African Burial Ground Project. People came together and emphasized the need for a proper reburial of the enslaved Africans.

Following Blakey’s presentation, the next panel, “Critical Engagement-Civil Rights and Activism, Social Justice, and Truth Commissions in the USA,” which consisted of a historian, forensic anthropologist, lawyer, and NAACP representative, extended the conversation on memorializing the victims of Dozier. The panelists discussed some of the issues involved in a reconciliation effort. For example, Dr. Edward Kissi, historian, asked several questions: How does Marianna come to terms with a past that it does not want to remember? How much of the past should be told for a community to deal with its burdensome history? He explained that amnesia produces myths in memory construction, so it is easier for the Marianna community to
forget what it does not want to remember about its past and remember what it deems “appropriate” for the present. He stated that the USF Boot Hill Burial Ground Project should serve as a restorative process and get the community to reflect on the conditions that led to the deaths of the boys. Forensic anthropologist Dr. Jose Pablo Baraybar asked whether this was an issue of national importance. He suggested that the issue should go beyond Marianna. Baraybar also explained that the research must lead to change for it to have a purpose. Yet, he acknowledged that he did not believe in reconciliation, but in a contested coexistence. Dr. Peggy Maisel, a lawyer, asked if reconciliation can happen. In order for it to be successful, the former students at Dozier should be asked what they would like to see happen.

The memorialization conversation continued with an emphasis on the faith community in Dale Landry’s presentation. Landry, President of the Tallahassee Chapter of the NAACP, argued that it should be the decision of the “faith commission” to determine what should happen with the unidentified remains. The reburial is the responsibility of the Interfaith Commission and the community, in that order. As he would later suggest at the Dozier Task Force meeting, Landry believed a memorial should be in the church on the South Campus and the entire South Campus be memorialized. In Landry’s view, the Interfaith Commission should go back to Marianna, which he said was the heart of the Confederacy, and help to change the consciousness in the city.

During the evening of the conference, a memorial program entitled “Recognition of Families & Commemoration” was held in honor of the 1914 fire victims. The program was sponsored by the NAACP and the Florida Council of Churches. Rev. Russell Meyer, Executive Director of the Florida Council of Churches, was the moderator for the event. During the ceremony, a pianist played and sang several selections per instructions of Meyer, who organized
the event. The program opened with a speech by Robert Straley, one of the original members of the White House Boys. Meyer then hosted general conversations on Dozier. The attendees got into groups and answered questions presented by Meyer that allowed people from different backgrounds to converse with one another. For example, I was in a group with a White House Boy who told me about his experiences and perspectives on the reform school. The program ended with a candlelight vigil, called the “Interfaith Candlelight Ceremony,” for the deceased children of Dozier. Meyer used a rope to create an infinity symbol on the floor. Each of the attendees received small electric candles to place on the floor in honor of those who died. After everyone placed their candles within the infinity symbol, Meyer made a concluding speech and the attendees were dismissed.

The Boot Hill Burial Ground Project aimed to access subjugated knowledges in understanding the social, political, and economic conditions of the lives of boys who were incarcerated at Dozier, including those who died while under the care of the institution. Prior to the Boot Hill Burial Ground Project, the White House Boys were the only group providing alternative perspectives to Dozier. The Project further complicated the dominant and official narrative with the inclusion of multiple perspectives from different positions. “Research & Remembrance: 100 Years after the Fatal Fire at Dozier” was an opportunity for people from different professions to discuss the issues of Dozier, especially the construction of public memory. It also recognized and memorialized the victims of the fire as well as other deceased individuals exhumed from Boot Hill Cemetery. The event also gave the White House Boys, such as Robert Straley’s speech, an opportunity to share their experiences and reflections with others.
The Official White House Boys Organization Memorial Ceremony

The Official White House Boys Organization has played a dominant role in the Dozier activities since the Boot Hill Burial Ground Project. TOWHBO have been heavily involved in the memorial conversations regarding the victims of the reform school, as part of the official narrative construction as well as their own counter memorial. As noted above, the group was integral to the memorial ceremony at the Unitarian Universalist Church of St. Petersburg. The president of the group, Jerry Cooper, was also involved with the Dozier Task Force and spoke at the Florida Cabinet meeting. Despite working with the State in creating an official narrative for memorialization and after receiving an apology in April 2017, members of the group still did not feel that they received closure. Therefore, TOWHBO, specifically Jerry and Babbs Cooper, worked with state of officials to have access to Dozier campus, both the South Campus and the Boot Hill Cemetery, for the men and their families to be reminded of their past as they fellowshipped with each other about their experiences, revisiting and revising collective memories in the process.

Despite the fact that members of TOWHBO shared their experiences, this entire event did not fall within the category of a counter-memorial experience. It was, in fact, facilitated by the State of Florida with the input of the dominant group representing former students of Dozier, whose narrative has been accepted in the official public memory. Yet, during this event, the narrative of The Official White House Boys Organization was challenged by the African American men who were present. These men contested the narrative that excluded the issue of race and racism in the dialogue. These subjugated knowledges revealed themselves throughout the day of the memorial event.
The Official White House Boys Organization memorial event occurred on April 6, 2018, after much planning between Jerry and Babbs Cooper, the Department of Juvenile Justice, and the Department of Environmental Protection. For years, the White House Boys, not only TOWHBO, attempted to get access to the property. According to a Facebook post on the White House Boys Family and Friends group page, “It took ten years to get the state to open the gates for the WHBz to visit and it was opened with a red carpet welcome by many” (July 1, 2018). Babbs Cooper sent out invitations personally to White House Boys and other guests. It was not posted on the White House Boys Friends and Family Facebook page because the Coopers and the State entities did not want the press involved or too many people to attend. News outlets were not invited to the event. In order be a part of the day, people had to notify the Coopers via a phone call or direct email. Approximately 80 people attended the ceremony, including myself. Marianna Inn was the host hotel for the event, providing discounts to the group, $58.00 a night with complimentary breakfast. Everyone had to sign a waiver in the presence of a notary regarding not being members of the press and destroying the property.

The night before the event, April 5, 2018, everyone in attendance met at Marianna Inn at 8:00pm to discuss the activities for the next day. Everyone would then meet at the Marianna Inn at 7:45am the next morning. Unless people received special approval to drive their cars, everyone was to ride on the chartered buses that were assigned for the event. Due to the fact that I had to leave earlier the next day, I had to receive approval from Jerry Cooper to drive my vehicle to the campus. In order to get on the buses or even travel behind in a car, we had to give the state officials our waivers. We were also informed that there would be bathrooms and an ambulance on site. Due to the fact that the majority of the people were older and dealing with a
variety of illnesses, the Coopers and the state officials made sure to have resources available in case of an emergency.

After receiving directives, Jerry asked the White House Boys to stand, say their name, and the years they attended the institution. He wanted everyone to know who was in attendance. Following the introductions, Jerry asked an African American pastor, also a former inmate of the institution, to say a prayer for the next day. Afterwards, time was also allotted for people to speak about their experiences at Dozier or say uplifting words or prayers.

During this time, two black men, one of whom is a member of the Black Boys at Dozier, spoke about their experiences as black children on the campus. The black men explained that they were treated differently than their white counterparts. Several of the White House Boys in attendance looked at the men disapprovingly. During the Dozier Task Force meetings and at TOWHBO 2016 reunion, the topic of race was dismissed by the organization’s leadership as not being a factor in experiences; however, this memorial event would underscore the racial inequities that exist in the Dozier narrative.

The memorial activities began Friday morning, April 6, at Dozier School for Boys, on the South Campus, which was known as the white campus. The first stop was the church where we were given announcements about how to proceed on the campus. Most of the people in attendance filed into the building, taking multiple pictures with cellular phones and cameras. The need to capture the campus via digital media would become a trend throughout the day. This was also the time to acknowledge the numerous people involved in ensuring this event happened. Babbs Cooper, David Clark (Department of Environmental Protections), Jerry Cooper, and Robert Reid (a state official) each shared their thoughts about the event and how it would bring
closer to the White House Boys. There was no service at the church. Instead, the building was treated as a meeting place.

After the church, the groups visited the museum, where the first memorial was created to commemorate the life of a boy who died at Dozier. One of TOWHBO members mourned the death of his friend, Tommy Elton. Elton, who had asthma, died after being forced to run on a hot summer day. While everyone filed into the gym to get snacks and beverages, the White House Boy was emotional as he walked to a remote area of the building and placed a *lieux de mémoire* on the floor in honor of his friend (see picture below). Once he placed the item on the ground, the White House Boy was met with other people, including his wife, who gave their condolences to his dear friend. While the White House Boy and a few visitors were talking about the deceased boy, other attendees were taking pictures of the gym and the surrounding buildings on the campus.

![Figure 8.1: Memorial for Tommy Elton, a student who died while under the custody of Dozier. A member of The Official White House Boys Organization placed the small memory in the gymnasium of the South Campus at Dozier School for Boys. Photo taken by author.](image)

Although there was no ceremony at the gym, TOWHBO leadership had a brief memorial ceremony at the White House, the building where the boys were allegedly abused. Everyone had the opportunity to walk through the white house, which was an emotional experience for some. The African American pastor who prayed the previous night was unable to enter the building.
because it brought forth bad memories. Most of the people, both White House Boys and family members, did walk through the building, crowding the rooms as they took multiple pictures. State officials, including David Clark and Robert Reid, monitored the activity on the inside to ensure there was no destruction of the property.

Despite the precautions taken to preserve the property, on the outside of the building, the president, sergeant-at-arms, and another member of TOWHBO made several attempts to tear down the remnants of a sign posted by the Department of Juvenile Justice. On October 21, 2008, a plaque was placed on the white house noting its closure. The sign was removed by DJJ and, ultimately, ended up in the custody of the University of South Florida forensic lab. Prior to this event, the Coopers and other TOWHBO members attempted to get the plaque (see below) from USF to place back on the building for the memorial event. After multiple discussions between DJJ, Department of Environmental Protections, and USF anthropologists and legal team, the plaque was allowed to be taken from the forensic lab and brought to the ceremony. Due to the fact that I was the only person traveling from USF to the event, I brought the plaque with me for the event. However, it was to return with me and not remain in the custody of anyone else. Once I arrived in Marianna, I was informed by two members of TOWHBO executive board that it would not be a part of the ceremony and told not to show the plaque to TOWHBO members. They told me that it was not fair to the White House Boys who wanted closure to show the plaque and then return it to USF. So, I left the plaque in my vehicle. TOWHBO printed another sign for the building that included the same words that was on the plaque. This sign, pictured below, was temporary placeholder until the original plaque is returned, which is based on the State of Florida and their decision for the other items in USF custody.
In order to put up the sign, The Official White House Boys Organization members tried to take off the clear baseboard that supported the DJJ plaque. This baseboard was drilled into the structure of the building. The men tried to take off the plaque with drills and the aggressive physical force of pulling the clear baseboard out of the wall. Clark eventually saw the activity and attempted to stop the men from destroying the government property. The men decided to place the sign over the clear baseboard, drilling it into the structure, dismissing the warning delivered by Clark. This overt dismissal of the state official’s directive is a physical example of The Official White House Boys Organization claiming ownership over their memories of the white house.

Once the sign was placed on the building, everyone stood around taking pictures and talking. Then a request came from the attendees that someone should say a few words. An executive member of TOWHBO complemented the Coopers on the sign and for displaying it on the building. He further explained that the original plaque would be replaced on the wall. David Clark then clarified the status of the plaque by explaining that it was in the possession of USF.
He then explained that at some point, the Department of Management Services is required to retrieve the remains of the boys exhumed from Boot Hill and any artifacts and other materials that are from the Dozier campus that are currently located in the USF Forensic Anthropology Lab.

After the speech, another African American pastor, who was also a former student at Dozier, was asked to say a prayer. The prayer was as follows:

We come this evening to say thank you. God, you have been good to us. You have brought each one of us from a long ways and for that we say thank you. We could have been dead sleeping in our grave, but Your grace and Your mercy, you’ve allowed us to see another day. Thank the White House Boys for what they do. We ask God to continue to bless us with [being able] to go to the end. I just want to thank Jerry and Babbs and the entire White House Boys. We couldn’t be here without you. Jesus is on our side. He said, ”Great is He that is in me than he that is in the world.” When we have Jesus on our side, all things are possible if you believe, you must believe. In the mighty name of Jesus. Can we all say Amen?

The pastor expressed being outside of this organization twice in this prayer. He first made mention of not being a part of the group when he said, “Thank the White House Boys for what they do.” The use of “they” refers to the people other than himself. In addition, he states, “I just want to thank Jerry and Babbs and the entire White House Boys. We couldn’t be here without you.” In this phrase, the pastor acknowledged himself as not being included in the group but invited by them to come to the memorial event. Although the pastor may not consider himself a part of the group, TOWHBO members refer to him as a White House Boy.

This feeling of alienation on the part of the Black men who were present continued when we went to tour the dormitories. The DJJ representatives on site made sure that no one could get
into the buildings and all of the attendees stayed within a particular area. Some people remained on the buses and in their cars due to the high temperatures. The majority of the White House Boys went to the different buildings, taking pictures and sharing memories with each other. A few of the men remembered which house they resided in and took pictures of themselves in front of the building. While the White House Boys were looking at the buildings and sharing stories, a couple of black men were standing around, not attempting to go into the dormitories. When I asked one of the men why he was not looking at the buildings, he said that he did not stay in the dormitories on the south campus. He was not allowed on the white campus. The African American man identified an important issue regarding the day of memory for TOWHBOs. The organization primarily focused on the south campus for the event. Although boys of different racial backgrounds were abused at the white house, the black men did not share the same past experiences as the white men at Dozier. The conversations about the north campus, which is the site of Boot Hill Cemetery, were not inclusive of the differing experiences of the black youth. Instead, it was simply mentioned as being the black side of campus.

The main memorial ceremony was held at Boot Hill Cemetery. Several people took pictures of the dilapidated buildings on the north campus. The area leading from the north campus to the cemetery and the burial ground itself, which no longer held the remains, was cleared by Riverside Community Church and businessmen of Marianna. In the cleared space, everyone received yellow balloons that were released to the sky in honor of the deceased children. Some people said a few words about the deceased children and men as well as those who could not make it to the event. Following the memorial at Boot Hill Cemetery, everyone headed back to Marianna Inn.
The Official White House Boys Organization memorial event was well attended, with a few African Americans present. Although the group, specifically the Coopers, had creative input in the activities of the day, state officials from the Department of Environmental Protections and the Department of Juvenile Justice, provided the parameters for the event. The officials monitored who were allowed on the campus by mandating a waiver. They were also keeping a watchful eye of everyone as we walked around the campus. If anyone strayed, an official would notify that person to return to the designated area. TOWHBO has worked with the State of Florida since presenting at the Cabinet meeting in January 2016. The organization has become the voice of former students, including the deceased boys exhumed from Boot Hill Cemetery. However, the organization has dismissed and demeaned the narrative of black men who attended Dozier. As stated by a Dozier Task Force member:

Experiences in this country can vary broadly right, based on their racial identification, based on their socio-economic status, et cetera. And so I think that through that particular prism that … people's views on what took at place at Dozier could vary, but they are also legitimate positions, right. And so, the position of African Americans as it relates to Dozier in some ways was different from the perception of the White House Boys, the white people who had experiences with that and part of that is related I believe to our historical experiences in the United States (Interview with author, December 16, 2016).

Despite only being called upon to provide prayer for the attendees, a few Black men who attended the event found multiple ways to insert their perspectives and narratives in the stories that were being shared, engaging in their own counter-memories.

Reburials

_I don’t like the word ‘exhumed.’ I don’t like the issue of taking anybody who has passed out of the grave. This is not exhumed, ladies and gentlemen, it’s a rescue. Let’s call it rescue because if God didn’t intend for these children to come out of_
that cemetery so the truth would be known, He would not have allowed it. [Jerry Cooper, President of The Official White House Boys Organization, at Billy Jackson’s funeral]

The excavation of Boot Hill Cemetery by USF anthropologists generated a series of memorial practices while, simultaneously, disrupting the common, and albeit sanitized, history of Dozier School for Boys. The removal of human remains from Boot Hill Cemetery forced a favorable narrative of the past to be faced with contested memories of abuse at the school and the underreporting of deceased children to state officials and families (Kimmerle, Wells, and Jackson 2016, 15). In their “Report on the Investigation into the Deaths and Burial at the Former Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys in Marianna, Florida,” the USF anthropologists concluded that the historical records of deaths at Dozier are incomplete and inconsistent. For the majority of the cases, the cause and manner of death were unknown. More African American boys died on campus than the white boys, which reflects the racial makeup of the institution. The “colored” boys were likely to be unnamed in the reporting of deaths (2016, 15). The exhumation exemplified the Foucauldian “insurrection of knowledges” by challenging the dominant narrative of the school through the recovery and identification of the deceased children whose identity and experiences were forgotten and/or ignored.

Of the exhumed human remains, approximately seven positive identifications were made based on DNA and fourteen presumptive identifications. As explained in the USF final report, “a presumptive identification is the possible identity of an individual based on information that is consistent with individuality but that is not mutually exclusive to only one person” (Kimmerle, Wells, and Jackson 2016, 90). The forensic anthropology team used the initial parameters for identification, such as ancestry, stature, skeletal markers, context and location of burial, and other field evidence regarding the possible association between the individuals and burial
Five remains have been repatriated to families: George Owen Smith (positive ID), Thomas Varnadoe (positive ID), Early Wilson (positive ID), Robert Stephens (positive ID), and Billy Jackson (presumptive ID) (Kimmerle, Wells, and Jackson 2016). As these families memorialized their deceased relatives, they engaged in their own counter-memory politics. These memorializations recognized the humanity of the children. As Michael Blakey stated at the USF “Research & Remembrance” Symposium, burials have been an act of resistance to dehumanization. The memorializations and reburials showed the children as more than victims of Dozier, which is their identities to the public. Instead, the children were depicted as whole people, with kinship ties and experiences outside of the institution. The memorialization of the children offers a counter-narrative to the homogenizing depiction of victimization as emphasized by the dominant memory.

George Owen Smith

The first identification made by the USF forensic team was George Owen Smith. Ovell Smith Krell, Smith’s sister, had been actively seeking information regarding her brother for decades. Smith was sent to the Florida Industrial School (FIS) on September 20, 1940 for “auto theft.” He ran away on November 23, 1940 and his remains were discovered beneath a house in Marianna, Florida (Kimmerle et al. 2012). Once FIS employees notified the Smiths of George’s death, the family went to retrieve his remains, but they were told that he had been buried on campus by the time of their arrival. Krell told WUSF: “I was searching for him not only out of my love, but for a vow I made my mother and father on their death beds that I would find my brother if it’s in my power…I would look til I died” (Cordner 2014). In August 2014, the USF forensic team announced that the first DNA match of the 55 burials was George Owen Smith. After 73 and half years, her brother was finally found.
The next identified remains were that of Thomas Varnadoe. Thomas and Hubert Varnadoe were taken to the Florida Industrial School in 1934 after being charged with malicious trespassing.” A month later, a week after Thomas was buried, the Varnadoe family received a letter stating that he died, at the age of 13, of pneumonia (Kimmerle et al. 2012). The death had troubled the Varnadoe family for years as they searched for answers. Glen Varnadoe, Thomas’s nephew, has led the charge in the quest for information, which is the reason for his support of and push for USF research efforts regarding Boot Hill Cemetery. In September 2014, Thomas’ remains were identified. For Richard Varnadoe, Thomas’s brother, getting his brothers remains provided some closure for his family.

On November 24, 2014, the Varnadoe family buried Thomas at Hopewell Memorial Gardens in Plant City, Florida. It was a small service with a few family members and friends, including USF anthropologists, in attendance. Everyone sat or stood facing a small granite box, which was placed on top of a table covered in a burgundy cloth. The box, which held Thomas’s remains, was inscribed with the words “Brothers Together Again.” While waiting for the ceremony to begin, the attendees were given a card that included a picture of the Varnadoe family before Hubert and Thomas were sent to the Florida Industrial School. Below the picture were the words, “I Remember.” The left side of the card stated, “In loving memory, Thomas Henry Varnadoe, Jr., March 13, 1921-October 26, 1934.” It also included a scripture from Bible, Luke 18:16: “But Jesus called unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for such is the kingdom of God.”

Glen opened the memorial service by discussing the efforts involved in recovering the remains and thanking the researchers and journalists were a part of returning his uncle to the
family. Gene Varnadoe, a nephew of Thomas and brother of Glen, read a statement regarding how they were gathered together for the burial to seek closure for their family. Gene also briefly talked of the horrors experienced by not only Hubert and Thomas, but by the family as well. Now that Thomas has been returned, the family can bury him next to his brother and parents. Gene hopes that the process of healing can begin for the remaining family members. Richard closed the memorial service with a few words expressing how much it meant to him for his brother to be found and returned to his family.

Robert Stephens

The USF forensic team also identified Robert Stephens’ remains exhumed from Boot Hill Cemetery. In 1937, a fellow juvenile inmate, Leroy Taylor, stabbed Robert, who was then buried on the FIS campus (Kimmerle, Wells, and Jackson 2016). DNA was collected from various relatives of the deceased child, including Robert Stephens, Robert’s nephew and namesake. He had not heard of his uncle prior to this investigation because his father, who named him, died when Stephens was young. While at a press conference, Stephens mentioned that when his DNA was going to be collected, he was shocked to see his name on the USF “Searching or Families” poster. He thought someone made a mistake and printed the wrong name before realizing that he shared a name with his uncle. Once his DNA was collected, Robert began to connect with other Stephens family members he had not known due to being raised by maternal relatives.

On September 11, 2015, Robert’s family gathered at Smith Cemetery (Brown 2015) in Quincy, Florida. The cemetery is located near an unpaved road behind a school and in the nearby woods. As people walked to the seating area for the funeral, several family members began to meet each other. The people in attendance never met the deceased Robert Stephens, including his half sister who was seated in a wheelchair located near the first row of chairs. The presiding
pastor, who was also related to the Stephens family, stood next to the small white casket that housed the remains. After everyone sung an old hymn, the pastor began to preach about forgiveness regarding what happened to Robert and emphasized the need to be thankful for the life they are living and to appreciate each new day. Once the ceremony ended and the white casket was placed in the ground, the family began to view other graves, including the young Robert Stephens’ father.

The kinship conversations continued at the dinner following the reburial, which was located at the family church. Family members discussed their relation to the deceased Robert Stephens and to each other. Several of them stated that Robert’s father had over twenty children that were not all in one nuclear family. Therefore, some of the children, including Robert’s half-sister, may not have met the others. According to Tananarive Due, the great-niece of the deceased Robert Stephens, “Though we never knew of Robert Stephens, his loss had a ripple effect on my mother’s father and therefore on my mother. That loss shaped attitudes, family dynamics, dreams” (Due 2014).

*Earl Wilson*

Earl Wilson was sent to FIS on June 20, 1944 at the age of 12 for larceny. According to his sister, Cherry Wilson, the family was not aware of Earl being arrested at that time. On September 1, seventy-two days later, he was killed in a 7’ by 10’ confinement cottage located on the North Campus of the school. Four boys—William Foxworth, Charles Bevels, Robert Farmer, and Floyd Alexander—were charged for his death. The school physician reported that Earl died of “Head Injury, Blows on the Head” (Kimmerle et al. 2012). He was eventually buried on the campus and the family was given little information. Cherry Wilson stated that “My mother
couldn't find anything out, my daddy tried, he did before he died, then my sister, she was trying, both of them was trying to find, they couldn't get nothing before they died” (Schreiner 2014)

In September 2014, the USF forensic team identified Earl Wilson’s remains. Cherry said that the news of her brother provide closure about what happened to him (Schreiner 2014). The Wilson Family buried Earl in a Lakeland cemetery on October 2, 2015. Several family members, including Cherry’s children, and friends attended the small ceremony. Earl’s remains were placed in a white box that set on a table covered in a black velvet cloth. The Pastor opened the ceremony with the Lord’s Prayer, which was accompanied by the attendees, and said a few words about the occasion. After a family member read a poem, the pastor recommitted Earl’s remains to the Earth. The service ended with the burying Earl’s remains and artifacts, while family members released white balloons in the air. Cherry told ABC News correspondent Carson Chambers that “I think, I might be wrong, but I think his spirit be resting” (Chambers 2015).

*Billy Jackson*

Billy Jackson, also spelled “Billey” in the records, died 63 days after entering Florida Industrial School on October 7, 1952. According to his death certificate, Billy died of pyelonephritis, an infection and inflammation of the kidney. Two of his peers told USF researchers (Kimmerle, Wells, and Jackson 2016) that he was beaten at the White House two weeks prior to his death because he attempted to run away. His beating was so bad that his stomach was distended. Billy was later hospitalized and died before returning to the institution. Billy’s sister, Mattie Jackson, told USF researchers that a truant officer came to their house to inform them of his death. He was given a funeral, with a presiding minister, and buried at Boot Hill Cemetery (Kimmerle, Wells, and Jackson 2016).
Billy’s grave was presumptively identified by the USF forensic anthropology team. According to the Report on the Investigation into the Deaths and Burial at the Former Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys in Marianna, Florida (Kimmerle, Wells, and Jackson 2016). Billy was identified based on several lines of evidence including the approximate date of death (based on artifacts), the location and context of the burial compared to other known/positively identified persons, the age and ancestry of Jackson. While a family reference sample was obtained from his sister, Mattie Jackson (December 30, 2014), she indicated that they were both adopted and she did not know if they were adopted as biological siblings or not. Therefore, we may not expect a DNA match to his sister (Kimmerle, Wells, and Jackson 2016, 110).

The Jackson family received Billy’s remains in August 2016 and a funeral service was held on August 13, 2016 in Daytona Beach, Florida, his hometown.

The funeral,¹⁰ which was held at R.J. Gainous Funeral Home, was well-attended, with several speakers from Billy’s family and community and The Official White House Boys Organization. Pastor Ruth H. Plummer, Free Spirit Evangelistic Outreach Ministries, offered prayer during the service. In this prayer, Pastor Plummer expressed thanks to God for justice being served and “for being able to bring their child, their son, their brother back home.” Catina Gaddy, daughter of TOWHBO member Pastor Johnny Lee Gaddy, performed a selection, “I Won’t Complain.” A childhood friend of Billy Jackson, Roy Fletcher, spoke briefly about his friend. Fletcher stated, “Billy didn’t come back here by accident. God brought Billy back here.” He continued by saying that Billy would want black communities to become stronger. “We can’t

¹⁰ I did not attend this ceremony. However, several research participants told me about the proceedings. The ceremony was also recorded by an attendee and is available on YouTube under the title “Billey Jackson Memorial Service.” There are also numerous articles published about the funeral that is available online, especially the newspapers that are based in Daytona.
depend on no other race. We are strong enough to depend on ourselves.” He also advocated for the church to take more of an active role in black communities as they did during his upbringing.

Mayor Derrick Henry of Daytona Beach also attended the ceremony and said a few remarks about Billy and the justice system. He spoke about acknowledging the “miscarriage of justice” that occurred at Dozier School for Boys. Mayor Henry stated that “As mayor of this city, I’m here today to acknowledge that what happened to Billy Jackson is a part of our heritage…So the first thing we need to do today is acknowledge that this transpired.” He further explained that it is important to confront, and atone for, the past, which he plans to do by protecting future generations from such abuse by the justice system.

Mayor Henry recognized the members of The Official White House Boys Organization members in attendance during his speech. Three members of the organization spoke at the ceremony: Pastor Johnny Lee Gaddy, Charlie Fudge, and Jerry Cooper. This ceremony gave the men another opportunity to share their stories with the public. Pastor Gaddy, who provided the eulogy for the funeral, spoke about the abuse that he endured while at Dozier. He remained silent for years about his experiences but credits the White House Boys for helping him to tell his story. Pastor Gaddy explained how his race played a significant role in his experiences at Dozier and in other aspects of his life, including being called a “boy” and a “nigger” when he returned home. Jerry Cooper\(^{11}\) spoke briefly about race as well, even making a quip in his remarks: “As you see, I’m white.” After hearing laughter from the audience, he then pointed to the picture of Billy Jackson and said “That’s one of my brothers.” Jerry continued to talk about his experiences.

\(^{11}\) Jerry’s record producer, Billy Joe Burnette, spoke briefly at the ceremony. In his less than two-minute speech, Burnette mainly focused on Jerry’s experiences and emotions he has had over the years. He ended his remarks by expressing his sadness over what occurred at Dozier.
Charlie Fudge read a piece written by Bill Price, Vice-President of TOWHBO, that expressed his condolences. The words by TOWHBO members about the abuse at the school gave the audience insight into what Billy endured before he died at Dozier.

Billy Jackson was buried at Mt. Ararat Cemetery in Daytona Beach. His headstone stated his name, the years he was alive, February 18, 1939 – October 7, 1952, as well as “White House Boys.” Mattie Jackson, Billy’s adopted sister, died a few months after Billy’s memorial service, on October 6, 2016. Pastor Plummer officiated her ceremony, which was located in R.J. Gainous Funeral Home. Mattie was interred in same cemetery as that of her brother.

Conclusion

In the practice of reconciliation, the power elite attempts to construct a collective memory of the past that emphasizes forgiveness and unification. However, when a new narrative is created, silences develop, and some perspectives are excluded from the memory practice. The dominant narrative then becomes the collective memory to be memorialized for future generations as lieux de memoires (Nora 1989) are formed. As a method of resistance, the silenced groups construct counter-memories that speak out from the margins and challenge the power of dominant narratives. The State of Florida attempted to bring together multiple groups in planning the public memory and memorialization of Dozier School for Boys by developing a task force. From the representatives chosen to the topics that were dismissed, however, certain experiences were not included in the construction of this new narrative. Yet, multiple events were planned external to the State of Florida that would provide a platform for these subjugated knowledges. As evidenced by the memorial service on the Dozier campus, the resistance to

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12 Jerry Cooper learned about Billy Jackson’s experiences from Johnny Walthour, a former youth of Dozier who knew Billy.
power is not external to power, but in relation to it. Power flows from different directions, not just top-down. These marginalized groups found ways to use their power to push against a dominant narrative and insert their voices.

In these counter-memorial efforts, Christianity was employed to commemorate the living and deceased victims of Dozier. The same religion was also used by the State of Florida in their reconciliation process. Christianity was also an important component of the school’s administration, which was considered necessary at the time as the goal of the institution was to provide moral rehabilitation. The memory practices of Dozier each operated under the sacred canopy of religion. Its hegemonic power has maintained its authority, even as it is employed and performed in different manners. Although it has been used as a dialogic tool to speak to multiple groups, religion has further created erasures in the Dozier conversation. For example, due to the fact that the White House Boys group is primarily Christian, discussions of sexuality have not been included in the narrative. Additionally, differences in racial experience on the campus have been obscured by religious rhetoric. The “Prayer for Healing and Unity,” written by TOWHBO’s Chaplain and his wife, states “Although during the time spent at Florida School for Boys, many were separated and divided because of race, we rejoice that you have made us one body in Christ.” This rhetoric supports the notion that everyone is equal in their experiences. Yet, the narratives discussed above proved that the racial differences had a direct influence on the boys’ experiences. As exemplified in this study, religion has been used as a tool of social control. Though individuals have questioned using religious symbols for re-interment, the power of religion has been largely invisible, yet active in the public memory and memorialization of Dozier.
Chapter Nine:

Conclusion and Applied Implications

This study aimed to make visible the hegemonic, power of religion, which is often masked. Though the rituals and overt celebrations of religion is acknowledged or even dismissed, it is the ubiquitous presence of religion, specifically Christianity, which is the focus of this study. I critiqued this form of power through an analysis of the public memory processes of the victims of Dozier School for Boys. I documented how Christianity first appeared in the Dozier story as a rehabilitative and controlling technique for the youth. My study further examined how religion was brought into the memory process in order to control the new narrative being created. This study examined how stakeholders, in the construction of Dozier’s public memorialization, reconciled the fact that Christianity was used as a controlling mechanism for the youth and as a source of healing and memorialization as well as a tool for reconciliation. As shown in this study, Christianity was not considered as a contributory factor in the abuse and other mistreatment that occurred at the school. The memorialization activities, both public and collective, did not recognize religion as problematic in Dozier’s history, unlike Peru and South Africa who acknowledged their complicated religious dynamic during the respective conflict. If the goal of the memorialization is to promote justice and reconciliation, it is necessary to recognize all of the social factors that resulted in such institution.
Specifically, I have sought to identify and analyze ways in which religion operates as a form of social control in the construction of public memory and memorialization at Dozier. This involved multiple layers of analyses of religion from moral and disciplinary practices to memorialization, as well as tracing the power relationships among the stakeholders. Michel Foucault argues that to examine power relations we should start by focusing on “forms of resistance against different forms of power” (1982, 780). During this study, I conducted research on several groups as they operated within the boundaries established by the State of Florida and other dominant groups. For example, to understand how The Official White House Boys Organization monopolize the collective memory discourse about the experiences at the reform school, I analyzed how the Black survivors of Dozier interacted and resisted the dominant narrative being put forth by the group. In addition, to understand how the State controlled the narrative being presented to the public by the White House Boys, I examined how the organization had to maneuver around and work with state officials to get their stories publicized, such as having their stories monitored and controlled before the Cabinet meeting and the Senate hearing for the apology. In these memory-making practices, I outlined the role of religion in facilitating dialogue, forgiveness, and reconciliation among the stakeholders.

The stakeholders each had competing interests in the public memory politics of Dozier. Boot Hill Burial Ground Project contributed to scientific knowledge about the reform school and engaged with multiple groups on public memory and the pursuit of social justice. Families of deceased victims exhumed from Boot Hill Cemetery were interested in the repatriation of their relative’s remains to the family. The White House Boys have varying interests among the group. The largest of the subgroups, TOWHBO, wanted an apology as well as financial retribution. The NAACP, specifically Dale Landry, argued that the black boys who attended Dozier should be
considered in public memory processes. This organization, along with the Florida Council of Churches and the Interfaith Commission on Florida’s Youth and Children, promoted reconciliation through religious, primarily Christian, rhetoric and belief system. The City of Marianna and Jackson County representatives were concerned about the property of Dozier and the public image of this city in regards to its tourist economy.

Collective memory is subjected to the social, political, and economic conditions of the present. It aims to serves the purposes of the present. The State of Florida has its own interest in controlling the official public memory and memorialization of Dozier, which was a state reform school. This stakeholder was concerned with the property of the school, mainly wanting to sell the property. The State aimed for a reconciliation, particularly a religious-redemptive narrative that promotes restorative justice instead of retributive and is focused on the future, including a new identity and new narrative. Discussions of reconciliation were in relation to the memorial and reburial, which were to redress the issues of the past. However, the plans lieu de mémoire and the reburials were and continue to be made in relation to the plans for the property. For example, a memorial on Dozier’s campus was a highly contested issue because of it being a possible interference to sale of the property.

The State of Florida engaged these different stakeholders in constructing a new narrative that incorporates the perspectives and experiences of multiple groups. However, as characteristic of collective memories, the dominant narratives that developed were constantly contested, revised, and negotiated through the memory process. The incorporation of religion and religious leaders were used to mediate the multiple interests. As explained in this dissertation, several stakeholders used religion to memorialize the victims. It was also used as a strategy for communicating between the groups. For example, Rev. Russell Meyer, who was not associated
with Dozier prior to USF’s involvement, was included on the task force to help facilitate reconciliation among the other religious groups and the public. By bringing in religious figures to speak to a largely religious audience and use religious rhetoric themselves, political figures within the State of Florida were able to gain the trust of the people in their efforts to promote reconciliation. Christianity provided the guidance for the public memory of the reform school and the memorialization of the victims.

**Key Findings and Applied Implications**

There are several key findings that resulted from this qualitative study on religion as a tool for power in the memory practices of Dozier School for Boys. One of the primary findings was the significance of Christianity in the reform school’s past. In 1909, a legislative committee, appointed by the state government to provide oversight for the school, urged Dozier to enhance its religious focus, even recommending that a reasonable amount of money is taken from the appropriation budget to pay a minister to preach at the institution. After the 1909 report from the legislative committee, Dozier provided frequent religious activities for the boys, including Bible Study and Sunday school, for the youth. The school also celebrated Christian holidays (Easter and Christmas) and would invite the community to the campus during the religious events. The religious instruction was to provide moral training for the boys so that would become rehabilitated for release into society. Despite Christianity playing a large role in the social control of the students, the current memorial efforts rarely cite the religion as being an oppressive tool for the youth.

This research study also emphasized the tensions involved in the memory practices. As noted by Dozier’s complex past and memorialization, it is impossible to construct one collective and dominant memory that encompasses multiple versions of the past. A dominant narrative of
the past, which is usually created by the power elite or non-disenfranchised groups, engenders silences, leaving subjugated groups without a voice in the public memory. Certain groups were silenced for various reasons, such as race, class, and political interests. These groups are forced to construct counter-memories that targets subjugated knowledges in resistance to the mainstream memory.

The goal for reconciliation and healing as a memorial practice should not be the development of one narrative. Instead, spaces should be created that allots for multiple versions of the past to be respected and accepted equally. In order to develop such spaces, there must be an acknowledgment of the multiple stakeholders associated with and impacted by the injustices of the past as well as an analysis of power in narrative construction. Dozier’s memory and memorialization involved several stakeholders—State of Florida, University of South Florida, media, former students, families of victims, faith-based and civic organizations, as well as communities. Each of these stakeholders possesses different degrees of power in the memorialization of Dozier. By understanding the power dynamics of the stakeholders, subjugated knowledges as well as gaps and silences in collective memory can be identified. Memorial spaces can then be constructed in a manner that is open for multiple versions of the past.

Christianity was employed throughout the memory construction of the reform school. The religion was used in the memorial practices of several stakeholders such as the State of Florida, Florida Council of Churches, NAACP, families of victims, and the White House Boys. Christianity was brought into the conversation to help facilitate dialogue between and among multiple groups. It is in this manner that religion operated as a form of social control in the memorialization of the school. Due to the fact that Christianity is the dominant religion in
Florida, it is not surprising that it was used in the memory practices. However, if injustices were committed against an individual or group who are not of the Christian faith, they may feel left out of the reconciliation and healing processes. Therefore, the use of religion in these processes should be critically considered and, as in construction of collective memory, there should be room for different faiths and non-believers in these dialogues of reconciliation.

**Contributions**

Scholarship on religion and memory within anthropology and other social science disciplines provided the theoretical framework for this study. Scholars (Durkheim 1995; Douglas 1986, Wallace 1966) have suggested frameworks for understanding how religion operates as a form of social control. Religion, as a social institution, helps to make sense of the world (Berger 1969; Geertz 1993; Durkheim 1995) and promote social solidarity. Social scientists have also examined religion within the context of class, power, and social stratification (Marx 2008; Weber 1958). Religion can operate as an oppressive force (Marx 2008) or liberating practice (Weber 1958; Cone 2010). Scholars have also offered theoretical frameworks for exploring power as it relates to memory (Shackel 2003; Bright 2002; Fabian 2007; Yelvington 2002; Climo and Cattell 2002; Foucault 1980; Benmayor et al. 2016). Memory is a social phenomenon that is constantly challenged and countered, even as a dominant narrative emerges. Scholars have examined the dynamics of authoritative memories and the silences that are created. This anthropological study contributes to the existing literature through an analysis of religion and power in the construction of collective and public memory and memorialization. It documents how Christianity has facilitated memorial practices of Dozier in the present even as it was used as a moralizing and disciplinary practice for youth who attended the school as shared in competing narratives—dominant vs. counter narratives about the school and school life.
Dissemination

The results of this study will be disseminated to different stakeholders who are associated with the Dozier School for Boys. During this study, several members of the White House Boys were interested in reading the results. I plan to present the findings to them at their reunion, which occurs annually. In addition, I will write up a summary of my findings for members who are interested in receiving more information. The aim for giving the group this information is so they will be more inclusive in their narrative of Dozier, specifically regarding racial minorities. Families of victims have also stated they would like to read my research. Similar to the White House Boys, if they would like a summary of my findings, I will provide it for them. Another outlet for disseminating my ethnographic study is through a presentation at the Florida Faith Symposium hosted by the Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council. This would be an opportunity to share my research with political officials and the faith-based community from around Florida. The goal for such presentation is to incite a discussion on how religion is practiced in educational and reform institutions.

In addition to disseminating my research to the groups mentioned above, I will be publishing my results in a book chapter and academic journals. I am the fourth author on a proposed book chapter with Kimmerle, Jackson, and Wells, USF researchers and co-PIs on the Boot Hill Burial Ground Project. Our chapter, entitled “The Boot Hill Burial Ground Project: Memory and Memorialization of a Difficult Past—An Interdisciplinary Collaboration,” highlights the multiple ways in which the interdisciplinary team of anthropologists sought to engage the past in uncovering knowledge as well as the construction of public memory and memorialization. In addition, I am co-authoring an article with Antoinette Jackson entitled “Reconciling a Contested Past: Counter-Memory in the Memorialization of Dozier School for
Boys” for the journal *Presents Pasts*. I also plan to submit additional articles based on my research to other anthropological academic journals and public outreach forums.
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Appendices
Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter

Original IRB Approval Letter:

August 1, 2016

Kaniqun Robinson
Anthropology
Tampa, FL 33612

RE: Expedited Approval for Initial Review
IRB#: Pro00026831
Title: Religion and Power: Christianity at the Crossroads of the Dozier School for Boys

Study Approval Period: 7/31/2016 to 7/31/2017

Dear Ms. Robinson:

On 7/31/2016, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and APPROVED the above application and all documents contained within, including those outlined below.

Approved Item(s):
Protocol Document(s):
IRB Protocol. Version #1, 7/29/16

Consent/Assent Document(s)*:
Informed Consent Form.pdf

*Please use only the official IRB stamped informed consent/assent document(s) found under the "Attachments" tab. Please note, these consent/assent document(s) are only valid during the approval period indicated at the top of the form(s).

It was the determination of the IRB that your study qualified for expedited review which includes activities that (1) present no more than minimal risk to human subjects, and (2) involve only procedures listed in one or more of the categories outlined below. The IRB may review research through the expedited review procedure authorized by 45CFR46.110. The research proposed in this study is categorized under the following expedited review category:
(6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

As the principal investigator of this study, it is your responsibility to conduct this study in accordance with IRB policies and procedures and as approved by the IRB. Any changes to the approved research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval via an amendment. Additionally, all unanticipated problems must be reported to the USF IRB within five (5) calendar days.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

John Schinka, Ph.D., Chairperson
USF Institutional Review Board
Recent Continuing Review Letter:

7/12/2018

Kaniqua Robinson
Anthropology

RE:  Expedited Approval for Continuing Review
IRB#:  CR2_Pro00026831
Title:  Religion and Power: Christianity at the Crossroads of the Dozier School for Boys

Study Approval Period:  7/31/2018 to 7/31/2019

Dear Dr. Robinson:

On 7/11/2018, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and APPROVED the above application and all documents contained within including those outlined below.

Approved Item(s):
Protocol Document(s):
IRB Protocol. Version #1. 7/29/16

Consent/Assent Document(s)*:
Informed Consent Form.pdf

*Please use only the official IRB stamped informed consent/assent document(s) found under the "Attachments" tab on the main study's workspace. Please note, these consent/assent document(s) are valid until they are amended and approved.

The IRB determined that your study qualified for expedited review based on federal expedited category number(s):

(6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.
(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural
beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

As the principal investigator of this study, it is your responsibility to conduct this study in accordance with USF HRPP policies and procedures and as approved by the USF IRB. Any changes to the approved research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval by an amendment. Additionally, all unanticipated problems must be reported to the USF IRB within five (5) calendar days.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

Kristen Salomon, Ph.D., Chairperson
USF Institutional Review Board
Informed Consent to Participate in Research Involving Minimal Risk

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Research studies include only people who choose to take part. This document is called an informed consent form. Please read this information carefully and take your time making your decision. Ask the researcher or study staff to discuss this consent form with you, please ask him/her to explain any words or information you do not clearly understand. The nature of the study, risks, inconveniences, discomforts, and other important information about the study are listed below.

We are asking you to take part in a research study called: Religion and the Dozier School for Boys.

The research will be conducted at a mutually agreed upon location.

The person who is in charge of this research study is Kaniqua Robinson. This person is called the Principal Investigator (PI). Dr. Antoinette Jackson, faculty advisor, is guiding her in this research.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to understand the importance of religion at the Dozier School for Boys as well as in the memorialization and reburial of the exhumed remains from Boot Hill Cemetery. It seeks to contribute to the existing research on the school by examining the function of religion in Dozier’s past and present developments.

Why are you being asked to take part?

You are asked to take part in this research study because you have knowledge of or a relationship with the Dozier School for Boys and/or the USF Dozier Project.
Study Procedures:
If you take part in this study, you will be interviewed and asked permission to have your interview audio recorded. The expected duration of the interview is 45 minutes, but no more than 1 hour. An interview script/schedule will be used. Recorded interviews will be transcribed and edited. The Project PI will protect the identity of participants by using pseudonyms unless participants specify otherwise in writing. The Project PI will keep the list of participants and pseudonyms confidential. No information about sensitive resources will be made public without explicit permission from the research participant. The PI will employ an alphanumeric code system to keep track of participants, and to keep informed consent form separate from raw data, such as video, audio recordings. The PI will collect and keep all documents under lock and key in a designated location on the USF campus, and any digital documents in a password protected computer, and any digital documents in a password protected computer. All documents relating to the study will be retained for at least 5 years after completion of the research. Records shall be accessible for inspection and copy by designated research personnel only.

Total Number of Participants
A total of 20 individuals will participate in this study.

Alternatives/Voluntary Participation /Withdrawal
You do not have to participate in this research study. You should only take part in this study if you want to volunteer. You should not feel that there is any pressure to take part in the study. You are free to participate in this research or withdraw at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits you are entitled to receive if you stop taking part in this study.

Benefits
We are unsure if you will receive any benefits by taking part in this research study. However, a potential benefit is participating in a study that is of importance to the State of Florida through its focus on the Dozier School for Boys and its memorialization.

Risks or Discomfort
This research is considered to be minimal risk. That means that the risks associated with this study are the same as what you face every day. There are no known additional risks to those who take part in this study.

Compensation
You will receive no payment or other compensation for taking part in this study.

Costs
It will not cost you anything to take part in the study.

There will be no additional costs to you as a result of being in this study. However, routine care for your condition (care you would have received whether or not you were in this study) will be charged to you or your insurance company. You may wish to contact your insurance company to discuss this further.

Privacy and Confidentiality
We will keep your study records private and confidential. Certain people may need to see your study records. Anyone who looks at your records must keep them confidential. These individuals include:

- The research team, including the Principal Investigator and faculty advisor.
- Certain government and university people who need to know more about the study, and individuals who provide oversight to ensure that we are doing the study in the right way.
- Any agency of the federal, state, or local government that regulates this research.
- The USF Institutional Review Board (IRB) and related staff who have oversight responsibilities for this study, including staff in USF Research Integrity and Compliance.

We may publish what we learn from this study. If we do, we will not include your name. We will not publish anything that would let people know who you are.

**You can get the answers to your questions, concerns, or complaints**

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this study, or experience an unanticipated problem, call Kaniqua Robinson at 404-384-7247.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, or have complaints, concerns or issues you want to discuss with someone outside the research, call the USF IRB at (813) 974-5638 or contact by email at R SCH-IRB@usf.edu.

**Consent to Take Part in this Research Study**

I freely give my consent to take part in this study. I understand that by signing this form I am agreeing to take part in research. I have received a copy of this form to take with me.

_____________________________________________  __________________________
Signature of Person Taking Part in Study            Date

_____________________________________________
Printed Name of Person Taking Part in Study

**Statement of Person Obtaining Informed Consent**
I have carefully explained to the person taking part in the study what he or she can expect from their participation. I confirm that this research subject speaks the language that was used to explain this research and is receiving an informed consent form in their primary language. This research subject has provided legally effective informed consent.

_____________________________________________________
Signature of Person obtaining Informed Consent

_______________________________________________________________
Date

_______________________________________________________________
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent
Appendix C: Necessary Permissions

Chapter One Figures:

Figure 1.1: Map of the State of Florida. Copyright 2018 by Google.
Figure 1.2: Map of Marianna, Florida. Copyright 2018 by Google.
A screenshot of the permissions is below:

![Google Maps & Google Earth Permissions]

Introduction

Generally speaking, as long as you’re following our Terms of Service and you’re attributing properly, you can use our maps and imagery. In fact, we love seeing creative applications of Google Maps, Google Earth, and Street View.

But we know you’re looking for more specifics to ensure you’re using our maps and imagery correctly. We suggest starting with the general guidelines below as these will apply to all projects.

Feel free to click directly to the section that applies to your use:

https://www.google.com/permissions/geoguidelines/
General Guidelines

Google Maps and Google Earth's "content" (as defined in the Google Earth/Google Maps Additional Terms of Service) includes everything you'd find in these products: map and terrain data, imagery, business listings, traffic, reviews, and other related information provided by Google, its licensors, and users.

These guidelines cover your use of the content – with one exception. There are some particular guidelines regarding your use of Street View imagery available from both Google Maps and Google Earth. Please read the section below for instructions on how Street View imagery may or may not be used.

Terms of Service

To help you figure out whether your use of the content is acceptable, first read the following documents:

- Google Terms of Service
- Google Maps/Google Earth Additional Terms of Service

Your use of the content is first and foremost governed by the licenses above.

Fair use

Apart from any license granted to you by Google, your use of the content may be acceptable under principles of "fair use." Fair use is a concept under copyright law in the U.S. that, generally speaking, permits you to use a copyrighted work in certain ways without obtaining a license from the copyright holder.

There are similar, although generally more limited, concepts in other countries' copyright laws, including a concept known as "fair dealing" in a number of countries. Google can't tell you if your use of the content from our products would be fair use or would be considered fair dealing; these are legal analyses that depend on all of the specific facts of your proposed use. We suggest you speak with an attorney if you have questions regarding fair use of copyrighted works.

https://www.google.com/permissions/paguidelines/
explicit permission. As long as you follow the guidance on this page, and attribute the content correctly, feel free to move forward with your project.

Attribution

All use of the content must provide attribution to both Google and our data providers. We require clear, visible attribution when the content is shown. You may not move the attribution to the end credits or fade it out after a few seconds.

Note that if you (a) embed a classic map, Street View panorama, or My Maps; (b) use one of our APIs on the web or in an application; or (c) use Google Earth Pro, or Earth Studio on desktop, then the necessary attribution is already baked into the map and no further credit is needed. Learn more about how to properly credit, as well as how to identify providers, on our attribution guidelines page.

If you're unwilling to meet our attribution requirements, contact our data provider(s) directly to inquire about purchasing the rights to use the content directly. You'll find provider contact information listed on their websites.

Personalizing your map

You may annotate our maps with additional information – like points, lines, or labels. In fact, many of our tools have built-in features that make it easy to do just that. For example, Google My Maps lets you draw lines and shapes on a Google map. We also offer a Styling Wizard that allows you to edit the colors of individual map components (for example, changing water to purple), as well as toggle visibility for each component (for example, making roads invisible). If neither of those fit your needs, you may export an image from Google Earth or Earth Studio to add custom labels or graphics using third-party software.

While we encourage annotations, you must not significantly alter how Google Maps, Google Earth, Earth Studio, or Street View would look online. For example, you’re not allowed to make any changes to the colors of the product interface.

For Google Earth and Earth Studio content, you’re not allowed to significantly alter our imagery without providing clear context that it’s a simulation, projection or fictional content.

https://www.google.com/permissions/legallanguage/
Chapter Five Figure:

Figure 5.5: This is a picture of the White House Boys with their marbles at an event. Used with permission, Erin H. Kimmerle.

Permissions: Permission granted by Erin Kimmerle via email. (See below.)

Re: Permission to Use Marble Photo

Kimmerle, Erin
Sun 11/18/2018 7:00 PM

Re: Robinson, Kaniqua <krobinson3@usf.edu>

Hi Kaniqua
You have permission to use the photo.
Thanks
Erin

From: Robinson, Kaniqua
Sent: Sunday, November 18, 2018 2:04:19 PM
To: Kimmerle, Erin
Subject: Permission to Use Marble Photo

Hi Dr. Kimmerle,

In order to use the photo of the White House Boys with the marbles (see attached), I will need your permission via email. Would you mind replying to this email stating that you give me permission to use the attached photo in my dissertation?

Thank you!
Kaniqua
Kaniqua L. Robinson, M.A.
Doctoral Candidate
Applied Anthropology Program
Department of Anthropology
University of South Florida

https://outlook.office.com/owa/?realm=usf.edu&exsvurl=1&ll-cc=1033&modurl=0

Chapter Six Figures:

Figure 6.1: Excerpt from the April 11, 1942 issue of The Yellow Jacket, Dozier newsletter, which refers to the Religious Advisory Committee and the Ministerial Association of Marianna.

Figure 6.2: Excerpt from the February 1, 1941 issue of The Yellow Jacket explaining the death of and memorial service for George Owen Smith.

Figure 6.3: Excerpt from the November 3, 1934 issue of The Yellow Jacket explaining the death of and memorial service for Thomas Varnadoe.

Figure 6.4: Excerpt from the September 8, 1934 issue of The Yellow Jacket discussing the Individual Rating System.

Permissions: The Yellow Jacket newsletters were published before 1977 without a copyright notice. Therefore, they are in the public domain.