

**REPORT OF THE  
VIRGINIA STATE CRIME COMMISSION  
TO  
THE GOVERNOR  
AND  
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
OF VIRGINIA  
ON  
FORENSIC SCIENCE**



**HOUSE DOCUMENT NO. 36**

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
Department of Purchases and Supply  
Richmond  
1975**

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Commonwealth of Virginia  
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REPORT  
OF THE  
VIRGINIA STATE CRIME COMMISSION  
TO: THE HONORABLE MILLS E. GODWIN, JR.  
GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA  
AND  
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA

Pursuant to House Joint Resolution No. 132, 1974 Session,  
the sub-committee of the State Crime Commission, as listed  
below, offers the following report on the Forensic Science Academy.

This report is also included with other information as a  
part of the Annual Report of the State Crime Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

Stanley C. Walker,  
Chairman

MEMBERS OF COMMISSION

Stanley C. Walker, Chairman

Erwin S. Solomon, Vice Chairman

George S. Aldhizer, II

Claude W. Anderson

L. Ray Ashworth

Andrew P. Miller

Theodore V. Morrison, Jr.

William N. Paxton, Jr.

A. L. Philpott

George F. Ricketts

George M. Warren, Jr.

STAFF

Lewis W. Hurst, Executive Director

STUDY GROUP

George S. Aldhizer, II

Claude W. Anderson

Theodore V. Morrison, Jr.

William N. Paxton, Jr.

Charles E. O'Rear, Jr.

George F. Ricketts

A. W. Tiedemann, Jr.

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 132

Offered February 15, 1974

*Directing the Virginia Crime Commission to study the advisability and feasibility of establishing a Forensic Science Academy; and if advisable and feasible, authorizing the Commission to establish such an Academy in cooperation with the Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services.*

Patrons—Messrs. Morrison, Anderson, Philpott, Ashworth, and Giesen

Referred to the Committee for Courts of Justice

Whereas, Virginia has one of the finest forensic laboratories in the Nation and its staff is composed of many nationally known experts in their field; and

Whereas, no facet of law enforcement is more important than the proper evaluation of a crime scene and the collection and handling of evidence; and

Whereas, these are important factors that well trained investigators must observe so that their actions are professional and responsible when accumulating and preparing scientific evidence for laboratory analysis; and

Whereas, a Forensic Science Academy, according to recommendations, will produce no less than ten expertly trained law enforcement officers annually whose expertise will be in the collection and preservation of evidence; and

Whereas, a study should be made as to the advisability and feasibility of establishing a Forensic Science Laboratory; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Virginia Crime Commission is directed to make a study of the advisability and feasibility of establishing a Forensic Science Academy, to be operated by the Commission in cooperation with the Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services. The Commission shall study all aspects of the problem, including how such an Academy would be financed. If the Commission finds that the establishment of such an Academy is advisable and feasible, the Commission is hereby authorized to establish a Forensic Science Academy, to be operated by the Commission in cooperation with the Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services. The Commission shall complete its study and report its actions to the General Assembly no later than November one, nineteen hundred seventy-five.

## FORENSIC SCIENCE

The Crime Commission has had a vital interest in the concept of a statewide crime laboratory system since the Commission's formation in 1966, with the idea of improving the quality of scientific criminal investigation available to law enforcement. In its first annual report, which was issued in 1967, the Commission recommended the establishment of a Central Crime Laboratory in Virginia.

The 1970 legislature directed the Crime Commission to study the need for the establishment of a Central Crime Laboratory in the state. Pursuant to that mandate, a subcommittee of the Commission headed by Senator George S. Aldhizer, II, conducted that study. In its work, the subcommittee contracted with a research team from the International Association of Chiefs of Police. As a result of the study the Crime Commission in 1972 recommended and, successfully sponsored, legislation providing for the consolidation of several existing state laboratories into one division and providing for forensic laboratory services to all law enforcement agencies in the Commonwealth.

Today, only two years after its formation, Virginia has one of the better equipped and staffed forensic science laboratories in the nation. The success of the laboratory in being able to render valuable assistance to law enforcement is dependent upon the quality of the evidence submitted to it. The Crime Commission and the laboratory staff saw that there existed a need across the state to train law enforcement in the full and proper utilization of the laboratory. During the 1974 Session of the Legislature the Commission sponsored House Joint Resolution No. 132, which passed the General Assembly, directing the Commission, in cooperation with the Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services, to study the advisability and feasibility of establishing a Forensic Science Academy to train law enforcement. The Commission, in conjunction

with the Division was directed to determine the need for such an Academy and, if the need were found, was authorized to proceed with the establishment of the Academy. The Commission was directed to report its findings to the Governor and General Assembly by November 1, 1975.

The subcommittee conducting the study of the Academy concept is headed by Delegate Theodore V. Morrison, Jr. The other committee members are Senator Aldhizer, Delegate Claude W. Anderson, William N. Paxton, and The Reverend George F. Ricketts. The Commission's subcommittee is working hand in hand with Dr. A. W. Tiedemann, Jr., Director of the Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services, and Dr. Charles E. O'Rear, Deputy Director of the Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services for Forensic Science, and members of the Forensic Laboratory staff, on this project.

The purpose of the proposed Forensic Science Academy is to give law enforcement officers the necessary training to enable them to fully utilize the expertise of the State laboratory system. The Academy, as envisioned by the Crime Commission and the Forensic Laboratory, would train law enforcement personnel to properly collect, identify, and preserve items of physical evidence at crime scenes for laboratory examination. The idea is to familiarize students of the Academy with the capabilities and limitations of the modern forensic laboratory in the examination of the very broad spectrum of materials which can be collected as evidence in criminal cases. The course would provide students with the necessary technical background information and practical application techniques which, coupled with the student's previous investigative experience, would permit maximum utilization of the forensic sciences in the criminal justice system of the Commonwealth. A number of courses with very limited enrollment could be held each year to produce 24 to 30 expertly trained law enforcement officers annually whose expertise would be in the collection and preservation of evidence.



During the initial phase of the study more training was needed in this area and sufficient interest was manifested in the Academy concept to proceed with a pilot course. A grant was obtained from the Council on Criminal Justice by the Bureau of Forensic Science to fund the pilot course. Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police from across the state were invited to nominate candidates from their departments to participate in the 12-week intensive training program.

Originally, it was planned that the pilot course would be limited to six students, but because of the interest in the program and the high caliber of the applicants, 10 officers were chosen to participate. Out of the 31 investigators who applied, the 10 chosen were:

Detective Thomas N. Akers, Fairfax City Police Department  
Officer Roy T. Austin, Suffolk Police Department  
Sergeant Gilmore Willis Cowan, Roanoke City Police Department  
Detective John B. Day, Virginia Beach Police Department  
Investigator Cameron L. Forrester, Lancaster County Sheriff's Department  
Investigator Frank H. Lasley, Jr., Virginia State Police, Culpeper  
Investigator Perry A. Lewis, Prince George County Sheriff's Department  
Detective Robert E. Loving, Henrico County Police Department  
Deputy Sheriff R. E. Maxey, Jr., Campbell County Sheriff's Department  
Officer Ronald L. Webster, Charlottesville Police Department

The 12-week course was held September 15 through December 9, 1974, in Richmond at the Forensic Science Laboratory. The faculty for the Academy was composed of experts in the field of forensic science, most of whom were members of the laboratory staff. Some of the topics covered included crime scene searching and sketching; collection, identification and preservation of evidence; law enforcement photographic techniques; and familiarization with modern forensic science capabilities to assist in recognition of useful items of evidence. Included in the training was on-the-job experience, lectures, seminars and practical application. The students spent 10 days working with the New York City Police Department's Crime Scene Search Unit.

Governor Mills E. Godwin, Jr. and Clarence M. Kelley, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, joined the Crime Commission, the Consolidated Laboratory Services Operational Board, and the director of the Academy in the graduation exercises for the students in the Academy's pilot course.

It is the preliminary conclusion of the Commission that the Forensic Science Academy should be established by law on a permanent basis. The need for it has thus far been evidenced by the apparent lack of availability of this type training elsewhere in the criminal justice system and the interest in obtaining this specialized training by law enforcement agencies. However, since only one class has been held thus far and the reporting date of House Joint Resolution 132, under which this study was mandated, is not until November, 1975, the Commission recommends that at least one, and possibly two more classes be held prior to the reporting date of H.J.R. 132. The Commission would then be in a better position to judge the desirability and feasibility of establishing the Academy on a permanent basis.

Today the Bureau of Forensic Science operates as one of four bureaus within the Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services. The Forensic Bureau has a central laboratory in Richmond and three regional laboratories across the state. The Forensic Bureau operates with approximately 100 employees, full and part time, which represent approximately 40% of the personnel for the entire Division. Their budget amounts to approximately 33% of that of the Division. The caseload of the laboratory has been increasing steadily since the laboratory was established. There is yet no indication that this constant increase is lessening. For example, the forensic laboratory completed 22,178 cases and handled 195,254 specimens during fiscal year 1973-74. In the current fiscal year for the four months July through October the laboratory has completed 9,601 cases and handled 130,660 specimens.

During that four-month period, it was necessary for the laboratory staff to work a total of 2,353 hours overtime to keep up with their workload.

The Crime Commission wholeheartedly supports the work being done by the crime laboratory. The laboratory staff deserves much praise for the prompt and efficient manner in which they are providing support services for law enforcement throughout the Commonwealth in scientific criminal investigations. The Commission feels the Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services should make every effort to insure the continued success of the forensic laboratory and take whatever steps appropriate to retain and recruit the expertise necessary for the growth of such a sophisticated forensic facility that Virginia has developed.

The Crime Commission has a number of legislative proposals to present to the 1975 Session of the legislature that it feels will assist the Forensic Laboratory in its work.

At the request of the Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services, the Commission is proposing a change in Section 19.1-106.1 of the Code of Virginia concerning the admissibility of certificates of analysis or examination. The proposal provides for the admissibility of the certificate of analysis or examination in all levels of hearings and not just a preliminary hearing. The change will conform this part of the Code covering most of the forensic techniques to that currently existing for drugs of abuse. This change should reduce the time spent by key personnel for travel and court appearances. For example, in September, 1974, alone, 46 man days were spent by laboratory personnel for court appearances and travel to and from court. This in turn should improve services, since much time now spent in court appearances can be used in direct analysis and examinations.

The Commission is proposing amendments to Sections 18.1-269 and 18.1-270 to allow, at the request of the Bureau of Forensic Science, and upon consent of the court, evidence to be turned over to the Bureau upon conclusion of the trial. This should benefit the Bureau by allowing them to use the evidence for the purpose of research, training, and comparison standards.

The Commission is proposing that Section 32-31.7 of the Code, which identifies agencies that can submit evidence to the crime laboratory for examination, be expanded. This will allow federal law enforcement agencies and agencies such as local fire departments who have arson investigative capabilities, but are not actual police departments, to have access to the laboratories' services.

LD5475

HOUSE BILL NO. 1545

Offered January 20, 1975

*A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 32-31.5:1, relating to the establishment of a forensic science academy.*

Patrons—Morrison, Ashworth, Melnick, Anderson, and Solomon

Referred to the Committee for Courts of Justice

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 32-31.5:1 as follows:

*§ 32-31.5:1. There is hereby established a Forensic Science Academy, operated by the Bureau of Forensic Science of the Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services. It shall be the function of the Academy to provide advance training to criminal justice agencies in the collection and preservation of evidence.*

2. That this act is effective on and after July one, nineteen hundred seventy-six.

