

In the early 1930's Mr. Hoover launched a program to locate scientists whose knowledge and experience might be used to guide a new scientific laboratory. On August 1, 1932, purchase of the first equipment for research purposes was approved. One piece of scientific equipment slowly followed another, but this simple collection was far from being a real laboratory. There followed the immense task of staffing the new Laboratory and training its personnel.

The FBI Laboratory was officially established on November 24, 1932. Gradually, scientists were recruited from specialized fields such as geology, metallurgy, mechanical engineering, mathematics, and other physical and biological scientists. Today, all Agents and many technicians assigned in the FBI Laboratory have at least one college degree and some hold Ph. D.'s in chemistry, physics, and other sciences. In addition, all have received extensive training in the FBI. The Agents assigned in the Laboratory have attended the same course of training which is received by all new FBI Agents. They also have served some time in one of the FBI's 58 field offices where they obtained investigative experience before returning to FBI Headquarters to undertake their scientific assignments.

Training is a never-ending process for the personnel assigned to the FBI Laboratory. They are in constant touch with other specialists in their field, attend and participate in numerous seminars, and constantly review scientific publications in their field of interest and responsibility. Many of them are continuing their formal education on a part-time basis or taking special courses.

The evidence examination work in the FBI Laboratory is highly specialized. For this reason, the Laboratory is divided into sections and units.

The units of the Document Section deal with examinations of handwriting, hand printing, typewriting, and forgeries. This Section also makes examinations of fraudulent checks, paper, inks, printing, obliterated writing, indented writing, charred paper, shoe prints, tire treads, photographs, and related matters.

The Physics and Chemistry Section is composed of several units which handle examinations involving chemistry, toxicology, firearms, toolmarks, hairs and fibers, blood and other body fluids, metallurgy, petrography, number restoration, glass fractures, spectography, and a wide variety of related matters.

The Radio Engineering Section consists of units which design and develop new radio communications equipment for use in the field, set up and maintain a network of radio stations for use in the event of an emergency, and serve in a consulting capacity in a large number of other matters relating to communications.

The Cryptanalysis-Translation Section is primarily responsible for examining cipher messages and translating documents encountered during the course of Bureau investigations or referred to the FBI by local law enforcement agencies.

In addition to a wide variety of precision scientific equipment, the FBI Laboratory maintains a number of reference collections which are a valuable aid to the scientist. One of these, the National Fraudulent Check File, contains nearly 100,000 specimens of the work of fraudulent check artists. Others include firearms, ammunition, automotive paints, hairs and fibers, tire treads, watermarks, typewriter standards, anonymous letters and bank robbery notes.

To insure that the FBI derives the maximum benefits of modern science, FBI Laboratory personnel are in regular contact with other scientists in Government, educational and private industry laboratories to keep abreast of new techniques and developments which might be applicable to scientific crime detection. Research in the FBI Laboratory also plays a vital role as FBI Laboratory personnel strive to develop new information and techniques which will assist the Nation's law enforcement profession maintain law and order. The knowledge and expertise so gained are disseminated through training lectures, scientific papers, and personal appearances.

During its first full year, the fiscal year ending June 30, 1934, the FBI Laboratory made 963 examinations. The number of examinations increased to 2,337 in the next fiscal year. The general acceptance that law enforcement has given to the importance of scientific analysis of evidence is illustrated by the fact that in the fiscal year 1967, some 330,516 examinations were made in the FBI Laboratory. These examinations often are responsible for the conviction of law breakers. Of equal, if not greater, importance is the fact that they frequently result in clearing the innocent.

The facilities of the FBI Laboratory are available without charge to all duly constituted State, county, and municipal law enforcement agencies of the United States and its territorial possessions. In addition to making examinations of evidence submitted to the Laboratory for examination, the FBI will also