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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dermatoglyphics Available for Study at the Kloepfer Genetics Archives

In May 1987 the H. Warner Kloepfer Genetics Archives was dedicated at the Louisiana State University in New Orleans. The Archives host what is presumably the largest collection of dermatoglyphics of twins available in the world.

This collection was started in the mid 1970s as a result of Dr. Kloepfer's wish to carry out extensive research on single major genes underlying dermatoglyphic traits in man. A collateral interest was to develop an easy method to determine zygosity in twins.

Within the framework and scope of the newly established International Society for Twin Studies, a collaborative effort was undertaken involving both scientists and mothers of twins or related organizations. In her capacity as Vice President/Collective Members of the Society for that term, Joyce Maxey was then appointed as coordinator of this collaborative effort.

Finger and palm prints of about 700 pairs of twins were donated by the Mendel Institute of Rome: these prints had been taken professionally and the zygosity of the twins had been determined with objective criteria, including bloodtyping.

Finger, palm and some foot prints of about 2,500 pairs of twins, 40 sets of triplets, and 2,700 relatives were then collected, over a number of years, at sessions specially held at Mothers of Twins Clubs and at the International Twins Association. A total of 134 clubs participated to the study: 111 clubs in the USA, 12 in Canada, 10 in Australia, and 1 in South Africa.

The prints were taken with instructions provided by Dr. Kloepfer and under his constant supervision. Zygosity was established in almost all pairs with a specially adapted questionnaire method.

Following Dr. Kloepfer's death in 1982, the family decided to continue the effort to collect prints so as to reach the target of 4,000 pairs of twins that Dr. Kloepfer had planned for his research. As the target approached completion, we looked for convenient housing for the material, and for researchers interested in

taking advantage of it in line with Dr. Kloepfer's intentions.

The H. Warner Kloepfer Genetics Archives established at the Louisiana State University in New Orleans, under the supervision of Dr. Mary Z. Pelias, now hosts the prints of over 3,000 pairs of twins subdivided as follows by sex and zygosity:

	Male-Male	Female-Female	Male-Female	Total
MZ	911	1065		1976
DZ	353	348	471	1172
?	60	62		122
Total	1324	1475	471	3270

In addition, there are footprints of 550 pairs of twins, and prints of some 40 sets of triplets and 2,700 parents. Prints of another 250 sets have recently been added to these archives.

These prints are available for use at Louisiana State University (c/o Dr. Pelias) by any qualified scientist. In the room in which the prints are filed, there is a large worktable and access to a computer. Users of the prints must of course agree not to add additional marks to the prints (original marks were made by Dr. Kloepfer), and to give appropriate credit to the Kloepfer Archives. We are particularly searching for a geneticist who wishes to use the prints to identify single major genes and/or to develop some easy zygosity test, along the lines originally intended by the late Dr. Kloepfer.

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