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The grave site Martha J. Ardis is located on a small section designated for Black residents at Woodlawn Cemetery, Thursday, June 16, 2022, in Tampa, Fla.

Solving mystery of Tampa’s erased Black cemeteries

By PAUL GUZZO
TAMPA BAY TIMES

TAMPA, Fla. — In 1900, the Tampa City Council agreed to stake off Woodlawn Cemetery’s “colored section.” During the era of segregation, it was a move that ensured the area would be visibly separated from the rest of the 40-acre Tampa Heights burial ground. Stakes still mark three sides of that section. They help locate what was one of at least eight turn-of-the-century burial grounds for the Tampa area’s Black residents.

The others were not so easy to find. Each was erased, built over and then discovered due to Tampa Bay Times investigations spanning four years.

It was previously believed that the now-integrated Woodlawn’s original Black section was also erased, possibly located on vacant cemetery land now owned by Greater Tampa Showmen’s Association that was for sale last year.

Rebecca O’Sullivan, an archaeologist with Stantec, found its true location by tracking Woodlawn’s early 20th century burials. She realized it was still staked off.

Her discovery might end the search for Tampa’s missing segregation-era Black burial grounds and provide further clarity for why some were erased.

From the start, the best guess was that racism was behind the erasures. Four years later, that remains the theory, but with more context.

Some of the cemeteries might not have been targeted because they were Black cemeteries or because they were on Black-owned land. Some might have disappeared due to both factors.

In 1919, with the other Black cemeteries filling up, East Tampa’s Memorial Park Cemetery for Black burials was established. It remains in operation and shares a distinction with Woodlawn: it had white owners.

Woodlawn was operated by the city, which had only white leaders at the time.

All but one of the erased cemeteries were Black-owned. Is that a coincidence?

Possibly, Jones said, but doubtful.

It is unclear what came of Oaklawn Cemetery’s Black section. Today that property is a city parking lot.

Marti-Colon Cemetery’s Black section — the other white-owned Black burial ground — was sold to the city, abandoned and then purchased by a

developer. Today, that property is a shopping plaza.

The Port Tampa Cemetery was taken via eminent domain and the land became part of MacDill Air Force Base.

Wrongful taxation was the mechanism used to erase the others.

Those are: Zion Cemetery, now under Robles Park Village housing projects, warehouses and a tow lot.

College Hill Cemetery’s Black section, located on land that today is the Italian Club Cemetery’s Parking lot.

St. Joseph’s Aid Society Cemetery, located on land that today has four East Tampa homes on it.

Keystone Park Memorial Cemetery, located on land that today is an Odessa horse farm.

Each was taken from the Black owners spanning the 1920s through 1940s when property taxes were not paid. Except that cemeteries are not supposed to be taxed.

White cemeteries were also incorrectly taxed in that era, but the owners successfully petitioned to have the fees waved, according to Tampa City Council and Hillsborough County Commission minutes from that era.

Those minutes also show Black churches and masonic clubs having erroneously levied taxes waved by the governing bodies because they, too, were exempt. There is no mention of the Black-owned cemeteries.

“There is no proverbial smoking gun, but there is a clear difference,” the Tampa Bay History Center’s Rodney Kite-Powell said. “Those other properties had large physical entities that needed to be cleared. To clear the cemeteries, all they had to do was remove the headstones.”

So far, archaeologists have only surveyed and confirmed that bodies are still buried at Zion and Port Tampa cemeteries.

The search for erased cemeteries began in 2018 when researcher Ray Reed told the Times about death records he discovered for Zion.

Since then, Reed has combed Tampa death records through 1950 and compiled a list of the missing cemeteries and those buried in each.

Every cemetery on his list has been located, as research shows the remaining two names are most likely duplicates. Robles Pond Cemetery is likely Zion, which was in the Robles Pond neighborhood, and Cottage Hill and College Hill cemeteries are also likely the same. Reed disagrees that Robles Pond Cemetery is Zion.

NOTICE OF CERTIFICATION HEARING ON PROPOSED ELECTRICAL TRANSMISSION LINE CORRIDOR

Application No. TA22-19 for certification to authorize location of a transmission line corridor, construction, operation, and maintenance of a 230 kilovolt electrical transmission line(s) commonly referred to as Sweatt - Whidden and maintenance of the transmission line right-of-way from, Okeechobee County, Florida to DeSoto County, Florida was received by the Department of Environmental Protection on April 18, 2022. The case is pending before the Division of Administrative Hearings, Case No. 22-1246TL, prior to action by the Governor and Cabinet (sitting as the Siting Board), or the Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection, pursuant to the Florida Transmission Line Siting Act, Chapter 403, Part II, Florida Statutes (F.S.). The proposed corridor passes through the following local government jurisdictions: Okeechobee County, Highlands County, Glades County, and DeSoto County.

Pursuant to Section 403.527, F.S., unless one or more alternate corridors are proposed and accepted for consideration, the certification hearing will be held by the Division of Administrative Hearings commencing on September 12, 2022 at the Genesis Center, 218 E Belview St., Lake Placid, FL 33852, at 9 a.m., in order to take written or oral testimony on the effects of the proposed electrical transmission line. The purpose of this hearing is to determine whether the application should be approved in whole, approved with modifications and conditions, or denied. In making this determination, the administrative law judge, and ultimately the Governor and Cabinet, or, if no certification hearing is required, the Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection, shall consider whether, and the extent to which, the location of the transmission line corridor, and the construction, operation, and maintenance of the transmission line will:

- (a) Ensure electric power system reliability and integrity;
- (b) Meet the electrical energy needs of the state in an orderly, economical, and timely fashion;
- (c) Comply with applicable nonprocedural requirements of agencies;
- (d) Be consistent with applicable provisions of local government comprehensive plans, if any; and
- (e) Effect a reasonable balance between the need for the transmission line as a means of providing reliable, economically efficient electric energy, as determined by the Florida Public Service Commission under Section 403.537, F.S., and the impact upon the public and the environment resulting from the location of the transmission line corridor and the construction, operation, and maintenance of the transmission line(s).

Consideration of individual private property rights, equitable compensation for eminent domain proceedings which may be necessary to obtain access and use of the right-of-way, and the electrical need for the transmission line will not be heard at this hearing. Need for the transmission line is considered by the Florida Public Service Commission at a separate hearing and is not an issue at this hearing.

A public hearing where members of the public not a party to the certification hearing may testify under oath as to relevant facts and be subject to cross-examination by all parties, shall be held on September 12, 2022, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., at the Genesis Center. This public hearing will be conducted by the Division of Administrative Hearings and as part of the certification hearing if a certification hearing is held.

Any person wishing to participate in the certification proceeding as a party must file an appropriate pleading with the Division of Administrative Hearings following the procedures in Chapter 28-106, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.) and Section 403.527(2)(c), F.S., which provides that:

- (1) Parties to the proceeding shall be: Florida Power & Light Company, the Department of Environmental Protection, the Florida Public Service Commission, the Department of Economic Opportunity, the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Department of Transportation, the South Florida Water Management District, the St. Johns River Water Management District, the Southwest Florida Water Management District, Okeechobee County, Highlands County, DeSoto County, Glades County. Any of these parties, other than the Department of Environmental Protection and Florida Power & Light Company, may waive its right to participate in these proceedings if the listed party fails to file a notice of intent to be a party on or before the deadline date indicated below.
- (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of Chapter 120, F.S., to the contrary, upon the filing with the administrative law judge of a notice of intent to be a party by an agency, corporation, or association described in subparagraphs (a) and (b) below or a petition for intervention by a person described in subparagraph (c) below, no later than the deadline date indicated below, the following shall also be parties to the proceeding:
 - (a) Any agency not listed in subparagraph (1) above, as to matters within its jurisdiction.
 - (b) Any domestic nonprofit corporation or association formed, in whole or in part, to promote conservation of natural beauty; to protect the environment, personal health, or other biological values; to preserve historical sites; to promote consumer interests; to represent labor, commercial, or industrial groups; or to promote comprehensive planning or orderly development of the area in which the proposed transmission line or corridor is to be located.
 - (c) Any person whose substantial interests are affected and being determined by the proceeding.

For further information and requirements, please see: http://www.dep.state.fl.us/siting/rules_statutes.htm.

For further information and requirements, please see: <https://floridadep.gov/air/siting-coordination-office/content/rules-and-statutes>. Persons not wishing to participate in the proceedings as a party may nevertheless offer sworn testimony during the public hearing portion of the certification hearing if a certification hearing is needed. Any notice of intent to be a party or motion to intervene must be submitted by August 15, 2022 and sent to: Re: DOAH Case No. 22-1246TL, Division of Administrative Hearings, 1230 Apalachee Parkway, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3060, and must contain the following: reference to the application number; the name, address, and telephone number of the agency or person; and allegations sufficient to demonstrate the agency or person is entitled to participate in the proceeding. The notice or motion must be sent by mail to the applicant and to all parties. (A list of parties may be obtained from the Department’s Siting Coordination Office at 2600 Blair Stone Road, MS 5500, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-2400)

Consideration may be given in this proceeding to corridors alternate to the corridor(s) preferred by Florida Power & Light Company. Persons other than the applicant may propose alternate corridors for portions of or all of the corridor(s) proposed by the applicant. To propose an alternate corridor, persons must request to become a party to the proceedings, and then must file a notice of proposed alternate corridor with the administrative law judge pursuant to Section 403.5271(1), F.S., all parties, and any local governments in the jurisdiction of which the alternate is proposed, by no later than July 29, 2022. The filing must include the most recent United States Geological Survey 1:24,000 quadrangle maps with the alternate corridor boundaries specifically delineated on it, a description of the proposed alternate corridor, and a statement of the reasons the proposed alternate corridor should be certified. Each party proposing an alternate corridor shall have the burden to provide the data necessary for the agencies listed in Section 403.526, F.S., to prepare a supplementary report, to provide public notice in accordance with Section 403.5363(2), F.S., and the burden of proof on the certifiability of the alternate corridor at the certification hearing. See Section 403.5271, F.S., and Rule 62-17.543, F.A.C., for further information about proposing an alternate corridor. <https://floridadep.gov/air/siting-coordination-office/content/rules-and-statutes>

Pursuant to Section 403.527(6), F.S., the certification hearing may be cancelled no later than August 16, 2022, if all parties to the proceeding stipulate that there are no disputed issues of material fact or law to be raised, and the Department of Environmental Protection or the applicant requests that the administrative law judge cancel the certification hearing. If the administrative law judge grants the request, the Department of Environmental Protection shall prepare and issue a final order in accordance with Section 403.529(1)(a).

The Siting Board, or the Department if the certification hearing is cancelled, may certify all or portions of one or more corridors proper for certification. This notice is in lieu of other notices, including those relating to variances, changes to zoning ordinances and local governments’ comprehensive plans (if any are required), or any other non-federal government license or permit.

A term or condition of the certification, if granted, may provide for the subsequent submittal of information necessary for agencies to monitor the effects arising from the location of the transmission line corridor and the construction, operation, and maintenance of the transmission line to assure continued compliance with state water quality requirements or compliance with other agency non-procedural rules and standards, particularly with regards to wetlands resource protection activities. A person whose substantial interest may be affected by such submittals or monitoring must petition to become a party to this proceeding if they desire an administrative determination relative to the post-certification monitoring process. This certification proceeding provides such a person with the opportunity for a hearing as required by Chapter 120, F.S., and the Act. Failure to petition to become a party within the time frames set forth in this notice constitutes a waiver to an administrative determination (or hearing) pursuant to Chapter 120 and the Act on the post-certification review and monitoring.



A Tesla Model 3 on the road.

NHTSA to investigate Florida Tesla crash that killed 2

By TOM KRISHER
AP AUTO WRITER

DETROIT — The U.S. government’s auto safety watchdog is sending investigators to another Tesla crash, this time one that killed two people along Interstate 75 in Florida.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration confirmed Friday that it sent a Special Crash Investigations team to probe the Wednesday crash into the back of a semi-trailer at a rest area near Gainesville.

The agency would not say if the Tesla was operating on one of the company’s partially automated driving systems.

The 2015 model year Tesla was traveling on Interstate 75 about 2 p.m. Wednesday when, for an unknown reason, it exited into a rest area. It then went into the parking lot and hit the back of a parked Walmart Freightliner tractor-trailer, the Florida Highway Patrol said in a release.

The driver and passenger, both from Lompoc, California, were pronounced dead at the scene.

Highway Patrol Lt. P.V. Riordan said Friday night in an email that his agency will determine whether any partially automated features were in use. “That is a consideration that will be explored during our investigation,” he said.

A message was left Friday seeking comment from Austin, Texas-based Tesla.

NHTSA is investigating 37 crashes involving automated driving systems

since 2016. Of those, 30 involved Teslas, including 11 fatal crashes that have killed a total of 15 people.

The agency also said in documents that it’s investigating a fatal pedestrian crash in California involving a Tesla Model 3 that happened this month. It also sent a team to probe a Cruise automated vehicle crash in California that caused a minor injury in June.

NHTSA also has been investigating Teslas on Autopilot crashing into parked emergency vehicles. In a separate probe, the agency is looking at Teslas on Autopilot braking for no apparent reason.

Last week, newly confirmed NHTSA Administrator Steven Cliff told The Associated Press that the agency is intensifying efforts to understand the risks posed by automated vehicle technology so it can decide what regulations may be necessary to protect drivers, passengers and pedestrians. He also says automated systems such as automatic emergency braking have huge potential to save lives.

In June, NHTSA released data from automakers and tech companies showing nearly 400 crashes over a 10-month period involving vehicles with partially automated driver-assist systems, including 273 with Teslas.

The agency cautioned against using the numbers to compare automakers, saying it didn’t weight them by the number of vehicles from each manufacturer that use the systems, or how many miles those vehicles traveled.

Florida man gets 20 years for bomb-making video

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — A Florida man has been sentenced to 20 years in prison for attempting to support the Islamic State terrorist group by posting a video online for making explosives.

Romeo Xavier Langhorne, 32, was sentenced Thursday in Jackson County federal court, according to court records. He pleaded guilty last year to one count of attempting to provide material support to a terrorist organization.

Langhorne has been a follower of the Islamic State group since 2014, according to a criminal complaint. Investigators said Langhorne was living in St. Augustine, Florida, in February 2019 when he began communicating with an undercover FBI employee who was posing as an Islamic State member.

Langhorne told the FBI employee about his plans to create and disseminate an instructional video on making a deadly explosive, triacetone triperoxide, the complaint said. Langhorne told the undercover employee that the purpose in making and distributing the video was to arm Islamic State supporters and others with knowledge of how to make the explosive and use it for terrorism-related purposes, authorities said.

The FBI produced a video using Langhorne’s instructions, though it actually featured an inert chemical formula that would not produce an explosion. Langhorne received the video in November 2019 and uploaded it to a video-sharing website, the criminal complaint said. He was arrested four days later in Roanoke, Virginia.

