

Baker Street *Elementary*

PRESENTS
"THE LIFE AND TIMES IN VICTORIAN LONDON"



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THE LIFE AND TIMES IN VICTORIAN LONDON
144 - IF IT'S A PRINT, IT MUST BE TRUE - SEPTEMBER, 2023



WELCOME TO TOPIC NUMBER # 144... TODAY WE WILL
BE LOOKING AT FINGERPRINTING DURING THE
VICTORIAN PERIOD AND THEIR ROLE IN OUR STORIES.



**IN 'THE ADVENTURE OF THE NORWOOD BUILDER,'
BOTH LESTRADE AND HOLMES APPEARED TO BE ON
THE CUTTING EDGE OF CRIME SCENE
INVESTIGATIONS, BUT HOLMES WAS FARTHER
ALONG IN THE SCIENCE.**



LESTRADE FOUND A BLOODY THUMBPRINT AND
WAS CERTAIN IT IDENTIFIED THE MURDERER...
HOLMES, HOWEVER, REMAINED SKEPTICAL.



*BOTH WERE AWARE OF SUCH PRINTS COULD BE
USED TO IDENTIFY A CRIMINAL—BUT ONLY
HOLMES SAW IT COULD ALSO BE MISUSED.*



FINGER PRINTS



BY

FRANCIS GALTON, F.R.S., ETC.

THE CASE OF THE NORWOOD BUILDER OCCURRED IN AUGUST 1894... ONLY TWO YEARS EARLIER, SIR FRANCIS GALTON, A MEDICAL DOCTOR AND MATHEMATICIAN, PUBLISHED HIS BOOK FINGER PRINTS.





HE WAS NOT, HOWEVER, THE FIRST TO STUDY FINGERPRINTS... DR. HENRY FAULDS, A SCOTTISH MEDICAL MISSIONARY IN JAPAN, WROTE AN ARTICLE IN NATURE IN 1880.



IN IT, HE SHARED ABOUT THE FINGER MARKS HE'D FOUND IN ANCIENT POTTERY... IT WAS THE FIRST SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF FINGERPRINTS. .



HE COLLECTED AND COMPARED THE PRINTS FROM DIFFERENT PEOPLE AND EVEN SUGGESTED THEY COULD BE USED TO IDENTIFY CRIMINALS.





SIR WILLIAM HERSCHEL, A BRITISH CIVIL SERVANT STATIONED IN INDIA, WROTE IN THE NEXT EDITION OF NATURE ABOUT HIS USE OF FINGERPRINTS FOR SIGNING CONTRACTS SINCE 1860... IN IT, HE MENTIONED THAT NO TWO MATCHED.



IF NO TWO FINGERPRINTS WERE ALIKE, WHAT WAS NEEDED WAS A WAY TO CLASSIFY OR DESCRIBE THEM SO THEY COULD BE COMPARED WITH OTHER PRINTS.



January 9th, 1933.
Centenary of Sir William James Herschel
DISCOVERER of the PERMANENCE of FINGER-PRINTS.
Born at Observatory House, Slough, January 9th, 1833.
Died at Warfield, Berks, October 24th, 1917.

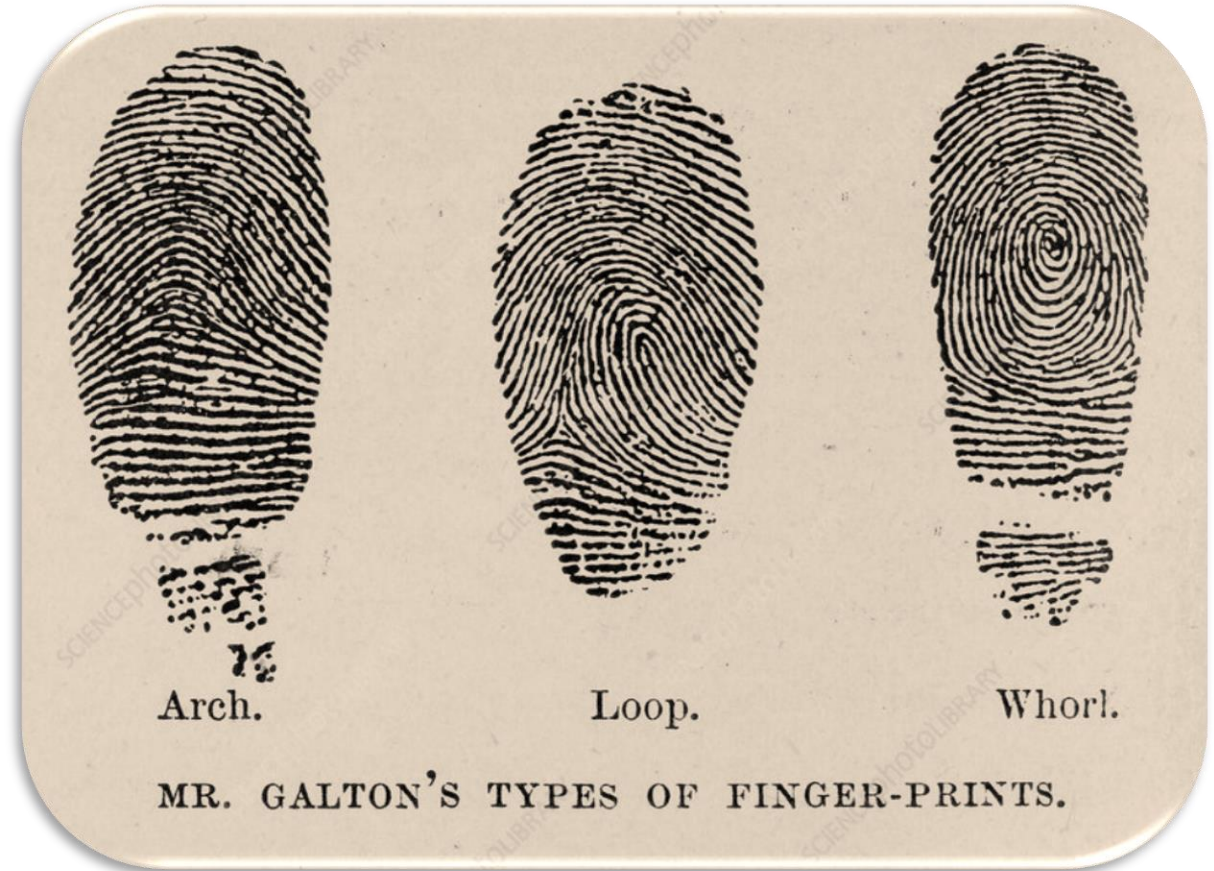
1st Right. June, 1859.
Middle Left. 1860.
1st Right. 1908.
Middle Left. 1917.

Signature 1859.
Signature 1917.
W. J. Herschel

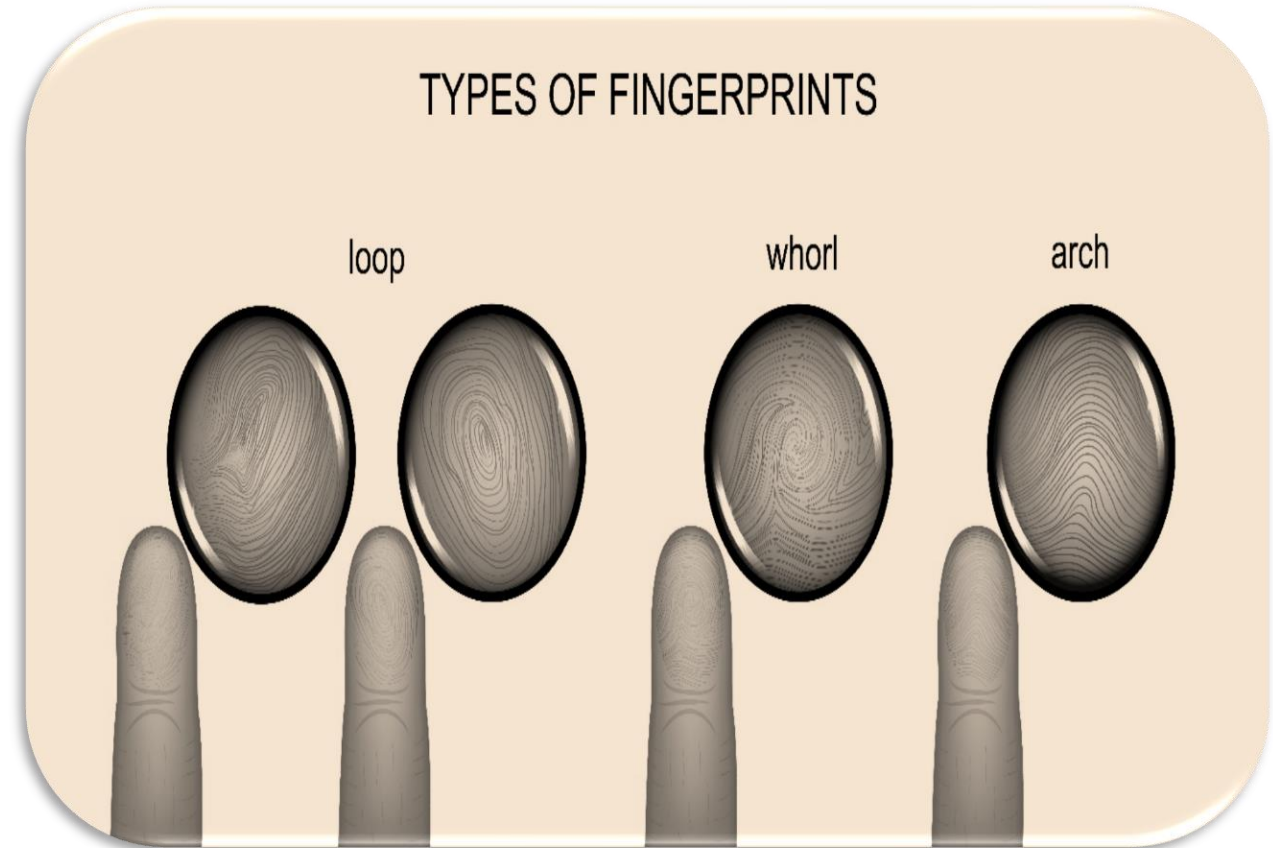
From a photograph taken at Oxford, about 1881, by Rev. J. C. Wilson.

The complex block is a commemorative page for the centenary of Sir William James Herschel. It features a central circular portrait of Herschel, a bearded man in profile. Surrounding the portrait are four fingerprints: the 1st Right (June 1859), Middle Left (1860), 1st Right (1908), and Middle Left (1917). Below the portrait is a signature from 1859 and another from 1917, which reads 'W. J. Herschel'. At the bottom, a note states the portrait was taken at Oxford in 1881 by Rev. J. C. Wilson. The top of the page is dated January 9th, 1933, and identifies Herschel as the discoverer of the permanence of fingerprints.

GALTON DEVELOPED SUCH A SYSTEM USING THREE CHARACTERISTICS HE CALLED THE PRINT'S LOOP, WHORL, AND ARCH... A FINGERPRINT IS MADE BY THE RAISED AREAS (RIDGES) THAT MAKE THE LINES ON THE FINGERTIPS.



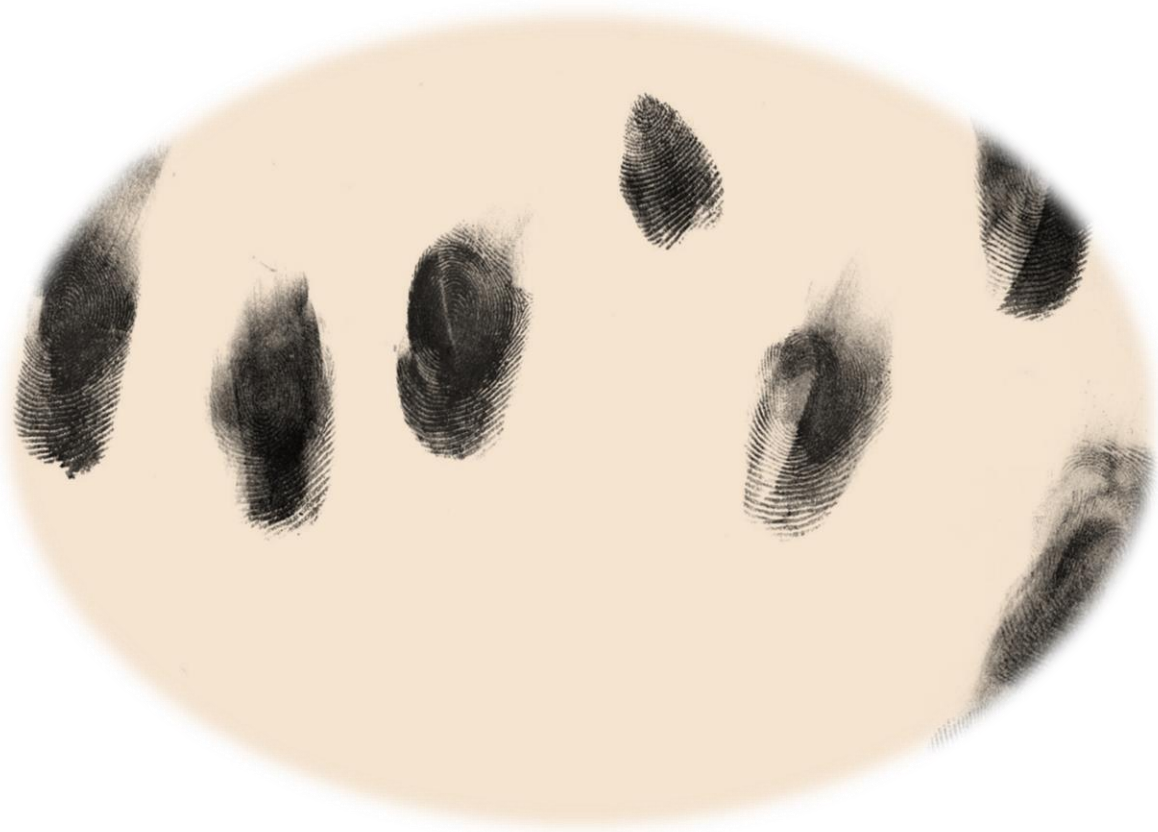
LOOPS ARE RIDGES THAT CURVE BACK ON THEMSELVES TO MAKE A LOOP... WHORLS ARE SPIRAL PATTERNS. ARCHES LOOK LIKE WAVES... SIR EDWARD RICHARD HENRY FURTHER DEVELOPED THESE DETAILS AND CREATED A SYSTEM FOR SCOTLAND YARD'S FINGERPRINT BRANCH 1901.



WITH THIS SYSTEM, A NEW PRINT COULD BE CLASSIFIED AND THEN COMPARED WITH PRINTS ALREADY ON FILE IN SCOTLAND YARD.



UNFORTUNATELY, NOT ALL PRINTS ARE AS CLEAR AS THE ONE FOUND IN THE NORWOOD BUILDER CASE... SOME CAN BE SMEARED OR ONLY PARTLY THERE.





EDMOND LOCARD STUDIED THIS PROBLEM. HE NOTED THAT WHEN NOT ENOUGH DETAILS CAN BE SEEN, THE PRINT COULD BE PRESUMED TO BE FROM A PERSON, BUT IT WOULD NOT BE FOR CERTAIN.



Michel
Mazévet

Edmond

le Sherlock Holmes français

Locard



EDITIONS DE STRABOU

HE ALSO DISCOVERED IT WAS POSSIBLE TO PLANT FALSE PRINTS USING A FINGER MADE FROM TREE GUM (A KIND OF RUBBER)... HE WROTE ABOUT THIS IN 1913... BUT HOLMES HAD FOUND THAT WAX COULD ALSO BE USED, WHICH IS WHAT HAPPENED IN THE NORWOOD BUILDER CASE'S BLOODY PRINT.





HIS DISCOVERY WAS ALMOST TWENTY YEARS BEFORE LOCARD'S... AS ALWAYS, HOLMES DEMONSTRATED HIS EXTENSIVE KNOWLEDGE OF CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION—THIS TIME CONCERNING THE USE AND MISUSE OF FINGERPRINTS—EVEN BEFORE IT BECAME STANDARD PRACTICE.



TAKE A LOOK AT YOUR FINGERTIPS... CAN YOU SEE ANY LOOPS? WHORLS? ARCHES? HOW DO THEY COMPARE WITH OTHERS AROUND YOU?



SO, WE HAVE COMPLETED TOPIC # 144 IN OUR SERIES...

WE WILL SOON BE BACK FOR TOPIC # 145...



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"THE LIFE AND TIMES IN VICTORIAN LONDON"

IS CREATED THROUGH THE INGENUITY & HARD WORK OF:

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LIESE SHERWOOD-FABRE

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