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LAGRANGE, Ind. (WNDU) - A missing person's cold case dating back to 1952 is solved, and a family finally has closure.

Ralph Stutzman mysteriously went missing 71 years ago, leaving without a trace.

His remaining family finally got answers Friday afternoon to questions they've been asking for the past seven decades. "Closure" was the word many of them used to describe how they felt.

While many of Stutzman's surviving children never thought they'd get any answers behind their father's disappearance, new technology helped them connect the dots, and connect with long-lost family members.

Ralph Stutzman's 1952 disappearance could only be explained by rumors for the past seven decades, but now thanks to the help of a genealogist, the LaGrange County Sheriff's Office pieced the puzzle together for good.

"Ralph Stutzman was actually going by the name of Delbert Schrock, and he had moved to Florida. Through all that, we've identified some family members and stuff in Florida," said LaGrange County Sheriff's Office Det. Stephanie Mickem.

It's actually that extended family which led investigators to realize Stutzman and Schrock were one in the same.

"Through DNA submissions, where they've submitted their DNA, there was a match to the Stutzman family and that's basically how the genealogist got a hold of me and said, 'Hey, I think I've solved one of your cases,'" Det. Mickem said.

Stutzman left 13 children behind when he vanished from LaGrange County, and now his grandchildren are all older than he was when he disappeared.

"It's relief for my mother. For years and years, she's always said that she would like to know what happened to her dad before he died. She's 92 years old," Ralph Stutzman's Grandson Ben Boyd.

Finally, he gets the answer his mother's been waiting for.

Ralph ended up passing away in 1968, and it's still unknown why he ever left, but what is known is that his family back in the Hoosier State can finally move on.

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