



Josephine Myrtle Corbin was also known as the four-legged girl, her father showing her to neighbors for money as a baby

 Sara B 2 days ago



Photo by [Reddit](#)

[Josephine Myrtle Corbin](#) was born May 12, 1868, in Lincoln County, Tennessee. Myrtle was born with a rare fetal anomaly called Dipygus. She was born to William Corbin, a wounded Confederate soldier, and Nancy Corbin.

Nancy's maiden name was Sullins, and it was thought that it was initially O'Sullivan, yet it changed due to the anti-Irish movement at the time. When Josephine was born, she was born with an [anomaly](#) known as Dipygus.

Rumors have spread due to her parents being closely related, possibly brother and sister, but that is only speculation, and there is no proof—only speculation due to Josephine's congenital disabilities. Josephine's birth was otherwise normal.

However, it was noticeable that something was wrong with [Josephine's anatomy](#). However, she was noted to not be in any pain, and the anomaly was just that. During her first weeks of life, doctors studied her, and since she was in no pain, there was no diagnosis for the condition.

The condition, now known as [Dipygus](#), is a complete caudal duplication deformity in the severest form and was not defined until 1993 in the medical context. Which can be defined as:

"Caudal duplication syndrome is a rare anomaly associated with complete/partial duplication of the spine, spinal cord, and other caudal structures including urogenital and gastrointestinal tract with some degrees of neurological dysfunction".

The exact reason for this [deformity](#) is unknown, but it is speculated that it is [related](#) to the HOX gene, mainly HOX10 and HOX11.

"The standard coding for the mammalian appendicular and the axial skeleton, misexpression of the genetic factors can lead to abnormal proliferation of the caudal mesenchyme"

When [Josephine](#) was born, there were only a few cases, and she was one of the few with two pelvises, and they were next to each other, which resulted

However, Josephine would wear matching stockings and boots on all four legs, as you can see in pictures of her.

Yet [Josephine](#) was discussed in the medical community and referred to as:

"the most remarkable freak of nature, now living and whose complex nature creates more sensation among scientific men than any curiosity known before"

At one month old, [Josephine's](#) father would show her to his neighbors for money, and this began her sideshow career. It helped provide for the family, and eventually, she made a full-time living working as part of a Side Show; she was 13.

Eventually, she made \$450 a week, which is around 15k today, and was referred to as the "four legged girl from Texas", due to her family relocating from Tennessee to Texas.

Even though Josephine had this condition, she had an everyday life and was married at 19 to James Clinton Bicknell. Josephine was even able to have children, and they had five children.

However, Josephine had two uteruses, so two children were born from one uterus, and three were born from the other. All were healthy, and none had developed the same deformity as Josephine.

Josephine lived until 59 years old. She died of a streptococcal skin infection that was not treatable then. She was buried in a grave that was covered in concrete to prevent grave robbers and people from digging her up to study her condition or, worse, to put her body on display.

Josephine was laid to rest despite the many offers from scientists to buy her body to study for science.

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