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## ORGANIZATION OF A LAUNDRY MARK AND DRY CLEANERS' FILE

Clemens R. Maise

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A Laundry Mark and Dry Cleaners' File is a valuable weapon for fighting crime; well worth the time and trouble required for its preparation. By means of such a file it is possible to "clean up" any number of criminal cases where the only clue is an article of clothing left at the scene of the crime. The file permits the identification of the marks in clothing as having been made by a particular cleaner or laundry. The store's records then reveal the name and address of the owner of the clothes.

It is realized that in some Police Departments a file such as this will not be maintained by the Police Laboratory. It may instead be assigned to a special detective squad or bureau. This is generally true in very large departments such as Chicago and New York. In cities of 1½ million people or less, however, a Laundry Mark and Dry Cleaners' File can be nicely maintained by the Police Laboratory and serve as a valuable adjunct to its other fact finding facilities.

### HISTORY

The St. Louis Police Laboratory has maintained a Laundry Mark and Dry Cleaners' File since 1940. In the beginning, beat officers were assigned the job of canvassing the stores in their own precincts. Questionnaire forms were provided by the laboratory which were filled out for each store. Data from these forms was transferred to index cards, and the cards appropriately filed. As might be expected this system was not very satisfactory. It suffered from the old complaint of "too many cooks." Periodical revision is another essential that was neglected in the early days of the file, and thus it eventually became obsolete and worthless. A successful file, therefore, requires a small team of well trained canvassers as a first requisite, and yearly revision as a second. In one year's time a number of stores will have gone out of business, some new stores will have sprung up, and some will have changed their marking system.

Prior to 1951, canvassing was confined to St. Louis proper which has approximately 1100 stores and a population of 860,000. Since

1951, all stores in the entire metropolitan area have been canvassed. There are 1400 stores in this area which has a population of 1½ million. Individual suburbs have been encouraged to set up files for their own communities. This has helped arouse interest in the program and has proven mutually beneficial. One suburb (East St. Louis) solved three major crimes during the past year by use of their file. Needless to say, they are "sold" on the system.

### CANVASSING

St. Louis is divided into twelve police districts. The approximate number of stores in each district and in each suburb is known from previous canvassing. Districts and suburbs are assigned so that each laboratory technician will canvass approximately the same number of stores. To further facilitate canvassing, each district and suburb is subdivided into routes. This is a simple listing of stores by streets enabling the canvasser to cover his territory with greater speed. It is possible for one man to canvass from 15 to 20 stores per day. The canvass is started on January 2 of each year and completed by July first. The questionnaire which is filled out for each store has undergone

#### DEPARTMENT OF POLICE

#### CITY OF ST. LOUIS

#### LABORATORY

#### CLEANING AND LAUNDRY MARK QUESTIONNAIRE

	TAGS		CLOTHES		LAUNDRY		HATS	
	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped
PENCIL								
INK								
SERIAL								
NAME								
HOW FILED								
WHOLESALE								
Name of Firm					Manager			
Address					Telephone			

#### NOTES

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Figure 1.

considerable evolution since the original. What started out a lengthy paper with about 25 questions has now become a simple check sheet where most of the information is indicated by check marks. Written information is held to a minimum, which also helps to expedite the canvass. Figure 1 shows a Cleaning and Laundry Mark Questionnaire. Along the top of the sheet, four categories are indicated: TAGS, CLOTHES\*, LAUNDRY, and HATS. Each of these is subdivided according to whether the marks are written or stamped. Down the left side of the sheet four more categories are provided to indicate if pencil or ink is used and whether a serial number or name is used to identify the customer. In the space marked HOW FILED, the characteristic number, letter, or symbol of the store is recorded. Spaces are also provided for the name of the wholesaler, name of the firm, the manager, firm's address, and telephone number. The ruled space at the bottom permits any additional information to be recorded. As mentioned previously, this questionnaire has been developed as a result of a number of years experience in recording marking systems used by laundries and dry cleaners in the St. Louis metropolitan area. We believe it will work as well in other sections of the country.

THIS MARK.....

Identifies clothing handled by your store.  
Please report any change promptly to:

DEPARTMENT OF POLICE  
City of St. Louis  
LABORATORY

Central 6236

Station 317

*Figure 2.*

When a canvasser has filled out his questionnaire and before he leaves the store, he fills out an identification card (Figure 2) which he leaves with the manager. This card records the characteristic mark used by the store and requests the manager to notify the Police Laboratory in the event of any change. This is another attempt to keep the file as current as possible. It has been moderately successful.

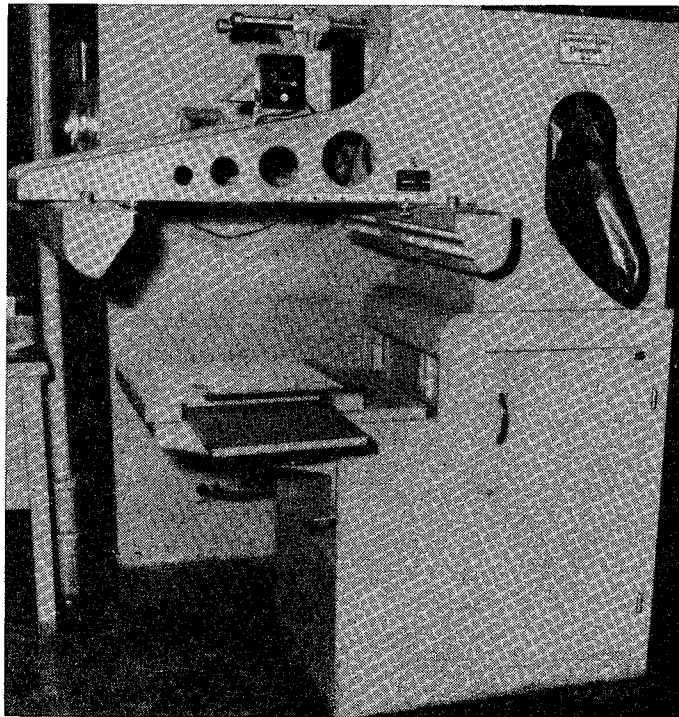
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\* Dry Cleaning.

### FILING SYSTEM

After each district or suburb has been canvassed, 3" x 5" index cards are prepared by making the desired number of photostats of the "boxed in" area of each questionnaire sheet. This is done on a Remington-Rand Dexigraph machine (Figure 3) which is used primarily by the St. Louis Police Department for photostating arrest records. When the photostat index cards have been completed they are prepared for filing by placing the store's characteristic letter, number, or symbol in the proper box at the top. These boxes are black on the questionnaire and white on the photostat to facilitate marking and filing.

The St. Louis Police Laboratory's Laundry Mark and Dry Cleaners' File has four main divisions as indicated across the top of the questionnaire sheet. The TAG FILE includes all tags regardless of how they are used by a particular store. The CLOTHES, LAUNDRY, and HAT files are an index of marks made on the respective garments themselves. Figure 4 shows a break-down of the entire file including sub-classifications. It might be pointed out that the "general" sub-classification reaches considerable volume in the TAG FILE, but is very small in the



*Figure 3.*

other three main divisions. Also, the use of symbols is relatively unpopular as compared with the other types of store designations.

### POLICE LABORATORY'S LAUNDRY MARK FILE

- TAG FILE: Numerical  
 Alphabetical  
 Symbols  
 Name or Initials of Customer  
 General: 1. Completely stamped  
     a. Strip tags  
     b. Serial only  
     c. Serial & date  
         1. Alphabetical  
         2. Numerical  
     d. Serial & number of pieces  
     e. All others  
 2. Completely written  
     a. Serial only  
     b. Serial & date  
         1. Alphabetical  
         2. Numerical  
     c. Serial & name  
     d. Serial & number of pieces  
     e. Serial, name & date  
     f. Serial, name & number of pieces  
     g. All others  
 3. Combination
- CLOTHING FILE: (same)  
 LAUNDRY FILE: (same)  
 HAT FILE: (same)

Figure 4.

In order to clarify the canvassing and filing system, ten different index cards will be presented and explained at this point.

	TAGS		CLOTHES		LAUNDRY		HATS <i>M</i>	
	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped
PENCIL							✓	
INK								
SERIAL								
NAME							✓	
HOW FILED							<i>M</i>	
							<i>Name</i>	
WHOLESALE							<i>Self</i>	
Name of Store	<i>Model Hats</i>				Manager <i>Paul Harris</i>			
Address	<i>8 South 15th St.</i>				Telephone <i>U.P.-4-9120</i>			

Figure 5.

Figure 5 shows the photostatic copy of an index card for the Model Hats store, located at 8 South 15th Street. The manager is Paul Harris, and the telephone number is Upton 4-9120. This store engages in hat cleaning work exclusively.

The two check marks show that pencil is used to write the customer's name (or initials) on the hat itself. This is done on the sweat band. The box immediately below the check marks shows that a capital "M" is written above the customer's name (or initials) to identify the store. The word "self" indicates that the store does its own work. This card will be prepared for filing by placing a capital "M" in the white box in the extreme upper right hand corner. It will then be placed in the alphabetical category of the HAT FILE.

	TAGS		CLOTHES		LAUNDRY		HATS	
	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped
PENCIL								
INK					✓			
SERIAL								
NAME					NAME			
HOW FILED					□.			
WHOLESALE					Self			
Name of Firm Long Laundry					Manager Charlie Long			
Address 1709 Market					Telephone GA-4865			

Figure 6.

Figure 6 shows a photostat of an index card for the Long Laundry, located at 1709 Market Street. Charlie Long is the manager, and the telephone number is Garfield 4865. This store handles nothing but laundry. The check mark indicates that ink is used to write the customer's name or mark (Chinese) on the garment itself. A symbol consisting of a square and two dots is used to identify the store and is written on the garment. This store does its own work as indicated by the word "self." The symbol will be written in the white box which is just to the right of the word Laundry at the top of the card. The card will then be filed under symbols in the LAUNDRY FILE.

	TAGS		CLOTHES		LAUNDRY		HATS	
	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped
PENCIL								
INK							✓	
SERIAL								
NAME							✓	
HOW FILED						B-Name		
WHOLESALE					Self			
Name of Firm Bond Hat Co.					Manager Earl Neely			
Address 1903 Bond					Telephone UP-3-2656			

Figure 7.

Figure 7 shows an index card for the Bond Hat Company located at 1903 Bond Street. The manager is Earl Neely, and the telephone number is Upton 3-2656. This store handles hat cleaning only. The check marks show that ink is used to write the customer's name (or initials) on the hat itself. A capital "B" written

before the customer's name (or initials) identifies the store. This store does its own work. A capital "B" followed by a dash will be placed in the white box in the extreme upper right hand corner of the card, and it will be filed in the alphabetical category of the HAT FILE.

	TAGS		CLOTHES		LAUNDRY		HATS	
	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped
PENCIL					Fantom Fast			
INK					✓			
SERIAL					:::			
NAME					Self			
HOW FILED					:::			
WHOLESALER					Self			
NAME OF FIRM	J. Arthur Anderson				Manager C.B. Chauvin			
Address	4940 Washington Av				Telephone RD-2200			

Figure 8.

Figure 8 shows an index card for the J. Arthur Anderson Laundry located at 4940 Washington Avenue. The manager is C. B. Chauvin, and the telephone number is Rosedale 2200. This is a laundry exclusively. The customer's name and a five dot symbol to identify the store, are stamped on each garment in invisible ink. This is a patented process known as the "Fantom Fast" system. The ink that is used will fluoresce under ultraviolet light and is thus made legible. This store also does its own work. The five dot symbol will be placed in the white box just to the right of the word Laundry at the top of the card, and the card filed under symbols in the LAUNDRY FILE. Special equipment is used in connection with "Fantom Fast" system which is sold nation wide by the National Marking Machine Company, 4026-30 Cherry Street, Northside, Cincinnati 23, Ohio. This company assigns a distinctive symbol to each laundry that uses the system. A blueprint complete with names and addresses of laundries throughout the United States using this system may be obtained by writing to this company. The latest revision of this blueprint should be part of every Laundry Mark and Dry Cleaners' File.

	TAGS		CLOTHES		LAUNDRY		HATS	
	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped
PENCIL								
INK		✓		✓				✓
SERIAL		✓		✓				✓
NAME								
HOW FILED	A-P-X		A-P-X		Already Filed Sep.		A-P-X	
WHOLESALER			Self		St. Clair		London	
NAME OF FIRM	Broadway				Manager Geo Marifian			
Address	1401 E. Broadway				Telephone ULP-4-1722			

Figure 9.

Figure 9 shows an index card for the Broadway Cleaners located at 1401 E. Broadway. The manager is George Marifian, and the telephone number is Upton 4-1722. This store handles dry cleaning, laundry, and hat cleaning. The check marks under Tags indicate that tags with a serial number stamped in ink are



used to identify the customer, and capital letters "A," "P," or "X" are used to designate the store. The same designations are stamped in clothes and in hats as indicated by check marks in those two respective columns. This store does its own dry cleaning but sends its laundry and hat cleaning work out to a wholesaler. The St. Clair Laundry handles its laundry business and places its own identifying marks in the garments. These marks have already been filed for the St. Clair Laundry on another index card. The Broadway Cleaners do not place any marks in laundry themselves. The wholesaler for hats is the London Cleaners. Nine duplicate index cards will be prepared for this store: three for the TAG FILE, three for the CLOTHES FILE, and three for the HAT FILE. One card will be used for each of the letter designations, "A," "P," and "X" in each of the three files, and then filed under the alphabetical classification in each instance. Since this store does not mark laundry itself, no cards will be made for the LAUNDRY FILE. Actual tag samples obtained from this store will be clipped to the TAG FILE index cards.

	TAGS		CLOTHES		LAUNDRY		HATS	
	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped
PENCIL								
INK	✓		✓				✓	
SERIAL	✓		✓				✓	
NAME								
HOW FILED	EX		-EX		None		-EX	
WHOLESALE			Self		"		Majestic	
Name of Firm	Exchange Cleaners					Manager Jake Bohnak		
Address	731 Exchange St.					Telephone 71 P-2897		

Figure 10.

Figure 10 shows an index card for the Exchange Cleaners, located at 731 Exchange Street. The manager is Jake Bohnak, and the telephone number is Upton 2897. This store handles dry cleaning and hat cleaning. It does not take in laundry. The check marks show that tags are used with a serial number written in ink to designate the customer and a suffix "EX" to identify the store. This same identification is written in ink on garments to be dry cleaned and in hats. This store does its own dry cleaning, but sends its hat cleaning work to the Majestic Cleaners. Three duplicate index cards will be prepared for this store: one for the TAG FILE, one for the CLOTHES FILE, and one for the HAT FILE. The letters "—EX" will be placed in the appropriate white box at the top of the cards, and each will be filed in the alphabetical category. A tag sample obtained from this store will be clipped to the TAG FILE index card.

Figure 11 shows an index card for the Division Cleaners located at 21 Collinsville Avenue. The manager is Chris Ponlos, and the telephone number is Upton 4-9682. This store handles dry cleaning and hat cleaning. It does not take in laundry. The check marks under Tags show that a serial number written in pencil is used to identify the customer. The box below shows that no store designation is used on tags. The check marks under Clothes and Hats show that a serial number written in pencil as well as the persons' name or initials is used to identify the customer. The store designation is "21C" written above the serial number or name. These marks are written on the articles themselves. This store does its own dry cleaning and hat cleaning work. Five duplicate index cards will be prepared for the Division Cleaners: one for the TAG FILE, two for the CLOTHES FILE, and two for the HAT FILE. The Tag File card will have the letters GEN (meaning

	TAGS		CLOTHES		LAUNDRY		HATS	
	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped
PENCIL	✓		✓				✓	
INK								
SERIAL	✓		✓				✓	
NAME			✓				✓	
HOW FILED	Serial only General		<u>21C</u>		None		<u>21C</u>	
WHOLESALE			Self		"		Self	
Name of Firm <u>Division Cleaners</u>					Manager <u>Chris Paulos</u>			
Address <u>21 Collinsville Ave.</u>					Telephone <u>U.P.-4-9682</u>			

Figure 11.

general) placed in the white box to the right of the word Tags. A tag sample obtained from the store will be clipped to the card, and it will be filed under "General"—"Completely written"—"Serial only." Clothes and Hat File index cards will be cross indexed under "21" and "C" in the numerical and alphabetical categories of these two files. The designation "21C" will be written in the proper white boxes of these cards.

	TAGS		CLOTHES		LAUNDRY		HATS	
	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped
PENCIL								
INK	✓	✓						
SERIAL	✓							
NAME								
HOW FILED	168-144		Not Marked		Already Filed See 8		Not Marked	
WHOLESALE			Yawitz Mutual		Grand 2		Self	
Name of Firm	Busy Bee Cleaners				Manager Isadore Palan			
Address	503 N. 18th St.				Telephone GA-8979			

Figure 12.

Figure 12 shows an index card for the Busy Bee Cleaners, located at 503 N. 18th Street. The manager is Isadore Palan, and the telephone number is Garfield 8979. This store handles dry cleaning, laundry, and hat cleaning. The check marks under Tags show that a serial number written in ink is used to identify the customer. The box below shows that the figures "168" or "144" stamped in ink on the tag designates the store. No check marks appear under Clothes, Laundry, or Hats. This indicates that no marks of any kind are placed on wearing apparel by Busy Bee Cleaners. The boxes below show that this store does its own hat cleaning, but sends its dry cleaning and laundry to two different wholesalers: Yawitz Mutual and Grand Laundry, respectively. The Grand Laundry does use identifiable marks, and these have already been filed on separate cards.

Only two duplicate index cards will be prepared for Busy Bee Cleaners: both for the TAG FILE. One card will be filed numerically under 168 and the other under 144. A tag sample will be clipped to each card.

Figure 13 shows an index card for the Triangle Cleaners, located at 1200 Clark Avenue. The manager is John Bigsby, and the telephone number is Central 6236. This store handles dry cleaning, laundry, and hat cleaning. The check marks under Tags show that a serial number stamped in ink is used to identify the cus-

	TAGS		CLOTHES		LAUNDRY		HATS	
	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped
PENCIL					✓			
INK		✓		✓				
SERIAL		✓			✓			
NAME				✓				
HOW FILED	Ser-Date-Nu General		Δ —		21 —		Not Marked	
WHOLESALE			Self		Griggs		London	
Name of Firm	Triangle Cleaners				Manager John Bigsby			
Address	1200 Clark Ave.				Telephone CE. 6236			

Figure 13.

tomer. The box immediately below shows that no store designation is used and that the tag simply bears a serial number and a date which is indicated by a number. One index card will be prepared for the TAG FILE. It will be filed under "General"—"Completely stamped"—"Serial and Date"—"Numerical." A tag sample will be obtained from the store and clipped to the index card. The letters GEN will be written in the proper white box at the top.

The check marks under clothes indicate that the customer's name (or initials) is stamped on garments to be dry cleaned, in ink. A triangle prefix identifies the store. One index card will be prepared for the CLOTHES FILE. It will be filed under symbols. A triangle will be placed in the proper white box at the top.

The check marks under Laundry show that a serial number is written on the garments in pencil to identify the customer. The box immediately below shows that a figure prefix 21 designates the store. One index card will be prepared for the CLOTHES FILE. It will be filed under the numerical classification. The figure 21 will be placed in the proper white box at the top of the card.

The absence of check marks under Hats shows that no marks are placed in hats by the Triangle Cleaners. No index cards, therefore, will be made for the HAT FILE.

The Triangle Cleaners do their own dry cleaning but send their laundry work and hat cleaning out to a wholesaler. Their laundry is done by Griggs, and their hat cleaning is done by London.

	TAGS		CLOTHES		LAUNDRY		HATS	
	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped	Written	Stamped
PENCIL								
INK		✓	✓				✓	
SERIAL		✓	✓				✓	
NAME								
HOW FILED	Strip Tags General		AR —		None		AR —	
WHOLESALE			Self		"		Self	
Name of Firm	Aragon Cleaners				Manager H.P. Mick			
Address	1516 State				Telephone UPTON 3-5602			

Figure 14.

Figure 14 shows an index card for the Aragon Cleaners, located at 1516 State Street. The manager is H. P. Mick, and the telephone number is Upton 3-5602. This store takes in dry cleaning and hat cleaning. It does not take in laundry.

The check marks under Tags show that a serial number stamped in ink is used to identify the customer. The box immediately below shows that these tags are what is known as "strip tags." These resemble the tags used to check hats and coats at hotels and restaurants. They are called "strip tags" because they come in strips of 5 or 6 duplicate tags. The store usually buys them in books. The tags are printed in advance. One "strip tag" is clipped to the garment and a duplicate is given the customer. When he claims his clothes, both tags are destroyed, and no permanent records are kept. One index card will be prepared for the TAG FILE. It will be filed under "General"—"Completely Stamped"—"Strip Tags." A tag sample will be clipped to the card.

The check marks under Clothes and under Hats both show that a serial number written in ink is used to identify the customer. A prefix "AR" is used to designate the Aragon Cleaners. All of these marks are written on the respective articles. One index card will be prepared for the CLOTHES FILE, and one will be prepared for the HAT FILE. Both will have the letters "AR" placed in the proper white box at the top of the cards, and each will be placed in the alphabetical category.

### SPECIAL PROBLEMS

It is readily seen from the foregoing material that greater uniformity in the marking systems of cleaners and laundries is certainly desired. Because of the relatively large number of stores who do not place identifiable marks in clothes (written on the garment itself) the file is estimated to be only about 75 percent effective. Numerous cleaners use only tags which they remove when garments are claimed by the customer. If tags are left on the garments, they are subject to removal by the customer. Such garments can not be identified. The ideal arrangement, from a police point of view, would be for every cleaner and laundry to write a distinctive store and customer identification on every article of men's apparel, on the garment itself. In St. Louis our canvassers do attempt to accomplish this, and these attempts have met with moderate success.

Another approach to this problem is through legislation. The State of Connecticut recently enacted a law requiring all dry cleaners and laundries to report to the commissioner of state police, the type and style of identification marks which are attached to, or stamped, or written upon, garments handled by them. This law also requires such stores to retain customer records for ninety days. Failure to comply with this law is punishable by fine of not more than one hundred dollars, or imprisonment for not more than three months, or both.

Maplewood, Missouri, a suburb of St. Louis has a city ordinance in effect which has been copied from the Connecticut law. Both are experiments, and it will be interesting to observe the extent to which these laws solve the problem. Neither law, however, requires the cleaner or laundry to place store and customer identification marks on the gar-

ment itself. Both permit the use of tags which are easily removed. In this respect they both fall short of the ideal.

### HOW GARMENTS ARE EXAMINED

When articles of clothing found at the scene of a crime are forwarded to the Police Laboratory for identification, they are systematically examined for cleaner's marks. These marks are usually written or stamped on the sleeve lining of coats, inside the shoulder. On trousers they are most likely to be placed on the inside of the waist band or on the pockets as seen from inside the trousers. On dress shirts and undershirts, the inside of the neck band is a favorite spot. On shorts and briefs, the waist band is generally used. In the case of tags, however, no rule can be followed except that the entire garment should be thoroughly examined. Shirts and underwear should always be examined beneath an ultraviolet lamp for possible "Fantom Fast" marks. If the Laundry Mark and Dry Cleaners File has been carefully set up no difficulty should be experienced from this point on.

### AN INTERESTING CASE

Figure 15 shows a photograph of the inside of a hat which the St. Louis Police Laboratory received from the Chicago Police Department on September 12, 1951. The name Boyd's, St. Louis is visible in the hat band which explains why the photograph was sent to us. Two cleaners marks are also visible. This hat was evidence in a case of armed robbery as explained in the letter of transmittal. The cleaners

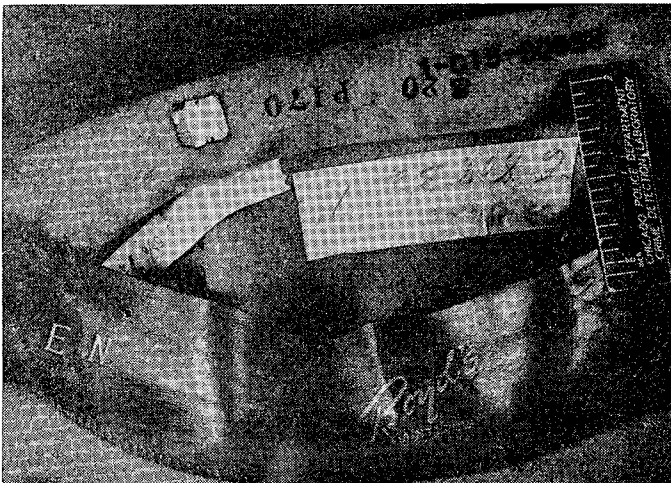


Figure 15.

mark 1-C15-80832 was identified as the Enterprose Cleaners located at 4225 W. Easton Avenue. This mark was found in the HAT FILE under "General"—"Completely Stamped"—"Serial and Date." The "1" indicates that one article was cleaned. The "C" indicates the third month: March. The "15" indicates the date. The serial number 80832 identifies the customer who was E. Neal, 4251 Easton Avenue. This checked with the initials E. N. in the band. A check of the Identification Bureau's files revealed that this man had a long record of arrests, and his photograph and fingerprints were on file. At his St. Louis address, his sister was located who in turn gave his Chicago address. All this information was forwarded to the Chicago Police. Many more examples could be cited where criminal cases were "cleaned up" by use of the Laundry Mark and Dry Cleaners File when the only clue was an article of clothing left at the scene of the crime.