

Hoffa's skeletal remains found in Penn Dixie site

Teamsters leader's bones found along nature trail in Hamburg

By FELICE E. KRYCIA

Since the July 30, 1975 disappearance of Teamsters Leader James Riddle Hoffa, many have speculated if he was buried under the Jersey Meadowlands.

On Saturday, March 27, the question of where Hoffa was finally laid to rest was answered.

His remains have been found in the wetlands of the Hamburg Natural History Society's Penn Dixie Paleontological and Education Center.

The skeletal remains of a human man were found by Jerold C. Bastedo, executive director of HNHS, when he was out inspecting the nature trail on the northern section of the site in the wetlands area.

"I was out in that area because recently I saw something there that just didn't look right," said Bastedo.

While on a nature walk with some seniors, Bastedo said he saw what looked like a part of a bone.

"I thought maybe it was an animal bone, since we do have coyotes and deer out here.

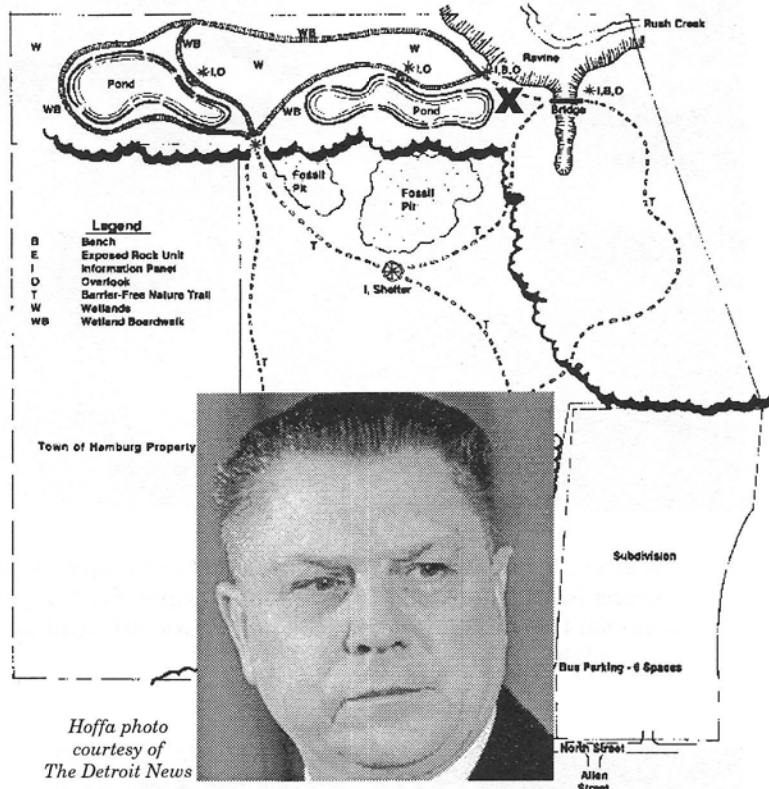
"I didn't want to upset the people visiting the site, so I went back later to check it out," Bastedo said.

What he found was not an animal bone, but a femur from a human being.

"Once I realized it was a human bone, I got on the phone and called the Town of Hamburg Police right away," he said.

Town of Hamburg Detectives Glenn Zawierucha and Joseph O'Brien responded to the scene and confirmed there was an entire human skeleton submerged in the muck and mire.

After the remains were removed, they were taken to the



new forensic lab at the Town of Hamburg Police Department where DNA tests were performed.

"We have confirmation from Detroit the DNA is that of Jimmy Hoffa," said Hamburg Police Chief Joseph Coggins.

"At this point we are not able to tell what the cause of death was or even when it occurred. The FBI are now involved in the case and have taken away the remains," said Coggins.

Hoffa disappeared without a trace almost 29 years ago. He was last seen sitting in the back seat of a car, with several men, leaving a parking lot, possibly the Machus Red Fox Restaurant in Michigan.

The FBI think he never left that car alive because his blood and hair were later found in the car.

"I can't believe that Hoffa was buried here," said Bastedo. The Penn Dixie site was originally owned by Federal Portland Cement and later sold to Penn-Dixie Cement who used the property to supply the company with shale and clay raw materials.

The company ceased excavating at the site sometime in the late 1960s or early 1970s.

"I guess when you look at what Hoffa's life was, president of the Teamster's Union, conflicts with "mob" members from New Jersey and possibly even the Mafia, one can imagine he could come to a violent end.

"It almost seems like this should be a joke. I mean really, what better place than an empty quarry to dispose of a body, especially one that was used to make cement, maybe even cement shoes," said Bastedo.

THE SUN's April 1, 2004, edition which resulted in many phone calls wondering if this April Fool's edition article was really true. As many HNHS members do not Receive THE SUN, a local Hamburg and southtowns newspaper; we thought this would be interesting to all. Reprinted with the permission of the THE SUN.