

Polk County Sheriff's Office Teams with Othram to Identify a 1972 Homicide Victim

After 52 years, a murdered man, whose body was found near the south side of Winter Haven, Florida in a marshy area, has been identified as **Mack Lavell Proctor**, born November 28, 1914.

Solved



Summary

In May 1972, the skeletal remains of an unidentified man were found on the south side of Winter Haven, Florida in a marshy area, just east of Tampa. Investigators were called to the scene and determined that the remains were that of a male between 40 and 50 years old. It was also estimated that the man weighed 180 pounds and stood 6 feet tall. Upon autopsy, it was determined that the man suffered two gunshot wounds to the head and his manner of death was ruled as homicide.

Several items were found in the vicinity of the man's remains, including a light colored short sleeved cotton shirt and dark blue trousers, as well as leather dress shoes and dark colored socks. Details of the case were entered into the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) as case number UP9508. Despite continuous efforts by law enforcement to identify the man, no leads yielded a match and the case went cold.

We have provided some closure to Mr. Proctor's family and concluded a cold case homicide investigation. I am so thankful to our outstanding team of detectives who worked hard to solve this case, especially our lead detective Master Deputy Jason McPherson.

-Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd

In January 1974, a Florida State prison inmate contacted investigators with the Polk County Sheriff's Office with information about a murder. The informant was serving time at what is now the Union Correctional Facility in Raiford, Florida when a fellow inmate named Clarence Ingram shared details with him about the murder of a man. Ingram explained that he and his friend, Edgar Todd, met a white man in a Winter Haven, Florida bar in 1972.

Ingram, Todd, and the unnamed man left the bar in the man's white Chevrolet car. During their drive, an argument ensued leading to the unknown man being shot in the head with a .22 caliber pistol. Ingram claimed that he and Todd drove to an overpass in the Winter Haven/Eloise area, removed the man's body from the car, and left it in an area near a canal. They then sold tools from inside of the car to Clarence Ingram's brother. Afterwards, Ingram and Todd drove the man's white Chevrolet car, which had a Georgia license plate, to Michigan where it was sold for \$500. At the time, investigators followed up on the story by reaching out to officials in Georgia, but the murdered man, whose remains had been found in May 1972 between Lake Lulu and Lake Ship, could not be identified. The case remained cold for decades with no clues about the identity of the victim.

In September 2023, in an effort to finally identify the murdered man and resolve the mystery surrounding his death, the Polk County Sheriff's Office submitted forensic evidence to Othram in The Woodlands, Texas. Othram scientists successfully developed a DNA extract from the forensic evidence, and then used Forensic-Grade Genome Sequencing® to build a comprehensive genealogical profile for the homicide victim. Othram's in-house forensic genetic genealogy team then used this profile to conduct genetic genealogy research, ultimately providing new investigative leads to law enforcement.

Using this new information, a follow-up investigation was conducted leading investigators to potential relatives of the man. Reference DNA samples were

collected from the potential relatives and compared to the DNA profile of the unknown man. This investigation led to the positive identification of the murdered man, who is now known to be Mack Lavell Proctor, born November 28, 1914. Proctor was last seen by his family between 1969 and 1972 in Georgia. He was never formally reported as missing to law enforcement.

Throughout the course of their investigation, Polk County Sheriff's Office investigators determined that Mack Proctor was a mechanic, and he would have had a large amount of tools in his vehicle, consistent with the story told by the inmate in 1972. Other details provided by the prison informant were accurate, including that the victim was shot twice in the head, details around where the body was left, and the fact that the victim's car had a Georgia license plate. Further, Clarence Ingram was stopped by police in Michigan around the time and place where the white Chevrolet car was reportedly sold. Investigators determined that the prison informant could have only learned these specific details from someone involved in the murder.

The identification of Mack Proctor's remains, along with the information provided by the prison informant in 1974, provides circumstantial evidence that strongly points to the identity of Mack Proctor's killers as Clarence Ingram, who died in 1995, and Edgar Todd, who died in 2015.

The identification of Mack Lavell Proctor represents the 24th case in the State of Florida where officials have publicly identified an individual using technology developed by Othram. Most recently, [Collier County John Doe \(1977\)](#) was identified.