



D64 The Jesse James Enigma - An On-Going Investigation on the Alleged Death of Jesse James in 1882

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The goal of this presentation is to reinforce the importance of checking the facts for one's self. There is no substitute for an actual review of the original source data. This is the case in the matter of historical and contemporary data surrounding the investigation of the death of Jesse James. Though sometime hard to find due to the fact that archives are "sanitized" or records are mislabeled. It is imperative to keep searching and checking the not so obvious. Check the facts for yourself, you may find an entirely different point of view.

This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by demonstrating that in spite of the credential of the parties involved in the 1995 study and rigors of scientific testing employed, nothing can replace objectivity in data analysis. There is a fine line between scientific review of the facts and shaping the evidence to meet a predetermined outcome. The Starrs report did not prove its stated outcome, yet everyone quotes the 99.7% certainly that it did. One would have to call that something other than science.

In 1995, the grave of Jesse W. James was exhumed in Kearney, Missouri, to refute claims that he staged his own death in 1882. DNA analysis was presented at the AAFS Annual Meeting in 1996, claiming the test proved that the exhumed remains were those of Jesse James to a 99.7% certainty. The forensic evidence and the "DNA Report" submitted to AAFS in 2000, do not support that claim.

A family in southeast Kansas claimed their ancestor, Jeremiah M. James was in fact the Missouri outlaw, Jeremiah "Jesse" Woodson James. After reviewing their evidence and investigating whether the 1995 study left any room for doubt it was to determine to proceed with a new study. After contacting the History Channel and Producer, Bill Kurtis, it was agreed that the evidence merited a second look. This led to a one-hour documentary featuring the exhumation of the grave of Jeremiah James in Kansas in May 2003.

A compilation of evidence in the form of historic photographic comparisons, handwriting samples, exhumation, forensic anthropological examination and DNA testing of the physical remains will be presented. The study was conducted with the assistance of Dr. Peer Moore-Jansen, PhD, Director of the Anthropology Department at Wichita State University.

Jesse James, 2003 DNA Study-Neodesha, Kansas Exhumation