

SUPERTWIN RECORDS

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My fascinating yet productive hobby began only with details of the delivery of quadruplets in my home city. The quadruplets were delivered by one of my physician-employers and, because of pre-delivery contacts with the mother who was a member of my church, a scrap book about the quadruplets was started. Through outside pursuits, correspondence, detailed study and research this single scrap book has developed into what is believed to be the most extensive collection of authentic data and photographs of twins and supertwins in the world.

Files are kept as authentic as possible, yet by no means are internationally complete. Unfortunately, all multiple births are not recorded in medical, or public, registers and/or literature and some are never registered as multiple births due to circumstances surrounding the birth. A set of quadruplets about whom I have many news items from birth to age one year comes to mind... although the quadruplet birth was recorded by articles in newspapers, medical archives have no record of it because the physician expired before he formally recorded the birth in medical literature. Some births are recorded individually not indicating a multiple birth and others are lost because of a stillborn infant or a macerated fetus accompanying a live birth. Even parents are not always informed of the birth of a macerated fetus that accompanies a live birth.

For "quick reference" a card file indicates Family Name, Number in Birth, Date of Birth, Parent's Names, Physician's Names, and Place of Birth (country, state, city, hospital). Statistical information as to a number of (for example) quadruplets born in a nominal year, a particular country, state or city, may rapidly be found. Cards are being divided and color-coded into sex distribution of set, MZ or DZ, year of birth, number surviving, etc. My files include data on twins, conjoined twins, triplets, quadruplets, quintuplets, sextuplets, septuplets, octuplets, nontuplets, decuplets and 13-lets to 15-lets, and the historically recorded birth of 365 infants to the Countess Margaret, daughter of Florent IV, Earl of Holland, and spouse of Count Hermann of Henneberg, who on the Friday before Easter of the year 1278 gave birth to 182 males, 182 females, and 1 hermaphrodite. Medical literature further states that the Countess was 42 years of age and that the male infants were baptized "John" and the females "Elizabeth" by the Bishop of Treras and placed in two large basins. It is reported that these basins were still on exhibit in the village church of Losdun during the 17th century. Modern speculation reports that this case was probably one of hydatidiform or multiple molar pregnancy. Visits to multiple births are always made with a tape recorder and cameras. I have tape recordings made during visits and pictures of the complete set as well as individual pictures of each member of a set. Impressions of my visits are taped and also typewritten to be placed in the book of a particular set. All books are loose leaf and the majority are 12" x 14" with newer sets, as applicable, being placed in books that are 8" x 11". Sets with a minimal amount of data are field on 5" x 8" cards so that anytime sufficient information is received an 8" x 11" book is started. All births higher than triplets are in the 12" x 14" size and there are some 80-100 of these. In the instance of a very special event a separate book is made, i.e., my visit to a set of quadruplets in Texas when only twelve hours old, my initial visit to any multiple birth, attendance at a Triplets Mini-Convention in Iowa and later in Texas, attendance at Mothers of Twins Clubs Conventions, and now, The First International Congress of Twin Studies.

In my files are printed articles' souvenir items, books, reprints of medical articles, photographs, and correspondence. Outstanding items are quite varied: a water color sketch of Chang-Eng Bunker that is dated 1831... a 1913 postcard of 5-year-old conjoined twins... a photo of the Tocci Brothers at age 5... a biscuit from the home town of the Biddenden Maids... a letter from Allan Dafoe, M.D.,

regarding the Dionne Quints... a picture of the octuplets delivered in Mexico as well as numerous photographs of the surviving sextuplets. From 1956 I have a large photograph of England's four sets of quadruplets taken on the 21st birthday of the first British set to reach maturity. A newsreel announcing the birth of the Dionne Quintuplets as well as audio tapes of television commercials using quintuplets are also part of my files.

Personal correspondence is much more revealing and interesting than reading a researcher's account of activities of multiples — it is first hand information from those closest in association with the set. A special photograph album contains photos of my "Met sets". To date I have personally met a set of unseparated conjoined twins, 27 sets of triplets, 12 sets of quadruplets and just recently my first set of quintuplets.

The current concept is *not* to stress multiplicity of a set of multiples but to treat each on an individual basis or their psyche will be disturbed. This statement will provoke an argument on my part because there are endless incidents about "my" local quads that will disprove all ideas about this. Galveston's photogenic quadruplets (triplets and a singleton) were always dressed alike, were photographed at least once a month, were "displayed" to the public twice daily from birth to age 5, were photographed annually by Fox Movietone and Pathe newsreels until just after their tenth birthday, appeared as a single unit (The Badgett Quads) dancing, roller skating, singing at all special events in and around Galveston, etc. Today at 35 all are delightful wives and mothers, work, sew, participate in community activities and yet manage to "become the Badgett quadruplets" each year on their birthday when they join mother to celebrate... one couldn't ask for more.

A more recently born set of quads (identical twin girls and identical twin boys) are being reared by the current concept. Attending nursery school they were most excited about twin boys in their class because "the twins look just alike, talk just alike, go outside together, do everything together". The fourmose was quite surprised to realize that the two girls looked just alike and the two boys looked just alike!

Research is conducted when a specific question is asked. Requests vary and are received from twin clubs, high school students, graduate students, physicians, magazines and newspapers. Statistical data from my files have appeared in medical publications since 1944. The Moody Memorial Library on our medical school campus affords the books which are not in my personal library. The requests come from all over the world.

Files continually are growing by international correspondence. Newspaper clippings that are received are followed by personal letters. Most letters are answered and some of my sets have been followed by correspondence and photos for the 35 years that I have been collecting.

In the United States alone there are 62 complete sets of quadruplets living and 6 sets of quintuplets, the latest quintet having been born October 8, 1974. The United States also has 2 adult sets of unseparated, conjoined twins, one male set (previously mentioned) and a female craniopagus. My files reflect that there are 11 complete sets of quintuplets now living worldwide as well as one complete set of sextuplets.

A Texas mother bore quintuplets, quadruplets, three sets of triplets, five sets of twins, and nine singletons. A North Carolina mother by age 31 had delivered 20 children — quintuplets, quadruplets, two sets of triplets, two sets of twins, as well as one single male infant. Eight of these children were surviving in 1960 when the last triplets were born.

Fulfillment of a "hobby-long" desire would be a large library where souvenirs could be displayed, books read and enjoyed and files accessible to researchers. A register of international scope of multiple births could be maintained and, to me, this is a necessity that has not yet been accomplished and it would be a privilege to accomplish it.

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