

A Tragic Beginning, A New Identity – Discovering A Grandfather’s True Story

Objective:

The goal of this research was to identify the parents — and, if possible, the grandparents — of James Carl Morris, who was reportedly born on 17 April 1894 in Dallas, Dallas County, Texas, and passed away on 22 May 1972.

Research Summary

When a client approached me with the story of her mysterious grandfather, James Carl Morris, she had already gathered snippets of family lore, some documents from his later life, but lacked any documentation on his early years. Family lore stated that he had murdered his father at the age of 16 and fled from his home to Idaho. She wanted to know: Who were James Carl Morris’s true parents, and why was his early life so difficult to trace?

Challenges Encountered

- **Sparse Early Records:**
Despite extensive searches through Texas birth, census, and other traditional records, no trace of a James Carl Morris born in Dallas in 1894 could be found before his World War I draft registration in 1917.
- **Multiple Marriages, Consistent Claims:**
Throughout his life and five marriages, James consistently listed his birthplace as Dallas, Texas, and his parents as William Morris and Elizabeth (or Elisabeth) Fleming.
- **Missing Linkages:**
The absence of any corroborating early documentation hinted that James Carl Morris may have changed his name or obscured his true identity.

Research Strategies and Breakthroughs

- **Traditional Record Analysis:**

Confirmed his consistent personal claims in later-life records but found no supporting documents from his childhood.

- **DNA Testing and Analysis:**

The pivotal breakthrough came from analyzing autosomal DNA results from James Morris's granddaughter. By mapping close and extended DNA matches, building family trees, and triangulating relationships, a striking pattern emerged: the DNA matches overwhelmingly pointed to the Fulghum and Fleming families of Hardeman County, Tennessee.

- **Reconstructing the True Lineage:**

It was determined that "James Carl Morris" was most likely born Carl E. Fulghum, son of William Franklin Fulghum and Sarah Elizabeth "Lizzie" Fleming.

- His paternal grandparents were Benjamin Raiford Fulghum and Marinda Crawford.
- His maternal grandparents were Joseph Washington Fleming and Sarah T. Coor.

- **A Tragic Family History:**

Further investigation uncovered a devastating event:

- Carl's father died in 1897, when Carl was about three years old.
- His mother remarried a wealthy farmer, Giles "Ham" Armour, in 1904.
- In 1907, a violent domestic dispute led Ham to murder Lizzie and then take his own life, when Carl was about thirteen.
- It is believed Carl fled from this tragedy, changed his identity to James Carl Morris, and made a new life for himself far from Tennessee, ultimately settling in Idaho.



Final Conclusions

Through a combination of **thorough document research** and **DNA analysis**, we were able to uncover the truth hidden for over a century. This research not only identified the correct parents and grandparents of J.C.M. but also explained the painful reasons for his life of secrecy and reinvention and debunked the story from family lore.

Why This Matters

Family mysteries often run deep, tangled with emotion and hidden in missing records. This project showcases how **professional genealogical research** — combining **documented evidence** with **modern DNA techniques** — can uncover even the most deeply buried truths.

If you have a similar family mystery you'd like to solve, or a lineage you'd like to discover or verify, I would be honored to assist you.

