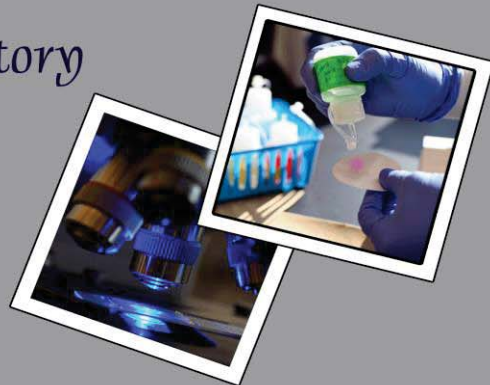




North Carolina State Crime Laboratory Forensic Update



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Dear Criminal Justice Stakeholders,

The State Crime Lab is over 80 years old! I have always had an interest and appreciation for history. Though my children would cringe when I wanted to take them to the NC Museum of History, I, on the other hand, could spend days in avid fascination studying our past. This edition of ***The NC State Crime Laboratory Forensic Update*** is about the history of the NC State Crime Laboratory and our relationship to the NC State Bureau of Investigation (SBI). I hope you enjoy reading about our fascinating past.

As always, if you have questions, please reach out to us.

John Byrd
Director, North Carolina State Crime Laboratory

"Truth through science."

History of the North Carolina State Crime Laboratory – Part I

The State Crime Laboratory was created in 1937 under NC General Statute § 114-16 as part of the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation (SBI). The statute directed in part that "... there shall be provided laboratory facilities for the analysis of evidences of crime ... which might lead to the determination or identification of criminals. A sufficient number of persons skilled in such matters shall be employed to render a reasonable service to the public through the criminal justice system and to the criminal justice system in the discharge of their duties." The lab was known as, "The SBI Lab".



The early years from 1937 to 1944: James W. Powell was hired in 1939 as a special agent assigned to the Technical Lab. He was trained in fingerprints, document analysis and firearms. He was technically the *Chief of Technical Division* (and for all intents and purposes was the first laboratory director) though nothing formal was announced. There were

four technicians including Powell. He served from July 1, 1938 until March 15, 1942. Powell served in the Army Reserve and was an intelligence officer during WWII and served in the Pacific Theater. After the war, Mr. Powell (left) would eventually rise to be Director of the State Bureau of Investigation.

March 16, 1942, William A. Shulenberger was named Chief of Technical Division until sometime in 1944. After 1944, the history is a bit murky. We know that in 1939, Duke Hospital was contracted to provide chemistry analysis. At the time, drug chemistry, toxicology, trace evidence and serology was one discipline. During this time period, these types of analyses were very basic and still early in the development stages and in addition the SBI could not afford the equipment. That would change in the early 1950s. William (Bill) Best was the SBI's first chemist. He started the Chemistry lab in 1955. The Chemistry lab was divided in the early 70s to create the drug chemistry section, the serology section and the trace evidence section.

Ray Garland was the first person referred to as assistant director over the SBI Lab from 1972 – 1985; Harold Elliott from 1986-1995; Bill Matthews 1995-1998; Alan R. Stevens from 1998 – 2002; Jerry Richardson from 2002 – 2010; and Joseph (Joe) R. John, Sr. from 2011 – 2014.

In 1969, the SBI Crime Laboratory consisted of four chemists, a firearms examiner, a documents examiner and two fingerprint experts. In 1971, the SBI became an agency within the Department of Justice. In 1973, the Identification Section was divided into two units because of the tremendous increase in the number of fingerprints received. The Latent Evidence Section thereafter became responsible for handling all latent fingerprint casework as well as tire and shoe track comparisons.

Under the Forensic Sciences Act of 2011, the SBI Laboratory was renamed the North Carolina State Crime Laboratory. During the 2013 Session of the NC General Assembly, NC General Statutes §§ 114-60 through 114-62 **established the North Carolina State Crime Laboratory as a separate division within the Department of Justice**. In 2014, the NC General Assembly moved the SBI under the Department of Public Safety and left the State Crime Laboratory under the Department of Justice. Complicating this move further was the fact that over forty sworn agents were assigned as forensic scientists at the State Crime Lab.

A State Crime Lab logo was first established in 2014 under Director John Byrd. In 2017, the Department of Justice aligned all divisions with a new logo. The SBI logo, first SCL logo and the current SCL logo are below.

