

Jury Charges Prison Fire Set By 3 Convicts

Full text from the existing archival transcription. Original uncertainty flags retained; line wrapping and typography reflowed. The separate Image PDF contains all source-view pages from the earlier combined edition. This does not expand an excerpt into a complete issue or volume.

MILTON, Fla. (UPI) - A coroner's jury Tuesday blamed three convicts for deliberately starting a prison road camp fire in which 37 prisoners burned to death Sunday night.

All three of the accused prisoners were among the victims of the flash fire at the prison camp at Berrydale, north of here. Only 14 convicts survived and six of these were critically burned.

Concluding two days of investigation, the jury also said it found "no signs of racial violence" on the part of the prisoners and found "no neglect on the part of the guards or prison officials."

The jury concluded the dead "met death at the hands of" prisoners Thomas Eugene Ard, Joseph Wynder and Earl Evans.

Testimony before the coroner's jury was to the effect that the three inmates started the fire, thinking they could force authorities to provide better and more up to date quarters than the old World War II barracks in which they were housed.