



Physical Anthropology Section – 2003

H9 The William M. Bass Donated Collection at the University of Tennessee - Knoxville

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The attendee will be provided with an overview of the demographic information as well as some pathological information on the human remains available for study in the William M. Bass Donated Collection.

The William M. Bass Donated Collection is housed at the Forensic Anthropology Center, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and contains the remains of over 425 individuals. Since 1981, body donations have been accepted for anthropological research. In most cases, the donations are received immediately after death and are used in various on-going human decomposition studies at the Anthropological Research Facility. Medical and other biological information is received through contact between Forensic Anthropology Center faculty and the individual prior to death and/or the individual's family after their death. The purpose of this poster is to provide an overview of the demographic information about the donated collection and a brief look into some pathological conditions seen in the collection.

The majority of the donated individuals are from Tennessee and the surrounding states, although some have come from as far away as Texas and Pennsylvania, with dates of birth ranging from the 189's to 1974. The remains represent a 20th Century American sample continuing in time where the Terry and Hammann Todd collections end. A small number of individuals with early dates of birth result in overlap between these collections. Manners of death for the donated individuals include natural, accidental, suicide, and homicide, resulting in a wide age range. Additionally, the collection contains 27 infants and stillborns. Approximately 100 of the individuals have been autopsied prior to placement at the Anthropological Research Facility. Ancestry and sex are two important demographic variables to consider. More males than females are represented in the collection, and the majority of the individuals are of European descent. Other racial groups represented include African Americans, Hispanic, Mexican, and American Indian.

Traumatic episodes are evident in the skeletal remains of the individuals. Many exhibit healed antemortem fractures, and some individuals have had limb amputations. Additionally, perimortem trauma (Meadows Jantz and Schneider, 1999) is present.

Finally, many pathological conditions are seen in the individuals such as: osteoarthritis, eburnation, amputation, spondylolysis, and diffuse idiopathic skeletal hyperostosis (DISH).

While osteological studies have been conducted using the collection, the increasing number of individuals available for study warrants a renewed interest and further analysis of the remains. The critical feature of the William M. Bass Donated Collection is that it is the largest collection of *modern* individuals available for anthropological study. Meadows Jantz, Lee and Kennan L. Schneider

1999 Trauma Patterns in the William M. Bass Skeletal Collection. Proceedings AAFS, Annual Meeting, Orlando, Florida Vol. 5:215.

Anthropology, William M. Bass Donated Collection, Demographics