

Human remains found in Perry County over four decades ago identified

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PERRY COUNTY, Pa. (WHTM)— Pennsylvania State Police have identified human remains found along Route 322 in Perry County in 1979.

State Police says the remains were severely decomposed and mostly skeletonized when they were located over an embankment along the shore of the Juniata River. She was found with turquoise jewelry, and was named by investigators the “Girl with the turquoise jewelry.”

Multiple unsuccessful methods were used to attempt to identify the victim, leading police to refer to the victim as Jane Doe. However, she was determined to be a female between the ages of 15 and 30.

Police said the case was revisited in 2023 with the help of a local dentist. Two of Doe’s molar and funding from the Perry County District Attorney’s Office were obtained to facilitate a genetic genealogy study by Othram Labs, a corporation specializing in forensic genetic genealogy in Houston, Texas.

Tests identified a distant and troopers traveled to Ravenna, Ohio, to conduct additional interviews and obtain DNA samples from family members.

Othram Labs and the Pennsylvania State Police identified Jane Doe as **Doris Joanne Girtz**, from Ravenna, Ohio. Police said Girtz would’ve been 23 at the time of her disappearance.



A composite of Jane Doe in 1979 from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, matched with a picture provided by Pennsylvania State Police in 2025 of Doris Girtz

In 2015, [abc27](#) featured Girtz's "Jane Doe" case in [Midstate Mysteries](#), looking at how her teeth and other DNA evidence would be used to identify the woman.





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During the long process of identifying Girtz, Dr. Christine France of the Smithsonian Museum Conservation Institute in Suitland, Maryland, tested bone, tooth, and hair samples.

Investigators were able to eventually put together a profile of Girtz and suspected she was from the Great Lakes Region.

An investigation into the cause of her death is ongoing.