

INDEPENDENCE DAY NUMBER

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HISTORICAL SURVEY ON FINGERPRINTS

SK. SAID BAKSH

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THE early history of finger prints is wrapped in obscurity. It is not known at what point of time the patterns on our fingers first attracted the attention of man as a positive means of personal identification. But this much can be said that finger prints have been in use since a long time. As to the country which first introduced finger prints, there is no dependable record. Some say that it was Middle East which first introduced finger prints while others hold that

●The author, an Inspector of Police, is a Finger-Print Expert of the Detective Training School, Criminal Investigation Department, East Pakistan. This article is a part of the book which he has written and is awaiting for publication.

they were first used in China. The latter view seems to be more correct. Nearly two centuries before the birth of Christ, the Chinese used clay seals and one of these seals is still preserved in the Field Museum, Chicago. During the reign of Tang Dynasty (A.D. 618-906) the use of finger prints became widespread in China. According to Dr. Robert Heindle, a German criminologist, the Chinese devised a system of classification by loops and whorls which were later developed by Sir Francis Galton and E. R. Henry.

The purpose for which the finger prints were used in China in ancient days is not definitely known but from the following writings it can be presumed that the finger prints as a means of personal identification was long recognised in China.

Kia-Kung-Yen, a Chinese historian of the Tang period in his book in 650 (A.D.) states, "Wooden tablets were inscribed with the terms of contract,

and notches were cut in the sides at identical places so that the tablets could later be matched, thus proving them genuine. The significance of notches was the same as that of the finger prints of present time."

The Chinese Law Book of Yung Hwai of the same period states, "To divorce a wife the husband must give a document setting forth which of the seven reasons was assigned for action....All letters should be written in husband's own handwriting but in case he is unable to write, he must sign with his finger prints."

In Europe the finger prints were first officially mentioned by Dr. Nehemiah Grew (1641-1712), a British anatomist who in 1684 commented on sweat pores, the epidemal ridges and their arrangement. The pores were first brought to notice by Grew.

In 1686 another anatomist Marcello Malpighi (1628-1694) who was a professor in the University of Bologna, Italy, made inquiries into the formation of skin on human fingers and discovered the nucus nature of the lower structure of the epidermis. He also made reference to papillary ridges arranging themselves into patterns.

In 1770 Mr. Thomas Bewick (1753-1828), an English wood engraver, engraved his thumb on a piece of wood and used it as designs for his illustrated



works. His thumb was so faithfully reproduced that some believe that the individuality of finger prints was recognised by him.

Mr. J. C. Mayor of Germany in his writing in 1788 states, "Although the arrangement of skin ridges is never duplicated in two persons, nevertheless the similarities are closer among some individuals."

In 1823 Johannes Evangelist Parkinje (1787-1869), a professor of Physiology in the University of Breslau, wrote an essay as a thesis for the Doctorate of Medicine degree. In his writings he classified finger prints into nine groups. He also commented on the sense of touch and held that patterns made by furrows widely differ in form.

The contribution of Sir William Herschel (1833-1917), Chief Officer of Hooghly under the old East India Company of Ben-

gal, India, was an important landmark in the evolution of Fingerprint Science. In order to study the persistence of patterns and ridge details, he took finger impressions of different persons as well as his own at long intervals. In his article dated the 25th November, 1880 published in the British magazine, *Nature*, he stated that he used finger prints in India for more than 20 years with marked benefit, and by comparing the finger impressions of persons then living with their finger prints previously taken he found no material change. He introduced the use of fingerprints in different departments of Hooghly. His first attempt to use fingerprints was made in 1858 when he compelled a native contractor named Rajydhari Konai to put his hand prints on an agreement. The prisoners at his time were fingerprinted for the purpose of preven-

ting their friends and other persons from serving out the terms of sentence on their behalf. He introduced the system of taking fingerprints of pensioned persons to put a check upon drawing pension by their relatives by impersonation. He also insisted upon taking fingerprints on the documents admitted for registration.

Another pioneer in the field was Henry Faulds, a Scots doctor working in Tsukje hospital, Japan. While delivering lecture to his students, some ancient Japanese pottery with finger markings suddenly attracted his notice. This aroused his interest to such a degree that he carried on research on fingerprints. In a letter dated 1880, Faulds wrote as follows: "If bloody fingerprints or impressions on clay, glass, etc., are present, the scientific conviction of the perpetrator may be effected. I have already met with two particular cases in my

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Answers To Increase Your Vocabulary

1. b) past
2. a) to humiliate
3. d) to put out of countenance
4. c) to mitigate
5. a) to abolish, e.g., custom
6. b) to renounce formally, e.g., monarchy
7. d) to kidnap, esp. woman
8. c) to assist an offence or offender
9. a) utterly depressed
10. b) to detest and shun
11. d) suspension
12. c) to be in plenty
13. b) collection of pus in a cavity
14. a) to cut off
15. d) to go in hiding

MARKS

All Correct—Excellent
12 to 14 Correct—Good
10 or 11 Correct—Fair

experience and was able to use such prints as very necessary evidence. In one case some one had left greasy fingerprints on a drinking glass. Fortunately I had previously made a print of the person in question. The patterns agreed with microscopic fidelity. In the other case, the sooty fingerprint left by a person when he climbed over a white wall was of great value as exonerating evidence. Still other evidence will occur in the field of medical jurisprudence when, for example, only the hands of a dismembered corpse are found. If the fingerprints that have been taken are known, they offer stronger proof than the customary "birthmark" of the dime novel. Faulds also found out that ridges regrow exactly in the same way after they disappear by being rubbed against hard substance or by burning. In his letter dated the 28th October, 1880 under the caption, "On the Skin Furrow of Hands," published in British magazine, *Nature*, he further states: "There can be no doubt as to the advantage of having besides their photographs, a nature copy of the forever-unchangeable furrows of important criminals." Faulds wrote a textbook advocating recording of impressions of ten fingers. He appears to have recognised the unchangeable character of fingerprint patterns.

The next pioneer in the field is Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911) a noted British scientist. Although he borrowed much of the idea from his predecessors, he played an important role in

advancing the science. He laid the foundation of systematised identification. In his first-book, *Finger Prints*, published in 1892, he discussed the anatomy of the fingers and declared that the papillary ridges on our fingers first appear in the fourth month foetal life and get their full growth in the sixth month. The number of ridges that first appear persist throughout life and after death till decomposition damages the skin in a high degree. Except in dimension there occurs no change in the fingerprint patterns. Galton's research has conclusively showed that the fingerprints are not inherited and finger for finger, patterns differ. He had also declared that besides fingerprints, identity can be established by the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet in an infallible manner. He felt the need of registration of the finger prints of the criminals and for this purpose he evolved a system of registration known as A-L-W method—he divided the fingerprints



SIR E.R. HENRY, GCVO, KCB, CSI into three types; arch, loop and whorl. The British Government appointed a committee to examine his system. In 1894 his system was officially established in England and the criminals were both finger printed and measured.

Sir Edward Richard Henry, while Inspector-General of Police, Bengal, India in 1891-1899



লিডার ও পোর্টের পিড়িয়া

হোমিও

বিজ্ঞান

কালমেসের

হোমিও বিজ্ঞান
লোবরেটরি
হোমিও পোর্ট
কালমেসের
আদি আবিষ্কারক

১০২, অসিমবাজার, ঢাকা - ১

developed this system by dividing the fingerprints into four classes: arch, loop, whorl and composite. In 1900 he wrote a book, *Classification and Uses of Finger Prints*, based on the paper entitled "Finger Prints and the Detection of Crime in India," which in 1899 he read before the meeting of British Association for Advancement of Science at Dover, England. In 1901 he was appointed Assistant Commissioner of Police, new Scotland Yard, London. Later he became the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, London. He was raised to the rank of a Baronet. In 1912 he came to India as a member of the staff in attendance of King George V, during his royal visit. He was born at Shadwell, Middlesex, England in July 1860.

Juan Vucetich, a noted Argentinian and contemporary of Galton carried on intensive research on fingerprints and devised a system of classification. In 1898 he introduced his system in Argentina. At present there are more than fifty such methods throughout the world. All these methods deal with classifying and recording of impressions of ten fingers of an individual.

With the march of time when the importance of crime scene prints was more and more realised, need for registration of single fingerprints arose. Ultimately several method of single fingerprints classification such as those of Collins, Jorgensen, Battley, Rai Bahadur Hem Chandra Bose found birth.

There is much controversy



as to the originator of the use of fingerprints for identification purpose. Different writers hold different views but whatever may be their arguments it is certain that real work started from Sir William Herschel who first made practical use of fingerprints.

While we give credit to Sir William Herschel for his first practical use of fingerprints, we cannot overlook the glowing contribution of Dr. Henry Faulds to the advancing of modern method of identification.

The Illustrated Weekly of Pakistan, dated the 1st October, 1961 under the caption "Use of Finger Prints in Detection of Crime", says, "Almost two thousand years ago", said Bill Knox in B. B. C. overseas broadcast, "when a blind man was tried before a Roman Court with murdering his father, the defence tried to prove that blood-smearred palm prints on a wall were not made by him, but his step-mother. Even before that, fingerprints took the place of seals in China and part of Far East. But dactyloscopy, the technique

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of fingerprinting, was not put forward as possible science until 1880."

The man who put it forward was a Scot missionary working in Japan, Dr. Henry Faulds, whose memory is being honoured by the erection of a statue outside the Police Research Institute in Tokyo on the occasion of its Silver Jubilee. Dr. Fauld's claim to be originator of the system was quickly contested by an Englishman, Sir William Herschel, then Administrator of a district in Bengal, and experts have still not finally decided who should be considered the 'father' of modern fingerprinting, although Knox pointed out, a retired Scot Judge, Sheriff George Wilton, was now working on memorandum which he believed would provide conclusive proof that it was Faulds.

'Dr. Faulds was born in Beith, in Ayrshire, Knox said, and was a medical student in Glasgow, and clinical pupil under Lister. He wanted to be a medical missionary and went to Japan. Working in Teukiji Hospital in Tokyo, he had been fingerprinting his patients and, on examining the results, he decided the fingerprints were sufficiently personal in pattern to supply a long wanted method of scientific investigation. He described the idea in a magazine letter in 1880, and offered the system to Scotland Yard who promptly turned it down. Then the storm broke. Sir William Herschel had a letter in the next issue of the magazine saying that he had been using fingerprints for identification

in India for twenty years. So began an argument that still continues. Eventually, Dr. Faulds returned to Britain and worked for a time as a police surgeon. He died in 1930 still fighting for recognition.

"Either man would be amazed at the way their discovery has developed," said Knox. "Twenty years after it was made, Scotland Yard adopted fingerprinting as means of crime detection."

Mark Twain

Another name that may be mentioned in this connection is Mark Twain. His fiction, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, is an illuminating study. The fiction was published from December, 1893 to June 1894 in serial form and in November, 1894 the story appeared in book form. How

nicely the role of a fingerprint technician has been portrayed in it! For letter understanding a synopsis of the story is given below:

Pudd'nhead Wilson is a young lawyer. He settled in Dawson's Landing, Missouri. His great hobby was to take fingerprints of person on strips of glasses. He took the fingerprints of nearly all the inhabitants of the town. In his collection he had the fingerprints of two children who were born on the same day to different parents, one was a son of Percy Driscoll and the other, the son of a slave woman. The former was named Thomas Driscoll and the latter, Valet De Chambre and governess to Driscoll fearing that her son might be sold one day as a slave by her master Percy Driscoll.

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substituted the babies whereupon real Chambre became Thomas Driscoll (later called as Tom) and real Thomas Driscoll became Valet De Chambre (later called as Chambres). No one, not even Percy Driscoll and Wilson noticed anything different about the babies. A few days before he died, Percy Driscoll set Roxona free. He also sold her son (false Chambre) to his brother Judge. Percy Driscoll left no estate. Judge promised to make his brother's son (Tom) his heir. One night while Judge was asleep, Tom entered his room and stabbed him with a dagger. He then dropped the weapon and hurried to his room where he dressed himself as a girl and left the house through the backyard. Then in the disguise of a vagrant he fled to St. Louis. Next day morning

he read the following news in the paper dated at Dawson's Landing, "Judge Driscoll, an old and respected citizen, was assassinated here about midnight by a profligate Italian nobleman on harbor on account of a general grudge out of the recent election. The assassin will probably be lynched." He at once sent a telegram to Mrs Pratt, a sister of Mr. Judge, "Have seen the awful news in the papers and almost prostrated with grief. Shall start by packet to-day. Try to bear it up till I come." Suspicion fell on two Capello twins, Luigi and Angelo, who passed by the house of Mr. Judge at the time of the incident and entered the death room being attracted by the screams of the women. They were arrested. The coroner's jury were convinced that these young

men were responsible for the murder but Pudd'nhead by comparing the prints on the dagger with those of Luigi and Angelo was certain that they were innocent. He was engaged as defence counsel for the accused. On the first day of hearing of the case, the Court heard the prosecution. That night while Wilson was searching all his fingerprint collection of girls and women, Tom suddenly appeared and in a joke he picked up one of the glass strips and then another. Tom pointed out that the second glass strip contained a scarred print. Wilson remarked that such scar was common. Just then his eyes fell on the glass strip and found that it recorded a fingerprint of Tom while he handled it. He at once recognised the new chance impression as being identical with a print on the dagger. As his excitement was likely to attract the notice of Tom, he pretended to be overworked. Tom left. He then searched for the fingerprints of Thomas Driscoll in his own collection and was puzzled to find that baby's prints did not tally with those taken at eight months and twelve years and the new chance impression made by Tom on the glass strip and the chance print on the dagger. He slept, then awakening suddenly he went to his fingerprint collection. He prepared pantographic enlargements of some of the prints. Next day in court Wilson made a long statement and declared, "Every human being carries with him from cradle to his grave certain physical marks which do not

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change their character and by which he can be identified—that without shade of doubt or question.

This autograph consists of the delicate lines or corrugation with which nature marks the inside of the hands and soles of the feet... The patterns of the right hand are not the same as those on the left... Finger for finger, your patterns differ from your neighbours'.... The patterns of one twin's right hand are not the same as those of the left. One twin's patterns are not as his fellow twin's. Next he announced that the real murderer would be produced before the clock struck noon. After this he reviewed his work on fingerprints for the

last twenty years and said that he had the prints of practically the entire town.

Wilson then proposed a test of his ability as well as the value of fingerprints. He would turn his face to other side while several of those present in court would place their prints on a window near the jury, that the accused twins also place their prints and that the prints of the same fingers of all would be placed on yet another window in different order so that he could not be charged with guesswork. He promised identification of all such prints. After that Wilson identified all the prints. He then showed 10 diameter panto-

graphic enlargements of the prints of Thomas Driscoll and Valet De Chambre taken when they were but a few months of age, then at the age of several months. They were labelled "A" and "B". Pudd'nhead took a pantograph without mentioning the name of its owner and asked the jury to compare it with a print on the dagger. The jury agreed that both the prints were the products of the same finger. Thereafter he asked the jury to compare the print on the dagger with prints of both twins. The jury examined them and reported that they did not even resemble each other. Pudd'nhead declared that his clients were innocent and he would proceed to detect

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the guilty party. The pantographs of "A" and "B" at age five months and seven months were placed and the jury was asked to compare them. The jury found them identical. Next, he gave the pantograph of "A" at eight months of age. They were compared by the jury who found them different. After this the pantograph of "B" at five and at seven months were given to the jury. They found them as being identical. On the other hand the pantograph of "B" at eight months did not tally with B's other prints. Pudd'nhead then explained to the court that the discrepancy was due to the fact that somebody changed those children in the cradle. Next Wilson declared "A" as usurper bearing B's name, and offered A's print

at age twelve years requesting it to be compared with the print on the dagger. The foreman announced that the prints tallied to the minutest detail. Wilson then declared Valet De Chambre falsely called Thomas Driscoll or Tom as the Judge's murderer.

Some say that Mark Twain got his theme from Faulds but if the statement of Pudd'nhead before the court is considered it is definite that some ideas were borrowed from Herschel and Mayer too. Whatever may be the historical background of the fiction, there is no shade of doubt that it played a significant role in advancing the science.

Bengal's Bureau World's First

Thanks to the efforts of the above pioneers, today the Fingerprint Science has attained

worldwide popularity. Except some newly born states there exist fingerprint bureau in almost every country to record and examine the fingerprints of the criminals. The first bureau of the world was established in Bengal in 1897.

Prior to this, Bertillon's Anthropometry System (which was identification by bodily measurement) was in use. It was introduced in Bengal in 1892 while Edward Richard Henry was the Inspector-General of Police of Bengal. By 1898 this system spread all over India and 200,000 cards were collected. Edward Richard Henry ultimately scrapped this system and substituted it by fingerprints. He evolved a system of classification which was based on the prints of ten fingers. It produced astounding result. In 1897 an application was made to the Government of India for appointment of a committee to examine and report on the Henry system. The Committee consisted of Mr. Strahan, Surveyor-General of India and Mr. Alex Pedlar, Principal, Presidency College, Calcutta. In March 1897, the Committee met E.R. Henry at his office at Writer's Building, Calcutta. Being satisfied, the Committee recommended adoption of his system. In June 1897, the Governor-General in Council by a resolution declared that the system of identification of criminals by fingerprints should be generally adopted in India. In July 1897, the Fingerprint Bureau, Calcutta was established ringing the death knell of Bertillon system. This is the oldest bureau in the world but following the birth of India and

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Pakistan, it was divided between the two newly born States. In 1947 as a result of this division, a new bureau was started at Dacca (East Pakistan) with the experienced fingerprint technicians who opted for Pakistan from Calcutta Bureau. There are two more bureau in Pakistan—one functioning at Karachi and the other at Lahore. The world's biggest fingerprint collection is located in the Federal Bureau of Investigation (F.B.I.) U.S.A., which had its inception in Washington D.C. in 1908. In 1924 an identification unit was officially established in it. In U.S.A. the first introduction of fingerprints took place in 1904 when fingerprint bureaus were established in St. Louis Police Department and Leavenworth Penitentiary.

After the Calcutta Bureau was established the question arose as to whether the testimony of a fingerprint technician was admissible in evidence. In 1899 a special Act (Act V of 1892) was passed by the Indian Legislature adding the words, "or finger impressions" in Section 45 of the Indian Evidence Act (1872). Thereafter the testimony of fingerprint technicians became admissible in Indian Courts. In Pakistan the opinion of fingerprint technicians is also admissible.

Azizul Haque Claims He Invented

Fingerprint

Mr. Asirul Haque, a retired Deputy Superintendent of Police, East Pakistan claims that the Henry system of classification was actually devised by his father, late Khan Bahadur Azizul Haque while attached to Henry's office as a Sub-Inspector of Police. *Sec. B. C. Bridge's book, Practical Fingerprinting (P. 18).*



Khan Bahadur Azizul Haque

The claim is not wholly unfounded. In 1896 side by side with Anthropometric System, Henry began to maintain Separate records of criminals solely based upon fingerprints. But the main problem was classification and arrangement of fingerprint slips. Azizul Haque who was then attached to his office, was entrusted with the job. He was strong in Mathematics and within a few days he devised a mathematical formula based upon fingerprint patterns to accommodate fingerprint slips into 1024 pigeon holes. The success and development of Henry system mainly depended on this formula but his contribution

which has served to-day as a basis for recording of fingerprint slips in the fingerprint bureau world over, found no recognition by Henry in his book. In their joint article under the caption, "Personal Identification By Dermatoglyphics and the E-V Methods" published in March, 1957 issue of *The Patna Journal of Medicine*, Sreenivas, Lecturer in Medicine and officer-in-charge, Department of Cardiovascular Disease, Medical College Hospital, Patna and Saradindu Narayan Sinha, senior expert, C.I.D., Bihar, state that it was Khan Bahadur Azizul Haque who was responsible in great measures for devising technical details of Henry system.

In his letter dated the 27th September, 1926 to Khan Bahadur Azizul Haque, Mr. V.G. Aiyer, Editor, *Hindustan Review*, says:

"Dear Sir,

My attention has been drawn to a note passing round of the newspapers that the Government of India have sanctioned an honorarium of Rs. 5,000 in recognition of your service in connection with classification of fingerprints. I shall be much obliged by your kindly sending me one half dozen copies of your photographs for publication in the *Times of India* *Illustrated Weekly* and other permanent papers in India. If you cannot spare too many copies, please send me at least a copy from which I shall take copies and return the original if you so desire.

Kindly send me at least a para all in connection with your work in fingerprints and I shall make out a note out of the materials supplied to me.

Hoping to be excused for the trouble given to you,

I remain with regards,
Sincerely yours,
Sd/-V.G. Aiyer

The original letter is with Mr. Asirul Haque who lives at 13/1, Toyenbee Circular Road, Dacca.

An extract from the *Englishman* of the 8th January, 1912, published in *The Bengal Police Gazette* of the 12th January, 1912 says about Azizul Haque as follows. "A pleasing function took place on Saturday, the 6th instant at the United Service Club, Calcutta, when Sir Edward Henry, G.C.V.O., K.C.B., C.S.I., who wore the insignia of the Orders and is now here as an Equerry to His Majesty the King—Emperor, was entertained at a dinner by some 35 members of Indian Police, some of whom were his old colleagues when he was Inspector-General of Police, Bengal in 1891—99.

Sir Edward Henry who was visibly affected, was garlanded in Indian style and referred to cheerful manner in which the staff cooperated with him during the tenure of his office and singled out Maulvi Azizul Haque, Deputy Superintendent of Police to whose unsparring effort was due in no small degree the development and success of the Fingerprint system, which had just then been inaugurated."

An article published in the *Statesman* of January 28, 1925 tells about Henry system as follows, "the first system in the world which depended wholly on fingerprints." About Khan Bahadur Azizul Haque the same

article proceeds on: "A Mohamadan Sub-Inspector played an important and still insufficiently acknowledged part."

Khan Bahadur Azizul Haque who born in Paigram—Kasba, District Khulna, East Pakistan in 1872. He joined Bengal Police in 1892 as a Sub-Inspector of Police. Since 1900 he worked as Inspector in many districts in Bengal. In 1900 he was promoted to the rank of Deputy Superintendent of Police. In 1913 he was conferred with the title of Khan Shaheb. In 1919 he came to Matihari, district Champaran, Bihar as Deputy Superintendent of Police. Ultimately he rose to the rank of Superintendent of Police. He retired from service in 1923. He constructed in Matihari a house which he named "Aziz Manzil." The house is at a distance of a furlong from Matihari Railway station. In 1924, the Government of India awarded him an honorarium of Rs. 5,000 and a small *jagir* in recognition of his valuable service in fingerprints. In 1926 he was conferred with the title of Khan Bahadur. He died in April, 1935 at the age of 63 and was buried in the compound of his own house, "Aziz Manzil."

The name of another Police Official in Indo-Pakistan Sub-continent may be mentioned in this connection. He was Rai Bahadur Hem Chandra Bose who assisted Henry in devising subclassification.

