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Pacific Coast INTERNATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT NEWS



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Richard H. Wootton
Former Director, State Bureau of Criminal
Identification and Investigation
Salt Lake City, Utah
(Story of his recent retirement on page one)

**Volume XVI
Number 3**

*PUBLISHED IN THE
INTEREST OF
LAW ENFORCEMENT*

March

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Volume XVI

Number 3

March

1949

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
PACIFIC COAST INTERNATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF LAW
ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS

DISTRICT ATTORNEYS'
ASSOCIATION OF THE STATE
OF OREGON

OREGON STATE SHERIFFS'
ASSOCIATION

OREGON ASSOCIATION OF
CITY POLICE OFFICERS

WASHINGTON
POLICE OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF
CHIEFS OF POLICE

To generally promulgate interstate, provincial
and international cooperation of law enforce-
ment officers, thereby increasing efficiency
through assisting the organization and main-
tenance of active local law enforcement
organizations.

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Dates and Locale of Coming Conventions

Pacific Coast International
Association of Law
Enforcement Officials
May 31-June 4, inclusive
Long Beach, California

Washington Association of
Chiefs of Police
and

Washington Police Officers'
Association
(Joint conference)
June 10-11

Aberdeen, Washington
With Aberdeen and Hoquiam
Departments Sharing Host Honors

Pacific Coast INTERNATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT NEWS

On the Cover

THIRTY-SEVEN years in law enforce-
ment work is the record established
by Richard H. Wootton, affectionately
known as "Dick" by his many friends.
Mr. Wootton retired on a pension as
director of the Utah State Bureau of
Criminal Identification and Investigation,
effective March 1, 1949.

Mr. Wootton became interested in law
enforcement when he joined the Ogden
Police Department in May, 1912. He
worked as a patrolman for eight months,
and then was advanced to plainclothes
man and later detective. In January, 1917,
he joined the staff of the sheriff's office
of Weber County, in Ogden, Utah. An
incident then occurred which gave him
an incentive to study fingerprints; a
science then practically unused by the
law enforcement officers.

A young man in a uniform of the
United States Army, evidently an amnesia
victim, was brought in to the sheriff's
office. He could neither talk nor write,
and had no means of identification on
his person or belongings. After receiving
medical attention locally for several weeks
he was committed to the state mental
hospital. He died six months later, and
was buried as an "unknown." Upon
learning of this, Mr. Wootton said: "Such
a thing will never happen again, if I can
possibly prevent it."

He immediately took up the study of
fingerprints, and in 1921 rejoined the
Ogden Police Department to establish
its identification bureau. He wrote hun-
dreds of letters and contacted many in-
dividual officers throughout the inter-
mountain territory trying to interest them
in fingerprint work as a means of posi-
tive identification. He learned that the
best way would be through an organiza-
tion of officers. He was successful in
getting sixteen officers into a conference
in the office of the chief of police in
Salt Lake City. This was the beginning
of the present Utah Peace Officers Asso-
ciation.

In 1925, at the request of the governor
of Utah and prison officials, he accepted
the position of deputy warden and estab-
lished the prison identification system.
Photographs had been the only means

of identification up to that period.

Through the efforts of the Utah Peace
Officers Association, a law was enacted
by the 1927 legislature establishing a
state bureau of identification and Mr.
Wootton was appointed its first director
in April, 1927. This position he held
continuously until his recent retirement.

Mr. Wootton was born in Midway,
Wasatch County, Utah, on December 20,
1881. In his youth he worked on his
father's farm, hauled lumber and did rail-
road construction work.

He has always been interested in mak-
ing law enforcement work a profession;
hence his interest in establishing an asso-
ciation in Utah for that purpose. Through
his efforts the Association became one
of the first in the country to foster and
promote scientific work among the offi-
cers. Fingerprint bureaus were gradually
established in the police and sheriff de-
partments throughout the state. Police
schools were brought to the outlying dis-
tricts. As a reward for his efforts, Mr.
Wootton was elected the first president
of the Association, and served three terms.
He is now a life member.

Mr. Wootton has always been inter-
ested in civic affairs. He aided in organ-
izing the Sons of Utah Pioneers; served
as its first secretary and later as president.

He is married, has three daughters,
eight grandchildren, and one great-grand-
daughter.

He has been a member of the Inter-
national Association for Identification
since 1924, and was a director for one
term. He is a life member of the Pacific
Coast International Association of Law
Enforcement Officials; having joined the
organization way back in the days when
it was known as the Northwest Associ-
ation of Sheriffs and Police. He served
as president of the PCIA in 1944-45. He
also holds membership in the Interna-
tional Association of Chiefs of Police.

Mr. Wootton is a member of the Edu-
cation Committee of the Utah Peace
Officers Association, and will continue
to promote interest in the profession.

During his entire career as an officer
he was never "brought on the carpet"
by his superiors. An enviable record for
one who has been in law enforcement
work these many years.