

FINGERPRINTING

For over 100 years, fingerprints have provided a reliable and efficient means of identification, proving its value in criminal investigations. The biological principles of permanence and uniqueness along with the capability to be classified have made fingerprints a fundamental tool in forensic science.

It was common practice for the Chinese to use inked fingerprints on official documents, land sales, contracts, loans and acknowledgments of debts. The oldest existing documents so endorsed date from the 3rd century BC, and it was still an effective practice until recent times.

The first documented interest in the skin's ridges in the western world, a paper written in 1684 by an Englishman, Dr. Nehemiah Grew, was mainly of an anatomical nature, it was not until 1798, however, that J C Mayer of Germany theorised that the arrangements of friction ridges were unique.

In 1858 the first practical application of the science was made, when an English administrator in India, Sir William Herschel, commenced placing the inked palm impressions and, later, thumb impressions of some members of the local population on contracts. These prints were used as a form of signature on the documents because of the high level of illiteracy in India and frequent attempts at forgery. Herschel also began fingerprinting all prisoners in jail.

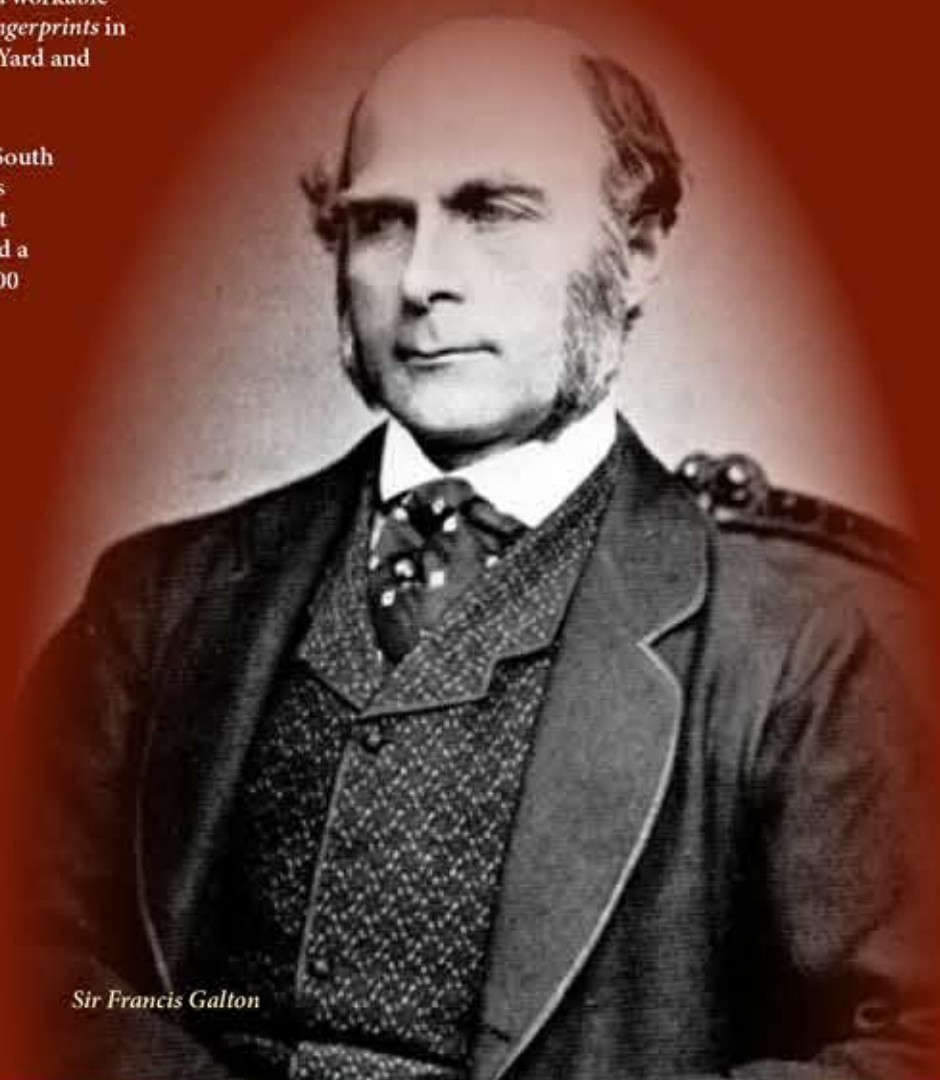
In 1874, Dr Henry Faulds, became interested in fingerprints while working at the hospital he established in Tsukiji, Tokyo, Japan. After careful experiment and observation, he became convinced that fingerprint patterns did not change. In 1892, a noted English scientist of the time, Sir Francis Galton, published an accurate and in-depth study of the fingerprinting science that included an attempt at a system of fingerprint classification to facilitate the handling of large collections of fingerprints.

This system was eventually put into practice in September 1891 by an Argentinian police officer Juan Vucetich who opened the first fingerprint bureau at San Nicholas, Buenos Aires. Within a short time of the bureau being set up, the first conviction by means of fingerprint evidence in a murder trial was obtained.

Following on from the initial research conducted by Galton, Sir Edward Henry devised a workable classification system independently and published his book *Classification and Uses of Fingerprints* in 1900. In 1901, Henry was appointed Assistant Commissioner of Police at New Scotland Yard and began to introduce his fingerprint system into that institution.

In 1901, Sam McCauley, Deputy Controller of Prisons and Inspector of Prisons in New South Wales, studied the use and classification of fingerprints at New Scotland Yard, and on his return, recommended that fingerprinting and classification under the Henry Fingerprint System be introduced to New South Wales gaols. In 1902, fingerprinting commenced and a fingerprint bureau was established in the Darlinghurst Gaol. By 1903, approximately 6000 fingerprint impressions had been taken.

Western Australia established their State Fingerprint Bureau in 1928.



Sir Francis Galton



TYPE 1	TYPE 2 RIDGE CHARACTERISTICS			
Loop	1. Core	2. Ending Ridge	2. Short Ridge	2. Fork or Bifurcation
Arch	5. Delta	6. Hook	7. Eye	8. Dot or Island
Whorl	9. Crossover	10. Bridge	11. Enclosures	12. Specialty

FINGERPRINT EVIDENCE
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