Police Science Technical Abstracts and Notes

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Reproduction of Footprints

A number of valuable suggestions for the reproduction of footprints are described in an article which appeared in the October 1941 issue of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Quarterly.¹ In discussing methods of reproduction the author, Constable J. R. Abbott, divides footprints into two classes: two-dimension prints and three-dimension prints. The former are classified as dust prints (coal, flour, plaster, etc.) and wet prints (oil, blood, water, etc.); the latter are classified as non-porous (moist clay), porous (sand, soft earth, cement, etc.) and miscellaneous (submerged, as in mud puddles, and snow).

In making a reproduction of dust prints, a piece of stiff paper or cardboard coated with ordinary gelatine is pressed against the print, removed and dried, and sprayed with fixative. Directions are given for preparing the gelatine and coating the paper.² The same process is used for wet prints by first spraying them with powdered resin, graphite, or talc—thus transforming them into dust prints which can be lifted in the usual way.

For impressions in non-porous materials, as in the case of moist clay, no preliminary preparation of the print is undertaken. A thin mixture of plaster of Paris is simply ladled into the print, reinforced with bur-

² The use of ordinary photographic papers and films has been proposed by other technicians. (J. Crim. L. & Criminology (Police Sci. Sect.), 26: 273-274 (1935); 27: 598 (1936)).