

# The Men Who Guard The Mails

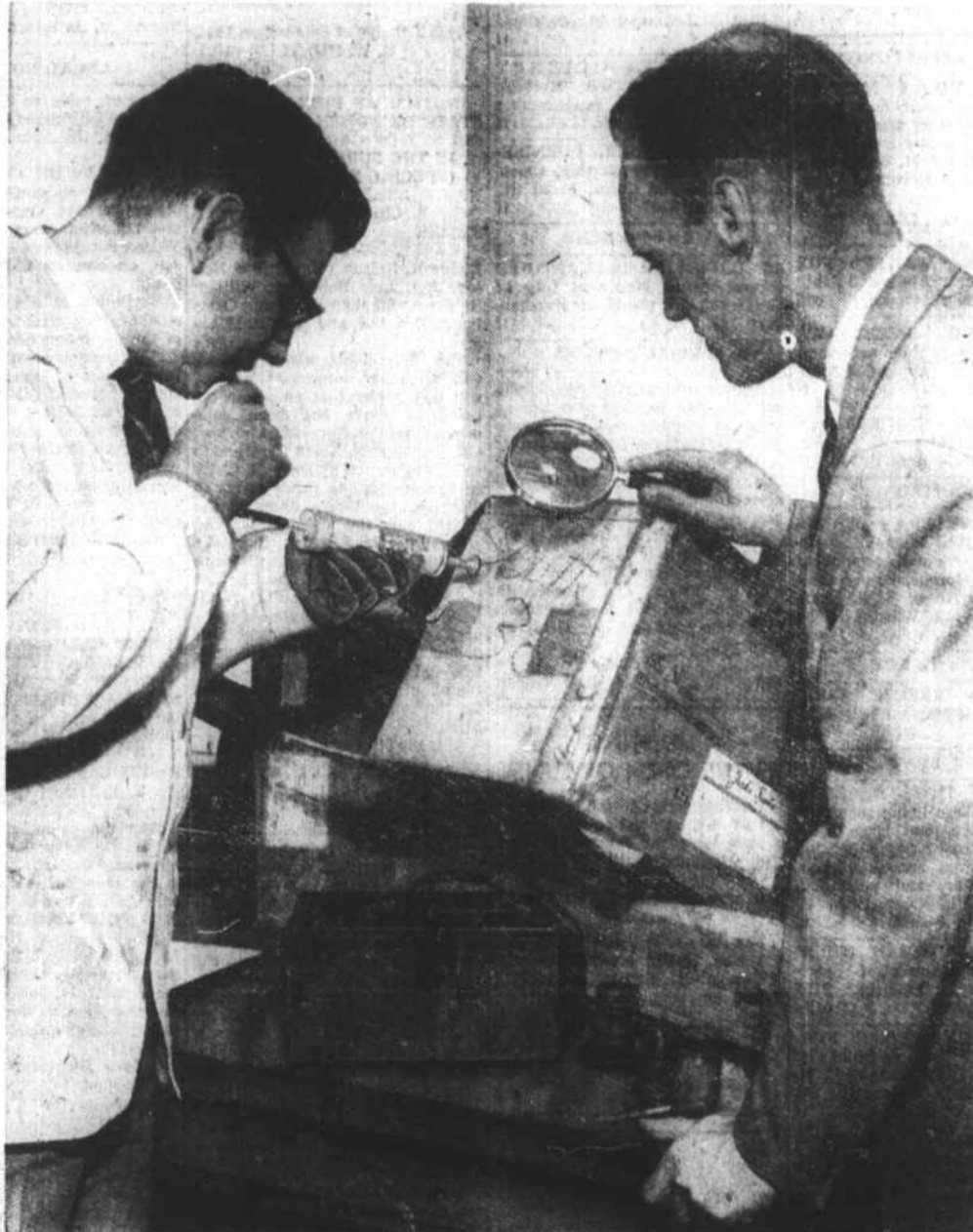


Sample of soil from shoe of suspected post office burglar is removed by Albert Somerford, director of lab. Soil is tested along with that found at scene.

Uncle Sam has a corps of detectives who are among the best in the business. They are the U.S. postal inspectors. They work for the country's oldest detective bureau. The postal inspection service has existed continuously in some form or another since Benjamin Franklin's time. It has operated substantially in its present form since 1875. It also has one of the highest batting averages. In some years, postal inspectors convict 98 per cent of the culprits they take to trial. Last year alone, their work resulted in 49,000 convictions.

One of the postal inspection service's most effective weapons against criminals is its laboratory in Washington. Here are cameras which can literally see through envelopes, the world's best files on inks and typewriters and various other devices. All its equipment is designed to stop criminals who use the mails to defraud or kill—forgers, swindlers who try to sell worthless stock, people who try to raise checks, murderers who send bombs and poisoned candy through the mail.

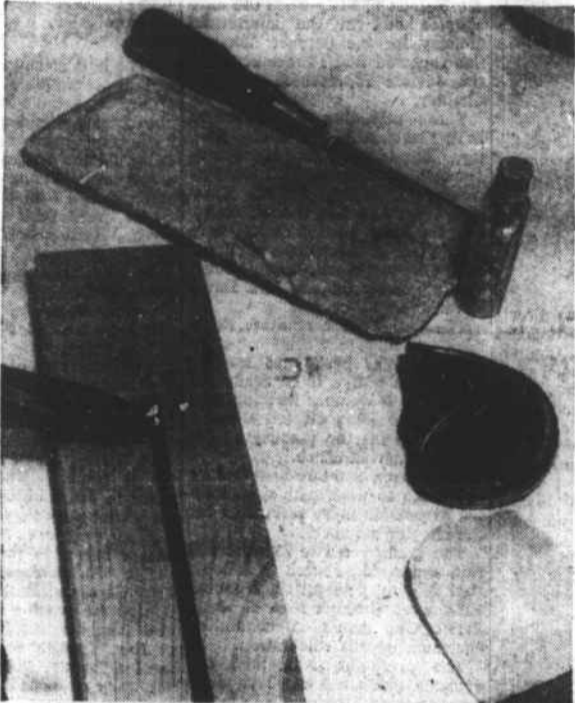
Here, we put the camera spotlight on the work in this highly effective laboratory.



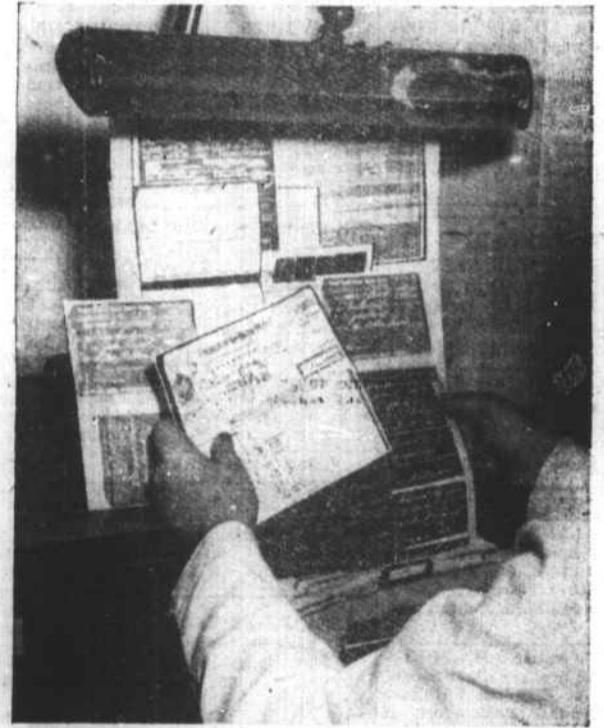
Box recovered after parcels post theft is examined by Richard Caronneau, left, and Inspector M. W. Brown. While Brown uses magnifying glass, Caronneau treats surface with chemical vapor which brings out prints.



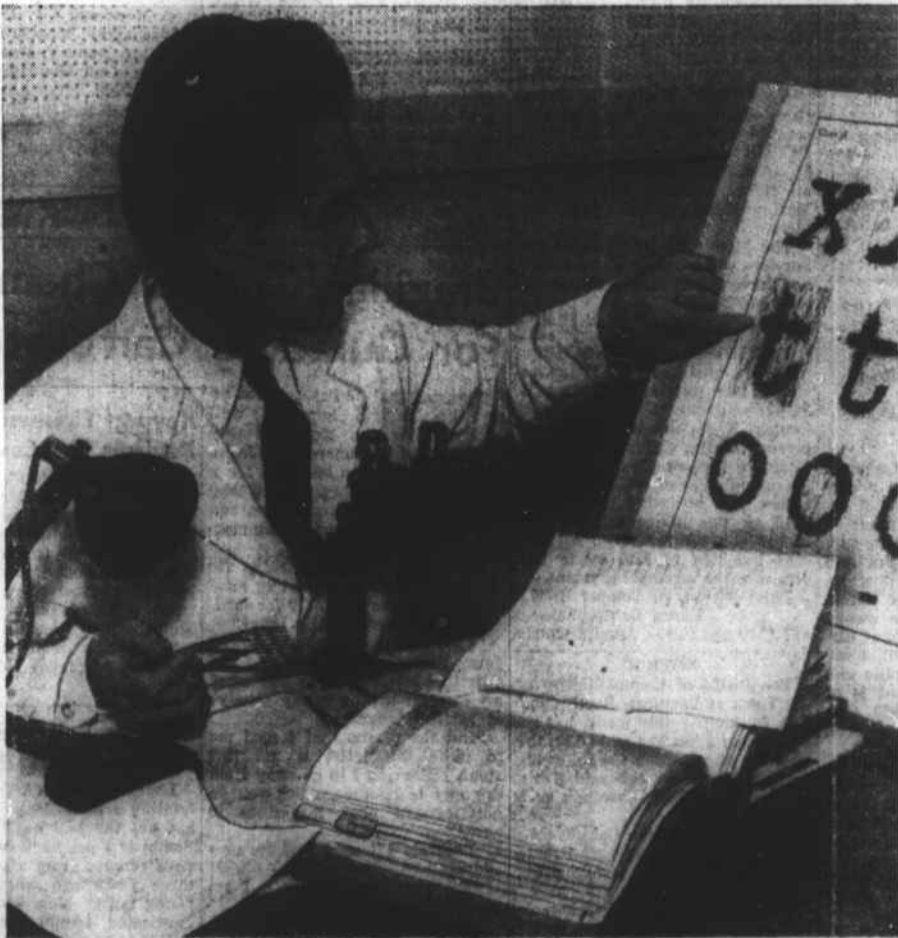
Laboratory director Albert Somerford shows how blown-up samples of handwriting are used in court.



Tools suspected of having been used in postoffice burglaries are checked by making marks in soft wood to compare with marks on P.O. doors and windows.



Suspected writing is compared with specimens of handwriting of major known postal forgers. File has pictures and writing of more than 1,000 forgers.



Gordon Stangohr compares typewriting in an anonymous letter case. Book on table contains type samples from every model of every make of American typewriter.



Laboratory experts Richard Caronneau, left, and Gordon Stangohr study a stereophograph of counterfeit postage stamp.

This Week's PICTURE SHOW by AP Staff Photographers William Smith and John Rous