

DNA confirms identity of Houston County man, who was missing 28 years

by:

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HOUSTON COUNTY, Ala. ([WDHN](#)) — A DNA test out of Florida has confirmed the identity of a man who went missing from Houston County over 28 years ago.

“Houston County Investigators were notified that the remains recovered at the bottom of the boat ramp in Dixie County, Florida was that in fact of James Aaron Toole,” Houston County Sheriff Donald Valenza said.

Toole was last seen in February of 1995 after he spoke with his granddaughter, who was waiting for her sister at Toole’s house to come home from school.

Family members say Toole was headed to South Florida to be with a sick relative.

In September of this year. authorities in South Florida say during cleanup operations from Hurricane Idalia, salvage crews were working at a boat ramp on the Steinhatchee River in Dixie County.

During the cleanup, they came across a Sam’s card and I.D. bearing Toole’s name, but also the car Toole was driving when he went missing

“While they recovering parts from that dock at the boat ramp parts of a vehicle were retrieved in it,” Valenza said.

The evidence from the car was sent to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement for DNA testing on October 31, where the test confirmed that the body found at the bottom of Steinhatchee River was Toole’s body.

Sheriff Valenza says that from the report his investigators received on the DNA test, this case does not appear to be one of foul play.

“We had several possibilities through the years, but none of it ever matched enough to where it even looked like it possibly could be, until this came up this year in September,” says Valenza

We spoke with his two granddaughters when the remains were first recovered back in September about what it would mean to bring their grandpa home.

“He didn’t leave, he didn’t have a choice to come back and that makes me feel better knowing that if he would have had a chance to come back he would have,” Mandy Morrow, a granddaughter of Toole told us in an interview back in September.

Now the family will be able to bring their loved one home and put him to rest next to where his mom and dad are buried in Houston County.

<https://www.wdhn.com/news/local-news/houston-county/dna-confirms-identity-of-houston-county-man-who-was-missing-28-years/>