

Foreword

Forensic Document Examiners provide Expert Witness testimony in courts of law presenting demonstrative proof concerning the fact that a document is genuine or forged. Thorough grounded training of the Forensic Document Examiner is required for the scientific analysis of handwriting, handprinting, and various seen or unseen qualities of the document. The presentation of the findings in court assists the Judge and Jury in their deliberations concerning the guilt or innocence of an individual.

One of the pioneers of the field of Questioned Documents was Albert S. Osborn. In addition to studying handwriting, he conducted extensive research and wrote articles and textbooks. His dedication to the analysis of the range of question document problems is a foundation for the study of Forensic Document Examination. We are pleased that John Paul Osborn, Forensic Document Examiner, and the great-grandson of Albert S. Osborn, provides comment about the article entitled "The Relation of Light to the Proof of Documents." The historical article written by Albert S. Osborn, was first presented in 1914, and was reprinted in the *Scientific American Supplement*, October 17, 1914. The information discussed in the article such as the need for sources of light in the analysis of questioned documents, the photography of evidence and the presentation of testimony in courts of law continues as relevant today.

The aspect of adequate and proper lighting is important today as one of the standards of The American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors / Laboratory Accreditation Board, ASCLD/LAB, for the planning and design of crime laboratory facilities. The American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD), is an organization of laboratory directors concerned with new developments, ethical practices and legislative matters concerning forensic science and laboratory management. ASCLD/LAB, developed standards which are considered key indicators of the overall quality of a laboratory. In the 1999 version of the ASCLD/LAB Accreditation Manual, standard 3.2.3 is described as "Is there adequate and proper lighting available for personnel to carry out assigned tasks?" The ASCLD/LAB accreditation process is a voluntary program in which any crime laboratory may participate. An independent and impartial inspection

of the facilities, management, operations, personnel, procedures and other areas are reviewed for compliance with established standards as a measure of the level of performance.

The historical foundations are relevant and continue to be the focus of scientific discussion as noted by the work of the Scientific Working Group for Document Examination, SWDOC. This committee has been formed for the purpose of looking at policy and procedure for the field of Forensic Document Examination. It is of note that the first Scientific Working Group, established by Federal law, brought together scientists working in the field of DNA for the purpose of advancing the development of DNA policy. Using this format, other forensic science groups have been established and continue to look at the entire field of forensic science examinations and analysis. Information on the SWDOC will be presented in subsequent issues of the *Journal of the ASQDE*.

There are many aspects to the examination of documents involved in proving authenticity or forgery of a document, as well as the presentation of the findings in courts of law. In addition to the identification of handwriting, other aspects of the examination include preparation of the questioned document, the investigation of a wide range of new technology such as computer output and mechanical devices, and marks seen or unseen contained on a document. Articles in this issue of the *Journal of the ASQDE* are of interest in the field of handwriting identification, printing techniques and preparation of court charts.

Past to present, the field of Forensic Document Examination remains dedicated to the scientific analysis of evidence. The continuation of research in the field ensures a vigorous scientific basis for demonstrating that a document is genuine or forged. The impact of technological advances in the field of questioned documents is an ongoing focus for research. The *Journal of the ASQDE* is a peer reviewed publication of original research articles, case studies, technical notes, and reviews contributed by Forensic Document Examiners from around the world that directly address these challenges. You are encouraged to submit articles for consideration to the *Journal of the ASQDE*.

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Editor