

Confirmatory Evidence as to the "Walter" Thumb Prints

By HERWARD CARRINGTON

Part I INTRODUCTORY

ON May 2, 1932, I received a letter from Mr. E. E. Dudley, asking me to send him impressions of my thumbs for purposes of comparison with those obtained in the Margery sittings. He added: "Such an investigation might seem to be of routine nature were it not for the fact that I have shown that the so-called 'Walter' prints (right and left thumbs) are identical with the prints of a living man who was present at about the time that you had sittings." Inasmuch as this discovery was of the very greatest importance, if true, I entered into a lengthy correspondence with Mr. Dudley, obtaining the details from him. The result was that a small Committee, composed of Mr. Arthur Goadby (Chairman), Marie Sweet Smith and myself (as members of the N. Y. Section Research Committee), visited Boston, where we met Mr. Dudley on June 6. We called on Dr. "Kerwin," for the purpose of obtaining his prints in our presence, if possible—for purposes of comparison—or, failing that, his refusal. He refused to make his prints, or to identify those made, although he did identify his signature on the signed sheet, containing his finger prints, before witnesses. This naturally led to an animated controversy within the Society as to the origin and significance of these prints. It was first claimed that the "Walter" thumb prints and those of Dr. "Kerwin" were not identical; this was disproved by careful comparisons made by the experts of the Boston and

New York Police Departments, who asserted that they *were*. Other contentions were similarly met and disposed of. Finally, in the July *Journal A. S. P. R.* a Statement appeared by the "Research Committee" of the Society, in which an attempt was made to show that the identity said to exist between the "Walter" and "Kerwin" thumb prints did not actually exist, for the reasons (1) that the *right* print offered for comparison was a Positive print, instead of a Negative, and (2) that the *left* print "used by Mr. Dudley" was not actually a genuine "Walter" left print at all, but seemingly "another" left print, which had been substituted (intentionally or otherwise) for the genuine "Walter" print. These points have been amply covered in the above statements by other writers, and need not be reiterated here. What I now have to offer is conclusive proof that no "substitution" of prints was at any time made, and that both left "Walter" prints reproduced in the *Journal* were actually "his."

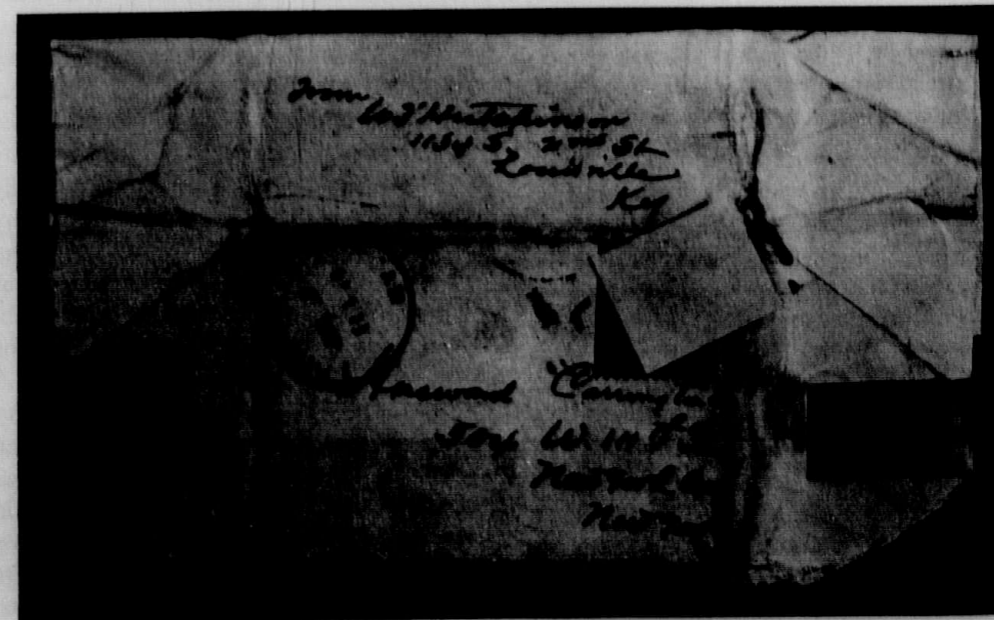
Part II DISCOVERY AND IDENTIFICATION OF THE MISSING WAX

Only four left thumb prints of "Walter" were obtained in the Margery sittings: three of these, on three separate pieces of wax, were obtained on August 23, 1927; one (paired with the right thumb) on December 3, 1927. One of the former was reproduced in the *Journal A. S. P. R.* October 1928, p. 564, with the caption: "The Print which 'Walter' presents as of his Left Thumb." The

latter is reproduced in the *Journal* for November 1929, p. 577. The statement is made by Dudley and Bird (p. 578) that this left print is identical with that already published, and on p. 579 the same statement is made by Fife. In both cases the statement is made that the three left prints made on August 23 are identical in pattern.

In the official Statement by the "Research Committee" it is said (July, 1932, p. 267):

and compared. If found to be identical in pattern, the Dudley print would no longer be "unique," but like the others obtained that evening. One of the left prints obtained that evening had been given to Mr. W. T. Hutchinson, of Cincinnati, Ohio. Now, it so happened that a report had somehow been circulated that Mr. Hutchinson had died. This report, however, proved erroneous! Mr. Hutchinson is still alive, and I communicated



A photographic reproduction (slightly less than actual size) of the wrapper of the box in which the wax of Fig. 7 was mailed.

... but the left print of 'Walter' used by Mr. Dudley seems to be unique in the series of left thumb prints produced by 'Walter,' the other contemporaneous left thumb prints of 'Walter' bearing no resemblance to Mr. X's [Dr. "Kerwin's"] left thumb print. The authenticity of the wax print of the left thumb shown in the photograph used by Mr. Dudley is, therefore, open to question."

It at once became evident that this statement could be disproved if one of the waxes obtained on August 23—other than the one reproduced in the *Journal*—could be secured

with him and obtained from him the wax in his possession, bearing the imprint of "Walter's" left thumb, obtained on August 23. It is here reproduced as Fig. 7, for purposes of comparison with the other left thumb print, of that date, shown as Fig. 5.* It will readily be seen to be identical in pattern. This

*The reader will easily satisfy himself that the pattern is also identical with that produced on December 3, 1927 (here shown as Fig. 8), which is, moreover, expressly declared in the *Journal* of November, 1929, p. 578, to be "an easily recognized duplicate," despite the fact that in the same organ, July, 1932, the print of which it is a "duplicate" is said to be "unique." The identity in pattern of the three "Walter" left thumb prints shown as Figs. 5, 7 and 8, and of the "Kerwin" left thumb print shown as Fig. 6 is obvious and beyond question.—Ed.