

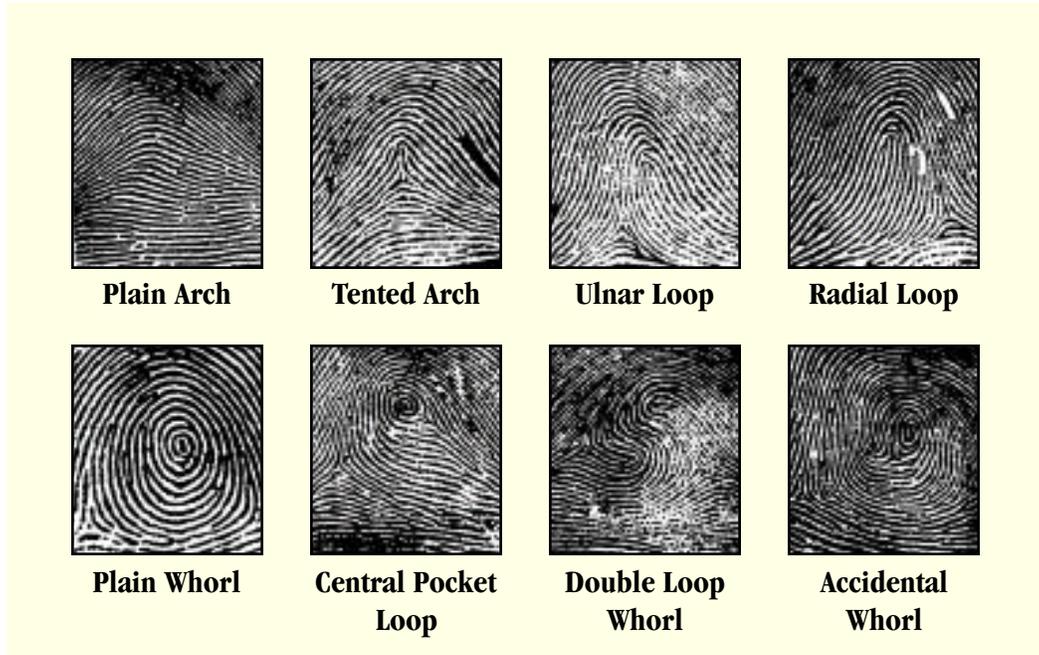
# Fingerprint Identification

## *Introduction*

**F**ingerprint Identification is the method of identification using the impressions made by the minute ridge formations or patterns found on the fingertips. No two persons have exactly the same arrangement of ridge patterns, and the patterns of any one individual remain unchanged throughout life. Fingerprints offer an infallible means of personal identification. Other personal characteristics may change, but fingerprints do not.

Fingerprints can be recorded on a standard fingerprint card or can be recorded digitally and transmitted electronically to the FBI for comparison. By comparing fingerprints at the scene of a crime with the fingerprint record of suspected persons, officials can establish absolute proof of the presence or identity of a person.

## **Fingerprint Pattern Type**



## **History**

The first year for the first known systematic use of fingerprint identification began in the United States is 1902. The New York Civil Service Commission established the practice of fingerprinting applicants to prevent them from having better qualified persons take their tests for them. The New York state prison system began to use fingerprints for the identification of criminals in 1903. In 1904 the fingerprint system accelerated when the United States Penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kansas, and the St. Louis, Missouri, Police Department both established fingerprint bureaus. During the first quarter of the 20th century, more and more local police identification bureaus established fingerprint systems. The growing need and demand by police officials for a national repository and clearinghouse for fingerprint records led to an Act of Congress on July 1, 1921, establishing the Identification Division of the FBI.

In 1924 the Identification Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) was established to provide one central repository of fingerprints. When the Identification Division was established its purpose was to provide a central repository of criminal identification data for law enforcement agencies throughout the Nation. However, in 1933 the United States Civil Service Commission (now known as the Office of Personnel Management) turned the fingerprints of more than 140,000 Government employees and applicants over to the FBI. Therefore, a Civil Identification Section was established. These innovations marked the initiation of the FBI's Civil File which was destined to dwarf the criminal files in size. In 1992 the Identification Division was re-established as the Criminal Justice Information Services Division (CJIS).



### **The New Age of Electronic Fingerprint Identification**

Fingerprints are now processed through the Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System. The fingerprints are submitted electronically or by mail, processed on IAFIS, and a response is returned to the contributing agency within two hours or less for electronic criminal fingerprint submissions and twenty-four hours or less for electronic civil fingerprint submissions. Fingerprint processing has been reduced from weeks and months to hours and minutes with IAFIS.