

# Denton Record-Chronicle

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## Human remains found near lake

By Donna Fielder  
Staff Writer

**Hickory Creek** — Amid lurid rumors of multiple murders authorities here would confirm Wednesday only that remains of one body have been found in a shallow grave on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers property off Vista Point Road.

Workers with Corps subcontractor Texas Electric who were digging a trench in a corps construction area near Lewisville Lake uncovered a skull, other bone parts, clothing and a rug in a 3-by-6 foot grave, said Denton County Sheriff Kirby Robinson at a news conference. Investigators believe the body has been in the grave between 18 and 24 months, he said. His officers are assisting Hickory Creek's four-man department in its investigation.

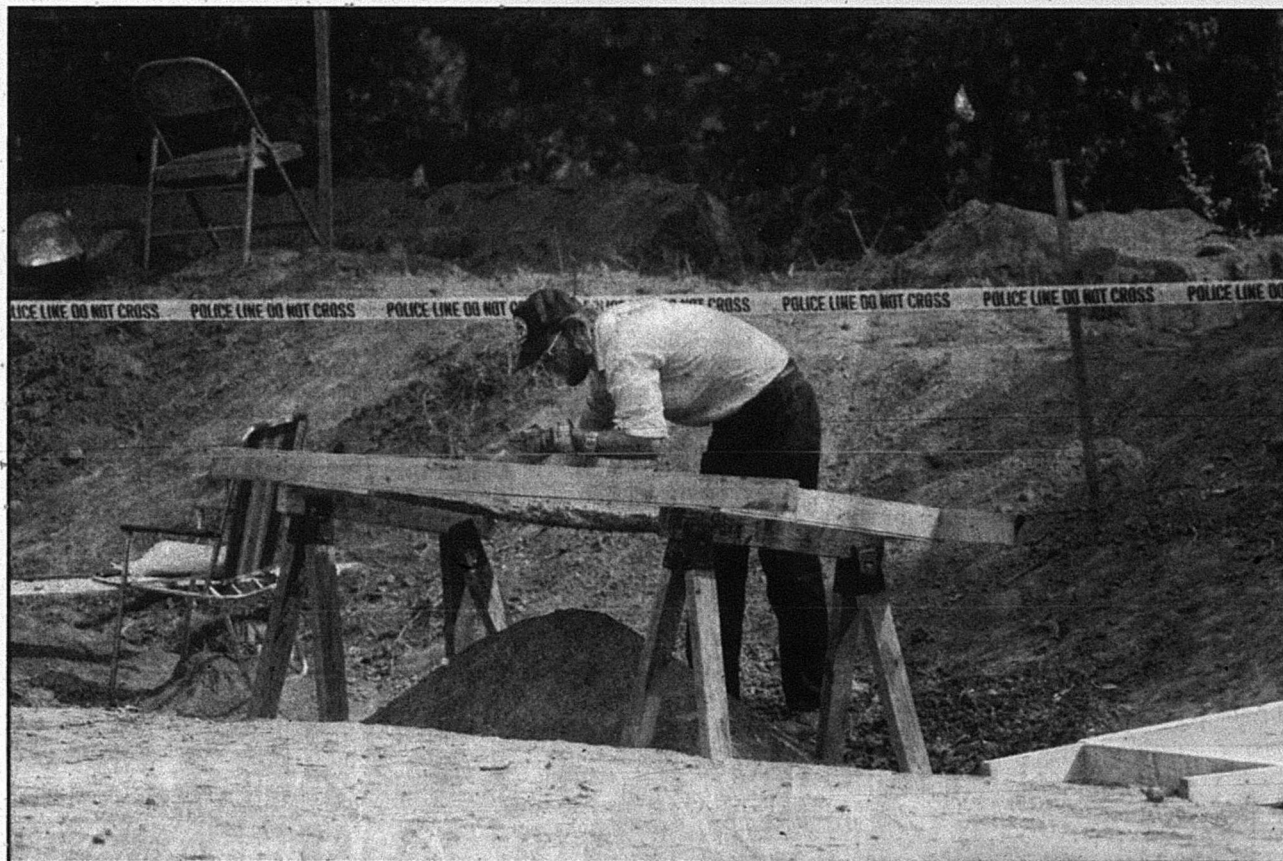
A Dallas television station reported Wednesday that at least three bodies had been

■ **UNT** experts join investigation/4A

recovered from the site. No official would confirm that report but an officer from another agency said he understood two bodies had been recovered. Robinson would say only that the site is being treated as a crime scene because human remains were unearthed. Authorities don't believe the site is an old graveyard, he said.

Corps Park Manager Rex Boyd said at the site Wednesday afternoon the work crew found the human remains about 3:30 p.m. Tuesday while digging a utility trench. The trench follows a road being constructed to a well at the lake park, he said. The bones remain at the site, he told reporters at 5 p.m. Wednesday. Dwight Crawford, Denton County investigator for the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office, is helping with the investigation, along with area law enforcement agencies, corps employees, an archaeologist and a physical anthropologist.

Tight security kept reporters for 24 hours from the site about one mile off Interstate 35E near Lewisville Lake. No one was allowed onto the corps property until a 4 p.m. Wednesday news conference in which large numbers of Metroplex reporters and photographers stretched



DENTON RECORD-CHRONICLE/BARRON LUDLUM

Jay Newman, an employee with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, sifts through dirt at the scene of a criminal investigation in Hickory Creek. The investigation began Tuesday afternoon when workers with Corps subcontractor

Texas Electric, who were digging a trench in a corps construction area near Lewisville Lake, uncovered a skull, other bone parts, clothing and a rug in a shallow, 3-foot by 6-foot grave.



Source: Denton Record-Chronicle

See REMAINS/6A

# Remains

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From/1A

yellow crime scene tape surrounding the trench.

Media members sought additional information to a sketchy news release that states that processing of the scene is expected to be time consuming and exhaustive. But sheriff's information officer Lynn

Holland and corps representative Ron Raffenach added little information in press interviews at the site.

Robinson explained the tight security measures taken at the site.

"We're trying to protect the scene to try to determine how big a thing it is," Robinson said. "Right now we don't know."

At least one area agency had officers on the scene to find out if the remains could be connected to their unsolved cases. Irving Police Lt. John Neely said he believed the remains of two adult males were found at the excavation site and he sent two officers to take a look at the crime scene. No evidence that connected the find to any Irving case was found, he said.

# Area authorities determine only one body in grave

**By Donna Fielder**  
Staff Writer

**Hickory Creek** — Authorities here gathered the bones of a human skeleton and removed them to the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office early Thursday after determining only one body was in a shallow grave at Hickory Creek Park.

A five-man archaeological team from the University of North Texas was finishing its tedious work Thursday, sifting through dirt collected at the site for clues in the death.

Hickory Creek Police officers are continuing their investigation and medical personnel will conduct an autopsy, all in the effort to determine who died and in what fashion, said U.S. Army Corps of Engineers representative Ron Ruffennach.

"Archaeologists finished for the day Thursday about 2 a.m. after unearthing the remainder of the skeleton from the rib cage on down," Ruffennach said. "They found it fairly intact, allowing them to recover it and remove it more easily. The cause of death, age, sex, race and how long it has been there will be confirmed by lab work at the medical examiner's office," he said.

Hickory Creek Park is corps property under construction for a new public park on the south side of Lewisville Lake. The remains were uncovered as corps subcontractors dug a utility line ditch on the federal property Tuesday. Officers for the town of 2,500 were notified about 3 p.m. and immediately sealed off the entire corps property, contributing to rumors

See BODY/4A

# Body

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From/1A

of multiple graves at the site.

A Dallas television station reported Wednesday that three bodies had been uncovered. Reporters from area newspapers, television and radio stations converged at the site, some attempting to sneak onto the sealed-off corps property. They were threatened with arrest and ejected from the federal property.

The Denton County Sheriff's Office

was deluged with more than 250 telephone calls Wednesday after Sheriff Kirby Robinson began cooperating with Hickory Creek in the investigation. Because of the intense media attention, Robinson held three news conferences Wednesday, refusing each time to confirm that more than one body lay in the grave. Metroplex media interest faded Thursday with the confirmation that only one body was found at the site.



DENTON RECORD-CHRONICLE/STEVE DELAFIELD

Authorities gather evidence at Hickory Creek Park after a single body was found in a shallow grave there. The remains have been sent to the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office.

Weekend  
Edition

75¢

## Lewisville Leader

Sunday  
August 5, 1990

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3 Sections

'Enforcer' to serve  
7 years in shootingBy DEANNE FLECKER  
Staff writer

DENTON — Prosecutor Vicki Foster portrayed Moses Herrera as a ruthless, troublesome young man who was already beyond rehabilitation.

On Thursday, she encouraged a Denton County jury to "send a message to gangs" and "keep their community safe," while



Moses Herrera

Herrera sat coldly staring at her. Her portrayal of Herrera, along with a key witness's testimony, led to the conviction of the 19-year-old Lewisville man for attempting to kill a former friend and classmate.

Even though he did not have a felony record, the five-woman, seven-man jury passed up defense arguments for probation and recommended Herrera be sentenced to prison. State District Court Judge David White sentenced Herrera to seven years.

Several police agencies

Turn to HERRERA, page 4A

## FM town manager resigns

Tenure marked by conflict; Tanner takes South Texas job

By DEANNE FLECKER  
Staff writer

FLOWER MOUND — Town Manager Mike Tanner announced his resignation Friday after accepting a position with an affluent Houston suburb.

Tanner said he accepted the position as city manager of West University Place after receiving a phone call Thursday night. The city of approximately 13,000 is located near Rice University in downtown Houston.

The resignation ends more than a year of strife and turmoil for Tanner caused by repeated attacks by Mayor Gary Acker and several of his



Mike Tanner

supporters. Last year, then-councilman Acker tried to have Tanner removed from office. As mayor, Acker has continued

to be a staunch critic of Tanner and other city administrators.

Tanner said his resignation is effective Aug. 17 and he will begin his new job the following week.

The 36-year-old Corpus Christi native said, however, his resignation does not stem from internal political problems which have marked Flow-

er Mound the past year.

"It wasn't a hard choice," Tanner said. "The salary is substantially greater and the benefits are either the same or better. My move is entirely positive. West University Place and the advantages presented explain my move and nothing else."

Tanner said he had always hoped to return to South Texas where he grew up.

"I'm excited about returning to South Texas," Tanner said. "I prefer the climate and I will be relatively close to family and friends in Corpus Christi."

Acker said Friday the council will begin the process of looking for a new town manager as soon as

possible.

"I wish him well and the community he will serve well," Acker said. "We hope Flower Mound and the community he is going to will both progress in an orderly manner."

Tanner came to Flower Mound from Universal City in November of 1987. Through the last 2½ years Tanner said he has been able to meet many of the goals he established when he took the position that had been filled on a temporary basis by Police Chief Dennis Hazelwood.

"The only thing I wish we had been able to do is begin a facility construction," Tanner said. "But I

Turn to TANNER, page 4A

1986 confession, grave  
near lake may be linkedMedical examiners  
study human remainsBy GLEN FEST  
Staff writer

HICKORY CREEK — Police are investigating a possible link between human remains discovered in a lakeside grave Tuesday and a DWI suspect's claim in 1986 that he had killed a man and buried the body near Lake Dallas.

Hickory Creek Police Chief Ronnie PEAR said Friday he had received information of an unfounded 1986 report made in Hamilton County in Central Texas and forwarded to Lake Dallas police in September of that year.

Lt. John Gaines of the Lake Dallas Police Department said Friday that the department had received a report on Sept. 8, 1986, that the Hamilton County Sheriff's Department had arrested a DWI suspect who claimed he had killed a man near the Jolly Rogers club in Lake Dallas on Sept. 4, 1986, and buried the body somewhere near the lake, but couldn't pinpoint the location.

Gaines said that at the time police had no unsolved reports of assaults or missing persons in the area.

"Everything was just dropped at that time," Gaines said.

Gaines said Lake Dallas police have the



Doug Layton/Leader photo

Bill Riggs of the Tarrant-Parker-Denton County Medical Examiners Office fills a bucket with dirt at the scene of a criminal investigation where human remains were found in a shallow grave.



Doug Layton/Leader photo

Workers at a criminal investigation site in Hickory Creek sift through dirt looking for human remains Wednesday after employees of Texas Electric found a skull and other

bone parts as they were digging a trench for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers near Lewisville Lake.

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# Graves

From 1A

name of the man who made statements to Hamilton County deputies, but he would not reveal it.

Pear said police have not linked the report with the human remains unearthed Tuesday by a utility contractor digging a ditch on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' property near Berville and Point Vista roads on the north side of Lewisville Lake in Hickory Creek.

"We don't have any idea" on the possible circumstances of the bones, Pear said. "The medical examiner's office is going to give us a determination next week."

Lab work will be done in Tarrant County, through the medical examiner district agreement between

Denton and Tarrant counties.

"The skeletal remains are of such a nature, we cannot determine either sex, race or age," Denton County Sheriff's Deputy Lynn Holland said Wednesday.

A medical examiner's report should reveal information on sex and age, and any signs of injury or trauma, according to a medical investigator.

Police investigators said the remains of one body, including a skull, were found. They ruled out the possibility the construction worker disturbed an unknown gravesite.

Investigator Sharon Baughman of the Denton County Medical Examiner's Office said nearly all the skeletal remains of the body were reco-

vered.

Early speculation of the discovery of up to three bodies was dismissed as investigators probed the site nearly all day Wednesday and into Thursday morning.

Pear said he was still awaiting the full report from Lake Dallas Chief Don Hamilton, who told him of the report Wednesday.

Hamilton could not be reached for comment Friday.

Gaines said the 1986 incident was remembered by Patrol Sgt. Nelda Oglesbee, who was a communications officer at the time.

Denton County Sheriff Kirby Robinson said investigators had not determined the origin of an article of

clothing discovered near the remains.

Robinson said Wednesday he knew of no missing persons or disappearances in the Hickory Creek area that could possibly be linked to the remains.

Rex Boyd, the Lewisville-area corps director, said the machine scattered the bones, thus forcing a lengthy and diligent search of the site by police and scientists from the University of North Texas in Denton.

Investigators and UNT experts worked through the night into Thursday morning sifting through soil in search of more remains or other evidence.

# Medical examiner official hopes to have Hickory Creek body ID by next week

By GLEN FEST  
Staff writer

A Tarrant County Medical Examiner's official said the office hopes to have information this week or next on the identity of a human skeleton discovered July 31 in Hickory Creek.

Among information used for identification may be a 1986 murder confession report given Lake Dallas police that has been forwarded to medical examiner investigators.

And the Hickory Creek police investigation into a possible link between the remains and the confession made to Hamilton County law enforcement officials by a DWI suspect is on hold until the medical examiner's report is completed.

Bill Fabian, a spokesman for the examiner's office, said Tuesday there was no new information on the remains discovered by construction workers digging a ditch on U.S. Army Corps of

Engineer property last week. Identification of sex and age must be determined before officials can hope to possibly match an individual identity to the remains, Fabian said.

Hickory Creek Police Chief Ronnie Pear said Tuesday he was informed by the examining physician's office the forensics study only got under way Tuesday.

Pear said a secretary to Dr. Marc Krause, the examining physician, told him the office was "knee deep" in work, and that forensic work could not begin until Tuesday.

"She said they hadn't had a chance to get started on it," Pear said. "They apparently have quite a bit going on."

"They said they were going to try and get to it today and maybe have something for us by the end of the week or next week."

And the timetable for releasing the information could stretch into next week, since the examining physician scheduled to examine the remains

along with a University of North Texas anthropologist is not expected back in the office until next week, another office spokesman said Tuesday.

Pear said his office is holding off the investigation of the possible link with the remains and the confession until the examiner's report is complete and a copy of the report has been received.

Pear said he was still waiting for Lake Dallas Police Chief Don Hamilton to provide him the report Hamilton first told him of last Tuesday.

"Not a thing," said Pear, when asked of any new information from Lake Dallas police. "We're not pursuing it until we know more about the remains."

According to the report, a man arrested on Sept. 8, 1986 by Hamilton County sheriff's deputies claimed he had killed a man at the Jolly Rogers nightclub in Lake Dallas four days earlier. Lake Dallas police dropped the investigation at the time after the department could find no substantiation.

# Examiner says skeleton not related to slaying

By GLEN FEST

Staff writer

A connection between an unsolved Denton homicide case and the unidentified remains found in Hickory Creek was dismissed Thursday by a medical examiner investigator.

Denton police were informed by Denton County ME investigator Dwight Crawford that the .38-caliber bullets found alongside the remains on July 31 could not have been fired from a gun allegedly used to murder an unknown male illegal alien last year in Denton.

The Denton case was the second such police report to cross the Tarrant County medical examiner's desk in regards to the nearly-complete skeleton found by construction workers on U.S. Army Corps of Engineer property north of Lewisville Lake. An investigation of an unsubstantiated 1986 Lake Dallas homicide report could begin once the medical examiner reaches certain conclusions in identifying the remains.

A Denton police captain said Friday the department was disappointed at the collapse of the possible breakthrough in their case. The case from the early spring of 1989 included a child witness, an admitted killer, and a weapon — but no body or identity of the reported victim.

"We had high hopes about (the case), yes sir," said Capt. Jim Dotson of the Denton Police Department.

Denton police sent a .38-caliber gun confiscated from a male murder suspect who confessed to shooting an individual in the stomach within Denton City limits. Dotson said a child witness whose polygraph test led them to the suspect did not know the reported victim, whom police suspect was an undocumented resident from Mexico.

Dotson said the suspect led police on fruitless searches for the site of the body throughout the county.

"You can confess to killing 10 people, but without a body....," no case can be built, Dotson said. "He took our investigator all over Denton County, through ditches and garbage dumps. We searched days."

Dotson said police immediately reopened the investigation when the news broke of the discovery of remains on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers property.

When police learned bullets were found with the body, Dotson said, they immediately sent the .38-caliber weapon to the medical examiner's office.

Dotson said, however, tests showed the bullets found did not match up with the gun.

Crawford said the office has no conclusions if the remains could be a shooting victim.

"We don't have anything conclusive on that," he said. "We don't have it (skeleton) reconstructed yet."

Chief Deputy Al Lewis of the Denton County Sheriff's Department said the bullets found at the body site have not been conclusively linked to the body.

Lewis said the sheriff's department has no unsolved homicide or missing persons cases being sent to the medical examiner's office.

Lt. John Gaines of the Lake Dallas police department said the 1986 murder confession by a DWI suspect in the custody of Hamilton County sheriff's deputies did not state how the victim was killed.

Information on the reported confession was given to Lake Dallas police officials in September 1986, when a man told sheriff deputies he had killed another man outside the Jolly Rogers night club a few days before. The man reportedly did not know the whereabouts of the body.

# Body identified as black male between 24-27

**By Donna Fielder**  
Staff Writer

A body found in Hickory Creek Park July 31 has been determined to be a black male, between the ages of 24 and 27, about 5-feet 7-inches tall, an official said Thursday.

A team of University of North Texas archaeologists assisting the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's office released the findings in a preliminary report Thursday, said Allen Lewis, chief deputy of the Denton County Sheriff's Office.

The report also states the victim had a deformity in his left shoulder and arm that caused the arm and hand to turn inward, Lewis said. The arm probably was immobile, he said. The canine teeth were rotated

and protruded so that they would have been noticeable to an observer, he said.

A determination of the length of time the body has been at the site was not released, but the investigation is continuing, Lewis said. No cause of death has as yet been released.

The body was found on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers property in the Hickory Creek township on the northwest side of Lewisville Lake. A subcontractor digging a utility trench unearthed a skull. Hickory Creek police sealed off the lake property while archaeologists excavated the bones.

Media attention was focused on the find after a Dallas television station reported erroneously that three bodies lay in the shallow grave.

# Experts: Remains are of black man 24 to 27 years old

By GLEN FEST

Staff writer

HICKORY CREEK — Skeletal remains discovered in a lakeside grave July 31 were those of an unidentified man buried six to nine years ago, authorities say.

A preliminary report from University of North Texas anthropologists and the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's office Thursday showed the remains to be those of a 24- to 27-year-old black male of average height, Hickory Creek Police Chief Ronnie Pear said.

Pathologists are still unsure how the man died, Pear said.

He said that because of the age of the remains, he had stopped pursuing a possible link between the body and the 1986 claim by a man in Hamilton County that he had killed someone and buried the body near Lewisville Lake.

Investigators' strongest piece of evidence in identifying the remains was that the man's left arm was deformed and turned inward, Pear said.

The arm rested naturally with palm outward, and knuckle in against the hip, Pear said. The deformity came from an injury, rather than a birth defect, Pear said.

Pear said the arm could prove more valuable than dental records or facial reconstruction in making an identification of the remains.

"This person had extensive dental problems, with no apparent indication of dental work ever being done," Pear said. Two of the man's front teeth were turned sideways, protruding outwards, he said. In addition, at least one tooth had decayed to the gums at the time of death, Pear said.

"We just now got the other information, and we'll be

antibodies made by the body in

A vaccine is now available for

ported to us.

# Remains

From 1A

sending it out  
in NCIC," the National Crime In-  
formation Center run by the FBI,  
said Pear.

A full facial reconstruction of the  
skull would be impossible because of  
damage caused when a construction

worker operating a trenching  
machine unearthed the remains last  
month. Partial feature construc-  
tion might be used if photographs  
from the NCIC provide a possible  
lead, Pear said.

Pear said he was hopeful the in-

formation released to the NCIC  
computer would prompt some leads.

There are still no conclusions as to  
the cause of death, despite two  
spent gun shells found with the  
skeleton, Pear said, adding that  
there were no related bone frag-  
ments or damage to the skeleton.