ANALYSIS OF HUMAN SKELETAL REMAINS FROM THE HISTORIC EUROAMERICAN RHOADS CEMETERY (12-Ma-777), INDIANAPOLIS, MARION COUNTY, INDIANA

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ABSTRACT of the
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This report summarizes the analysis of human remains from a 19th century cemetery in central Indiana, excavated in late 1996 and early 1997 by contract archeologists. A total of 43 inhumations and one cremation were removed and subsequently processed and examined by osteologists at the University of Indianapolis Archeology & Forensics Laboratory. The condition of the remains is typical of 19th century coffin interments in northern and central Indiana, with numerous subadults and adults being well-preserved. No unusual taphonomic processes were identified, although two children interred in iron sarcophagus coffins still presented traces of soft tissues and displayed exquisite preservation of fragile skeletal structures. Biological analysis indicates that 31 individuals are subadults and 13 are adults. The majority of subadults fall in the one to two year age range, and only one adolescent is represented in the assemblage. The adults fall primarily in the middle to older adult age range and include both males and females. All available indicators suggest that the interred are of Euopean ancestry and are of average body size and robusticity for 19th century American populations. Only a few pathological conditions are noted, the most severe of which is a case of osteomyletic infection of the pelvis of an older adult female. Seven adults and three subadults display mild, remodeled periostitic lesions, expressed primarily on the long bones of the lower extremities. Cribra orbitalia is seen in orbits of five of the subadults, suggesting slight anemic conditions. Little antemortem trauma is present in the assemblage. Growth disruptions of the tooth enamel (hypoplasias) are common but not particularly marked when present. Carious lesions and antemortem tooth loss are common in the adults. In general, the pathological and dental data suggest that the Rhoads individuals were relatively healthy, experiencing only mild to moderate bouts of inadequate nutrition and disease. Our conclusion is that the assemblage offers much for future research, and we assign it a high scientific value.

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