

Fraudulent Jesse James DNA Results?

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Stephen Caruso, the Deputy Counselor for Clay County during the 1995 exhumation and subsequent DNA testing of Jesse James' reported grave, recently revealed that the 1995 DNA results touted as proving with a 99.7 degree of certainty that Jesse James died and is buried as history reports are fraudulent. During separate telephone conversations with Texan Betty Dorsett Duke and Missourian Greg Ellison he said that instead of abiding by Clay County Judge Vic Howard's order for the James Farm & Museum to hand over hair and teeth stored there to Prof. Starrs for DNA testing, he gave him hair he obtained from the head of John Hartman, Director of the Clay County Park's Department in 1995. The Clay County Parks Department owns and operates the James Farm & Museum, and Caruso represented them (the farm and museum) in their attempt to prevent the hair and teeth from being obtained by Starrs.

Although there are two graves bearing Jesse James' name in Clay County, Missouri, the original grave a few miles from Kearney in the yard of Jesse James' boyhood home now turned tourist attraction, and the grave in Kearney's Mt. Olivet Cemetery, Exhumation Project Leader Professor James E. Starrs originally planned to only exhume the Mt. Olivet grave, but he ended up exhuming the original grave as well. The original grave was exhumed in 1902 for the purpose of reintering the remains in Mt. Olivet Cemetery, and then reexhumed in 1978 to retrieve remains that were left behind in 1902.

Drs. Stone and Stoneking performed the DNA tests and five years later they, along with Professor Starrs, published their final report regarding their DNA results. They maintain that the hair and teeth used for DNA testing were obtained from the 1978 dig of the original grave, but in 2001 Caruso told NBC 8 KOMU TV Anchorman Jim Riek that the teeth submitted for DNA testing "had nothing to do with the teeth that were dug up."

Duke relates that the origins of the remains reportedly retrieved during the 1978 dig are highly questionable even if fraud wasn't involved. She explains that Beth Beckett, the current curator of the James Farm & Museum, told her that Milton "Milt" Perry, the now deceased curator of the James Farm Museum in 1978, performed an unauthorized exhumation of the original grave in 1978. Perry encased the human and animal remains retrieved from the grave in a Tupperware bowl and stored it in his desk drawer. Then, as he saw fit, he handed out the remains as souvenirs to various individuals. After being fired for unrelated reasons he augured a hole in the original grave and reburied the Tupperware bowl, along with the remainder of the remains encased in it.

In 1995 the *Kearney Courier* reported that Starrs obtained a court order to exhume the Tupperware bowl to obtain a tooth that he claimed may "tell the tale", but later voiced his disappointment that it wasn't encased in the bowl. Caruso contradicts Starrs' statement: "We had teeth in the Tupperware bowl. We gave him teeth in the Tupperware."

Based on the information presented above, one wonders where and who did the teeth used for DNA testing originate from.

Now that the true origin of the hair is known, how can anyone involved in the 1995 exhumation and subsequent DNA results expect the rest of the world to take their word as to the origin of the teeth used for testing?

According to their final report Drs. Stone and Stoneking compared the mtDNA sequence of the hair and teeth submitted to them to the mtDNA sequences of the DNA reference sources (Robert Jackson and Mark Nikkel). Both men claim they are descended from Susan James Parmer (Jesse James' sister), and therefore share the same mtDNA sequence Jesse James had. A genealogical investigation of their lineage reveals that their validity as mtDNA reference sources is highly questionable.

Duke also inquires how John Hartman's mtDNA sequence matched Jackson's and Nikkel's mtDNA sequences now that Caruso has revealed the mtDNA sequence of the hair had nothing to do with them?

Obviously the final DNA report contains conflicting statements. Again, Dr. Stone, Dr. Stoneking, and Professor Starrs state that the mtDNA results do not prove the remains are those of Jesse James yet they also claim "...The DNA results are agreeable with other scientific investigations of the exhumed remains". Knowing that Caruso claims to have obtained the hair used for DNA testing from Hartman's head, and also knowing that he said the teeth had nothing to do with the teeth that were dug up, one naturally concludes that none of "the other scientific investigations" are agreeable with the hair and teeth used for DNA testing. Their report also states that there is no scientific basis for doubting the exhumed remains are those of Jesse James.

Only in their dreams, *there is every reason to doubt the exhumed remains are those of Jesse James*. Professor Starrs used no chain of custody guidelines for the human remains submitted for DNA testing; The hair submitted for DNA testing originated from the head of John Hartman; The teeth submitted for DNA testing are of unknown origin and had nothing to do with the teeth that were dug up; Hartman said, "The results of the 1995 exhumation should be published as they were found, not as they have been framed or sanitized for public consumption;" The validity of the two DNA reference sources' is highly questionable; and Drs. Stone and Stoneking's DNA results are highly questionable.

If not for all the tampering with the remains in both of the graves Duke and Ellison would call for them to be exhumed yet again for legitimate DNA testing. However, based on all of the information presented above, neither past nor future DNA results from either of those graves should be trusted.

There is always the possibility that Caruso may have lied about the origin of the hair but why would he, an officer of the court, tarnish his reputation by incriminating not only himself but John Hartman?

Hartman statement about the 1995 DNA results bears repeating because it definitely substantiates Caruso's claim – "...Framed or sanitized for public consumption". He was definitely informed of the facts since he was the director of the Clay County Parks Department, the owners and operators of the James Farm & Museum.

Being well aware that the statute of limitations is up on the crime Caruso and Hartman reportedly committed, Duke and Ellison decided that the fraudulent act still needed to be reported to Clay County, Missouri in order for truth to prevail. On July 12, 2011 notarized affidavits were faxed to the Clay County Prosecuting Attorney with the hope that they would investigate the matter and perhaps issue a statement that the 1995 DNA proved nothing.

Jim Roberts handled the situation regarding the affidavits via emails to Duke, but ignored her request to disclose his job title at the Clay County Prosecutor's office. Right off the bat his statements were very unprofessional and disappointing. According to him Clay County is not going to give any credence to Caruso's confession of fraud, and they are not going to investigate this very serious matter.

Duke left several telephone messages requesting Prosecuting Attorney Dan White to call her, but as of this date he has failed to do so. Duke asks how the Clay County employees involved in ignoring their own lawyer's confession of fraud can justify suppressing the truth, ultimately denying Jesse James' true descendants their birthright for the proverbial bowl of beans (tourist dollars) Jesse James brings to them? She and Ellison are hopeful they will reconsider and take full responsibility for their actions since genealogical and historical accuracy is at stake.

Duke claims the James Farm & Museum is in a perfect position to discredit any new information pertaining to Jesse James' life and death because the media perceives them as being "the authority on Jesse James". Having talked with them on a number of occasions she claims what they tell her is much different than what they tell reporters.

In 1999 Duke petitioned Falls County Judge Meyer to grant an order to exhume the grave in Blevins Cemetery bearing James L. Courtney's name for DNA testing purposes. Although initially disappointed that he denied her request she now realizes that it was for the best. Why? Because even if Jesse James did assume the alias of James L. Courtney and lived and died in Texas, the fraudulent DNA sequence his DNA sequence would have been compared against would have shown that he wasn't.

Duke believes that Jesse James was born in Clay County, Missouri, but a recently discovered eBay photograph of the James family literally shows what DNA failed to prove - Jesse James got away with his own 1882 murder and lived out the remainder of his life in Texas as James L. Courtney.

(The eBay photograph may be viewed at this link:
<http://www.jessejamesintexas.com/index.htm>)
