

Chatham County Sheriff's Office and NC Unidentified Project Partner with Othram to Identify a 1976 Homicide Victim

The young man, murdered almost a half-century ago and unidentified until now, was an Army veteran who had been stationed at Fort Bragg in North Carolina



In

March 1976, human remains belonging to an unknown man were found in the Cape Fear River near the CP&L plant intake valve near Moncure, North Carolina.

Investigators thought that the unknown man might have been put in the water upstream via the Haw River or Deep River. The man had appeared to have an athletic build and was likely in good health before his death. His head and hands were not found with the body Chatham County deputies subsequently opened a homicide investigation into the unknown man's death.

With few clues to the man's identity, the case went cold. The unknown man, eventually known as Chatham County John Doe, was estimated to be a Caucasian male likely 25-35 years-old at the time of death. He was 5'9" tall and weighed 150 pounds. The unidentified persons case was entered into NamUs in 2008 but traditional forensic methods did not yield answers on the case. Although early investigation into the case was hampered by a lack of basic information or viable clues, members of the Chatham County Sheriff's Office remained open to new methods and opportunities to identify the deceased.

Chatham County Sheriff's Office Investigator Ricky Culberson eventually connected with the NC Unidentified Project, an initiative was co-founded by Dr. Ann Ross (Board Certified Forensic Anthropologist and Director of the NC Human Identification & Forensics Analysis Lab at North Carolina State University in Raleigh) and Leslie Kaufman (Forensic Genealogist with First Genes, LLC, and member of the Carolinas Cold Case Coalition) in 2020 to raise and provide funding or assistance with unidentified person cases.

In the fall of 2021, Chatham County Sheriff's Office and the NC Unidentified Project partnered with Othram to use Forensic-Grade Genome Sequencing® to develop a comprehensive genealogical profile from the skeletal remains of Chatham County John Doe. After building the profile, Othram scientists return the profile and the investigation continued. Leslie Kaufman, working with Chatham County Sheriff's office used genetic genealogy to develop investigative leads pointing to the unknown man's identity. The leads were confirmed through additional testing and established Chatham County John Doe's true identity as Jimmy Mack Brooks.

Jimmy was born on Feb 16,1950 in Allegheny County, NC. He would have been 26 years old at the time of his murder. He was an Army veteran and had been stationed at Fort Bragg and had left the service only a few years before his death.

The Chatham County Sheriff's Office is now asking other members of the public to share what they know regarding the life and death of Jimmy Mack Brooks. Investigators say a single small detail could potentially lead to the next big leap in the case. Anyone with information about this case, including events or circumstances leading to the disappearance or murder of Jimmy Mack Brooks, is asked to call the Chatham County Sheriff's Office at [919-542-2911](tel:919-542-2911).