IDENTIFICATION

U.S.A. Being Fingerprinted

Identification Registration Required of All Aliens But Many Native-Born Also Having Prints Recorded

By MARJORIE VAN DE WATER

IN TIME of war, identification becomes highly important. Not only are plans being made to fingerprint all aliens, but many loyal American citizens will be fingerprinted to establish their identity and provide proof of it.

All recruits of the Army, Navy and Marine Corps are fingerprinted as a matter of course. All U. S. Civil Service employees are fingerprinted. Every person putting money into a U. S. Postal Savings account is fingerprinted. Babies born in hospitals are commonly fingerprinted—or footprinted.

With a scare of Fifth Columns spreading in the United States, fingerprints may be demanded on many more occasions. It may be necessary for persons working in munitions factories, aviation plants, light and power plants and other key positions to file their fingerprints along with other identifying material with their employers, or their unions, or the government.

Persons owning or carrying revolvers, guns, or other weapons may have to register their fingerprints also, as is now the case in some states.

For your own protection against the suspicions of alarmed neighbors and excitable "nuts," you may want your own identification securely established by your own fingerprints, proof against any forgery, filed in the Civil fingerprint file of the United States Bureau of Investigation.

Have you ever looked at your own fingerprints? Do you know how to classify those distinctive patterns you have carried around with you at your fingertips all your life?

Why don't you take your own fingerprints today and classify them for your own information? If you like, you can then leave them in your safe or deposit box or some safe place as a permanent means of making sure that you will never be without identification in case you should be lost, injured or killed. If ever you should be missing, your fingerprints and photograph filed together would be a great aid to police and G-men in locating you.

If you want really professional prints, get hold of some ordinary black printer's ink. Put a small amount of the ink on a clean sheet of glass, metal plate, or marble slab, and even it out with a roller.

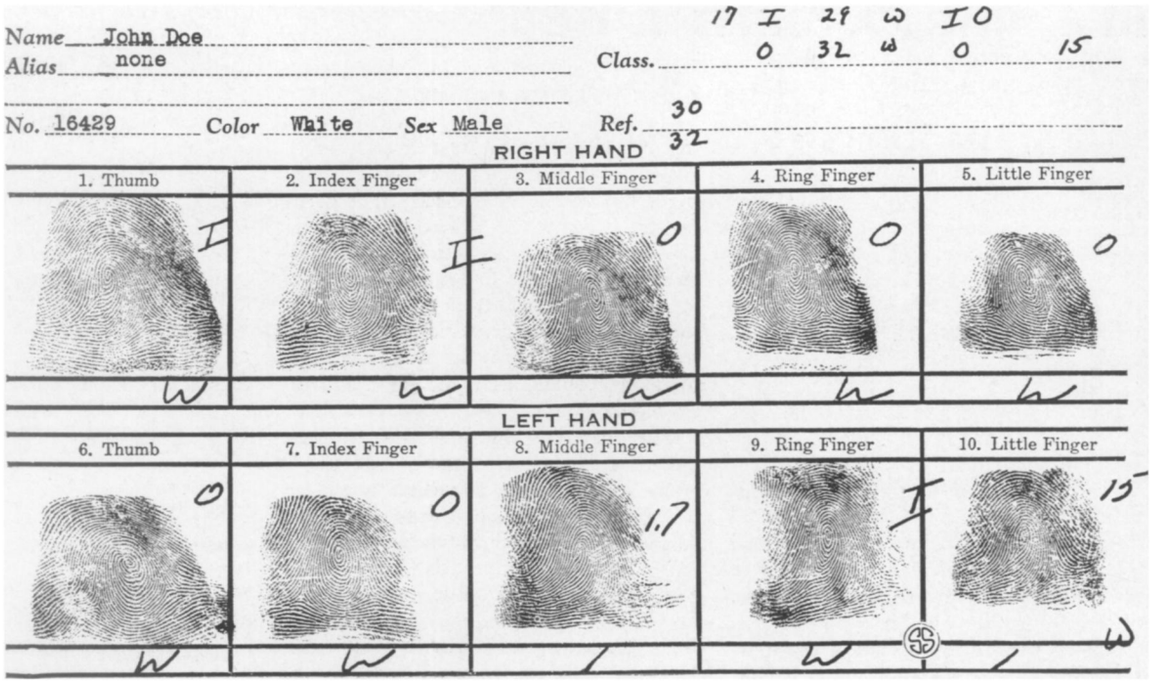
The roller inked in this way is then run over a clean sheet of glass and it is this thinly inked plate that is used to ink the fingers.

"Rolled impressions" are required by fingerprint experts to classify them completely. This is how they are made. Thumbs are rolled toward, fingers away from, the body. Begin with the right hand. Take hold of your right thumb with your left hand. Gently press the right side of the thumb down on the lightly inked plate and slowly and firmly roll it over until the other side is down. All the pressure used should come from the left hand because pressing down with the finger being printed will tend to spread the ridges and smudge the print. It is better, of course, to let someone else roll your fingers for you.

As soon as the thumb receives a single inking, roll it in exactly the same way on your fingerprint card or ordinary sheet of paper.

Fingers are printed in the same way except that the side toward the thumb is put down first and the rolling is away from the body.

When all the rolled prints have been made of both right and left hands, then the four fingers of each hand are placed



POSITIVE PROOF

Faces and figures may change, making even the best of photographs deceptive. But a well-made set of fingerprints constitutes a life-long and positive means of identification.

simultaneously, without rolling, on the ink plate and then on the recording sheet. Finally the thumb impressions are so placed.

It is important to have the inking plates and fingers clean and free from moisture or lint. To insure this, you can clean them with benzene or alcohol just before the prints are made.

Less messy to use is a special sensitized paper such as the Faurot stainless system used by many government departments. With this you have only to "ink" your fingers with a colorless and odorless substance which shows up clearly when impressed on the sensitized surface of the special paper.

Prints made with this material are plenty clear enough for identification and, in case you want to gather in your friends' prints at an evening party, you will not run, with this stuff, the same risk of ruining a pair of white flannels or an evening dress that you would if you played with printer's ink.

Look at your prints through a magnifying glass. You will see a number of fine black lines and probably also several white streaks. It is the black inked lines or ridges that make up the pattern used in fingerprint classification. The white marks are caused by the depressions (which are not inked) or by either scars or creases and are not considered.

The fine black lines, termed by experts "ridges," are not random marks but may be classified into four types of patterns. These are called arches, loops, whorls, and composites. Of these the loops are by far the most numerous.

All these types except the arches have at least two points which are used in analyzing the prints—the "core" and the "delta." Look over at the side of your print. You will very likely have no difficulty in picking out a point where a ridge splits apart and runs in two directions, or where two ridges running side by side abruptly part. This point is the delta. The core is the center of the loop or whorl.

Once you have located the delta, it is an easy matter to distinguish between the loop pattern and the whorl. The whorl generally has two deltas, one at each side of the print. Incidentally, it is to show these deltas that it is necessary to make the rolled print; sometimes they are far over on the side of the finger. The loop pattern has but one delta.

Probably you have at least one loop pattern among your prints. Look at it and you will notice that the loop has a slant. If it slants toward the thumb it is technically called a radial loop; if it slants toward the little finger, it is called an ulnar loop.

FIRST FINGERPRINTS

Baby seems to be taking it all very seriously, and indeed he may, for he is being placed on record for life. Even when he is an old man, the fundamental patterns of his fingerprints will not have changed.

Unfortunately for law enforcement officers, the fingerprints tell nothing of character, personality, or the future in store for the owner. It will not be possible to tell from the fingerprints of an individual whether he is German, Italian, French, British, or American, although it is true that certain fingerprint patterns are more common in some racial groups than in others.

Reproduced on the opposite page is a set of fingerprints made up and classified by the Federal Bureau of Investigation especially for Science Service.

It is the classification that gives the fingerprint system its great value in identification. It permits an expert to look at any impression of a criminal's fingers and go directly to his record, which is filed according to classification, not by name.

The first number, 17 in this case, is the count of the number of ridges from core to delta in the first loop pattern on the record, beginning from the right thumb. This is called the "key." John Doe's left middle finger is the first with a loop pattern and it has 17 ridges.

The second figure, a fraction, is a little more difficult to obtain. It depends on the location of the whorl patterns. Beginning with the right hand, each finger is assigned a numerical value, thus: Right thumb, 16; index finger, 16; middle, 8; ring, 8; little, 4; left thumb, 4; index, 2; middle, 2; ring, 1; little, 1.

Now to find the numerator of the fraction, add the values of every even numbered finger *if a whorl occurs in it,* beginning with the right index and continuing with the right ring, left thumb, middle and little fingers. Then add one. If no whorls are present in those fingers, the numerator is one.

The denominator is found similarly, but you begin with the right thumb and take the values of the odd numbered fingers.

On John Doe's card, all but two of the prints are whorls. His score is therefore high. In the numerator it is 16 plus 8 plus 4 plus 1, which equals 29. In the denominator it is 16 plus 8 plus 4 plus 2 plus 1 plus 1, or 32.

This fraction is the primary classification.

The second classification merely indicates what patterns occur in the index fingers, the right finger being indicated above the line. In the example, both were whorls, abbreviated "W."

With all the varying counts of ridges and distinguishing patterns on ten fingers it is possible to make use of as many sub-classifications as may be necessary to file and find again many millions of fingerprints.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation now has on file some 12,800,000 fingerprints. If they collect the prints of all aliens, they will add to this collection approximately another 3,000,000.