

History and Development of Forensic Science

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(A concise, organized overview for study or reference)

1. Foundations – Ancient to Medieval Times

Period	Key Developments	Notable Cases / Figures
c. 300?BC – 400 ?AD	Early use of medical knowledge to determine cause of death; rudimentary toxicology.	Hippocrates’ “ <i>On the Signs of Death</i> ” – early description of post-mortem changes.
Middle Ages (5th–15th?c.)	Legal systems begin to rely on witness testimony and corporal evidence (e.g., wounds).	Trial of William of Norwich (1144) – first recorded “blood libel” accusation, showing early reliance on physical signs.
Renaissance (16th?c.)	Surge in anatomical study; dissection becomes more common, providing baseline knowledge of human anatomy.	Andreas Vesalius publishes <i>De humani corporis fabrica</i> (1543).

2. Birth of Modern Forensic Science (18th–19th?c.)

Year	Milestone	Significance
1764	Pierre François Xavier de Charlevoix proposes systematic crime scene investigation.	Early conceptual framework for preserving evidence.
1794	Cesare Beccaria publishes <i>On Crimes and Punishments</i> – argues for rational, evidence-based justice.	Philosophical underpinning for scientific methods in law.
1800s	Development of chemical analysis (e.g., detection of arsenic).	Enables objective proof of poisoning.
1835	Claude François Chauveau establishes the first official police laboratory in Paris.	Institutionalizes scientific support for police work.
1850s	Alphonse Bertillon creates the Bertillonage system (anthropometry).	First systematic method to identify individuals by physical measurements.

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1887	Sir William H. Herschel (UK) introduces fingerprint identification to police work.	Marks the start of biometric identification.
1892	Dr. Henry Lee (later) pioneers bloodstain pattern analysis (later formalized).	Foundations for modern scene reconstruction.

3. Early 20th Century – Institutionalization & Technique Expansion

Decade	Advances	Impact
1900?	Fingerprinting becomes standard worldwide (e.g., FBI's "Identification Division" 1901).	Reliable, repeatable personal identification.
1910?	Forensic toxicology formalized (e.g., Meyer's "Toxicology" textbook, 1910).	Systematic detection of poisons, drugs.
1920?	Ballistics – development of the comparison microscope (Calvin Goddard, 1929).	Enables linking bullets to specific firearms.
1930?	Serology – ABO blood typing introduced for forensic use (Lazare?Alphonse?Bertillon's work).	First biological "DNA?like" identification.
1940?	Forensic pathology gains prominence; autopsy standards codified (e.g., American Board of Pathology , 1948).	Improves cause?of?death
1950		