



The First American Fingerprint Instructor

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As far back as 1905 – when fingerprinting had just begun to take hold in this country, a woman well versed in criminology worked side by side with a handful of men to help strengthen the foundation on which the science rests today. The Palace of Education Building at the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis housed several police related exhibits. Inspector John K. Ferrier of New Scotland Yard had been dispatched to the Fair as the official in charge of the London Police Exhibit. During his stay at the Fair he demonstrated the new fingerprint identification system in use at Scotland Yard. These demonstrations were a revelation to all law enforcement personnel who visited the exhibit, and as a result, Ferrier was asked to establish a class of instruction in the identification system. The class consisted of nine pupils who later inspired the spread of the system throughout this country, and who themselves became notables in the identification profession. Among them was one woman – Mrs. Mary E. Holland of Chicago, Illinois.

Mrs. Holland was the wife of the editor of "The Detective", a magazine which was the official journal of the

police and sheriffs in the country at the time. She assisted her husband as a writer and co-editor, while also managing a successful private detective agency. She also headed a manufacturing business for police supplies and equipment. She has been credited with being the first to manufacture a fingerprint kit in this country.

Enthused by what she had learned from Inspector Ferrier, she devoted nearly all of her time to the study of the fingerprint system, and in 1905 she began to give instruction in the science to police officers and other identification personnel throughout the country. It was during this year, under the tutelage of Mrs. Holland, that Mr. A. J. Renoe began his study of the science of fingerprints. Mr. Renoe then went on to become an enthusiastic pioneer of the science and one of the early driving forces within the International Association for Identification.

In 1906, at the request of Chief Sylvester of the Metropolitan Police Department in Washington DC, Mrs. Holland came to the nation's capital and instructed the superintendent of the agency's Identification Bureau on the new system. During this period, (1905 – 1907) Mrs. Holland was also

instrumental in introducing the system to the Army and Navy branches of the War Department. In early 1907, Mrs. Holland traveled to Europe and studied the system firsthand as it was being practiced in England and France. She frequently appeared on programs of state, national, and international police organizations in annual session, and addressed those bodies on the application of the fingerprint identification system. Her influence in advancing the profession during this period was immense. At a time when few women dared to take up her calling she was secure in it, and she held the admiration and respect of every chief of police in the country.

Over the years, women have been eminently successful in the fingerprint identification field. The list of pioneers in the discipline bears the names of several women, and Mary E. Holland heads the list as the first active American instructor in the science of fingerprints. ■

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Quick-Thinking Officer Collects Saliva to Link Man to Two Rapes

After seeing a rape suspect spit on the street, a police officer grabbed a paper towel, jumped out of his cruiser and blotted the spittle, gaining enough DNA evidence to charge the man with two attacks.

"The opportunity presented itself and I was in the right place at the right time." St. Petersburg Sgt. Michael Puetz said Friday. The saliva he retrieved Tuesday provided enough genetic evidence for authorities to charge ex-convict Charles Peterson in an attack at a Tampa discount store.

On Valentine's Day last year, a masked and armed Peterson hid in the store until closing, raped two clerks and fled with \$2,600, police said. Detectives saw similarities with past robberies committed by Peterson and put him under surveillance.

Surveillance crews had been told to watch in case Peterson tossed a cigarette or chewing gum – something that would give a possible DNA specimen.

On Tuesday, Puetz saw Peterson spit while waiting on a motorcycle for a light to change. Puetz grabbed a paper towel.

Peterson started serving time in 1981

for burglary, armed robbery and aggravated assault. He wasn't supposed to get out until 2011. However, the parole panel released him in 1992.

Peterson is also the sole suspect in a killing at a St. Petersburg discount store and at least a dozen robberies in the Tampa Bay area. ■

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