

Freeborn Co John Doe 2015

DNA Doe Project identifies elderly man found in Minnesota in 2015

Man found in Freeborn County identified as WW2 veteran **Luis Robledo**

Albert Lea, MN – Ten years after his body was found on the side of the I-90, the DNA Doe Project has identified Freeborn County John Doe as Luis Gilberto Robledo. Robledo was a native of El Paso, Texas, where he was born in 1923. While it's believed that he died sometime between 2000 and 2012, how he came to be in Minnesota and when exactly he died remains a mystery.



Luis Robledo

On April 6, 2015, the skeletal remains of a man were found off of the I-90 near Albert Lea, Minnesota. On or near the remains were a pair of Levi's brand pants, Stafford brand underwear, and Mario de Gerard loafers. Also found was a 10k gold ring with a ruby colored stone, as well as some coins with dates ranging from 1965 to 1992. Forensic investigators believed the man may have been Hispanic and that he was likely 40-55 years old at the time of his death.

This case was later brought to the DNA Doe Project, whose expert investigative genetic genealogists work pro bono to identify John and Jane Does. The unidentified man's DNA profile revealed that he was of Mexican descent, and to the team's surprise he had a number of close DNA matches in the GEDmatch database.

"Hispanic cases are often tough because that population is underrepresented in the DNA databases we have access to," said team leader Jeana Feehery. "But in this case, we were lucky to have close DNA matches on both the mother's side and the father's side, which allowed us to identify our John Doe's parents within 24 hours."

It soon became clear that Freeborn County John Doe was the son of a Mexican couple who'd moved to the US and settled in El Paso. While they had three sons, only one was unaccounted for – Luis Robledo. Robledo, a World War II veteran who was wounded during the Battle of Normandy, was born and raised in El Paso, though he later settled in Los Angeles, California. The last trace the team could find of him in the public records was a 1990 obituary that stated he was living in Mexico.

In addition to the absence of an obvious connection to Minnesota, his age came as a surprise too. While the unidentified man was initially believed to be 40-55 years old, Robledo was likely in his 70s or 80s at the time of his death. "We were very surprised when our research led us to a man born in 1923," said team co-leader Lisa Ivany. "The discrepancy with the age estimate was significant, but the DNA evidence clearly pointed to our John Doe being Luis Robledo."

After the team reported their findings, investigators contacted Robledo's family with assistance from the Minnesota BCA. One of his children then provided a DNA sample, which confirmed that the man formerly known only as Freeborn County John Doe was in fact Luis Robledo.

The DNA Doe Project is grateful to the groups and individuals who helped solve this case: the Ramsey County Medical Examiner's Office and the Freeborn County Sheriff's Office, who entrusted the case to the DNA Doe Project; the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, the Colorado Bureau of Investigation, and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, for facilitating the confirmatory DNA testing; Astrea Forensics for the extraction, sequencing, and bioinformatics; GEDmatch Pro for providing their database; our generous donors who joined our mission and contributed to this case; and the DNA Doe Project's dedicated teams of volunteer investigative genetic genealogists who work tirelessly to bring all our John and Jane Does home.