

1942

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Recommended Citation

Goldsmith, William (1942) "Trepanation and the "Catlin Mark", *Proceedings of the Iowa Academy of Science*: Vol. 49: No. 1 , Article 106.
Available at: <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/pias/vol49/iss1/106>

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TREPANATION AND THE "CATLIN MARK"

WILLIAM GOLDSMITH

This paper deals with the confusion of a certain anomalous condition of the human skull with one type of trepanation. Many skulls with an opening in each parietal bone should not be cited as examples of trepanation, but rather clear cut cases of the "Catlin Mark" of Goldsmith, or more technically referred to by other writers as: "*Large Bilateral Parietal Foramina*", "*Foramina Parietalia Permagna*", or "*Fenestrae Parietales Symmetricae*" of Halbertsma.

The writer cites cases (hereditary and otherwise) where individuals are born with paired holes in varying size in the parietal bones. Photographs of a calvarium from dissection at Tulane University and pictures and X-rays from living or recently deceased adults indicate that many cases of so-called "ancient trepanation" are mislabeled. Cases of certain frontal fenestrae and other skull anomalies are pictured and cited for further study as possibly illustrating developmental defects rather than trepanation. Photographs and X-rays are presented to show the differential diagnosis between congenital openings and man-made trepanations.

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