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## Column at Dallas Hal

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**COLUMN AT DALLAS HALL** Hector Reyes



**Florence Mae Dixon:  
CAMPUS EXPANSION DELAYED  
AFTER DISCOVERY OF 2,000 UNMARKED GRAVES**

Saffyre Falkenberg

I was 19 when my husband sent me to Jackson, Mississippi, away from the child I was sure couldn't be mine. He called it a hospital, but the white, stone columns, sprawling lawns, and enormous magnolia trees couldn't hide what it really was.

"Stay in bed," they said. "Don't wear yourself out." I was left to be coddled like the babe I left behind, rocked to sleep by mindless wails and the screeching of mockingbirds.

I wasted my days in bed, kept company by the smells of burning coal, kerosene, and melting wax. They didn't allow me to rest outside during the hot Mississippi summers, when the mosquitoes were the only visitors and the air was its own swamp. I was a number, just another lunatic; one more woman with a case of nerves.

I was 22 when I was moved to the new sanitarium, as patient # 29 gave me the "consumption." I suppose keeping white skin away from black skin was more important to them than keeping the sick away from the healthy. But we're all sick here.