

Wrong Fingerprints Were Sent In Ray Case by Missouri Prison

ATLANTA, April 26 (AP — The Georgia Bureau of Investigation discovered yesterday that it had been given an erroneous set of fingerprints identified as belonging to James Earl Ray, wanted in connection with the slaying of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Maj. Barney Ragsdale, director of the Georgia bureau, said a routine comparison of fingerprints received from the Federal Bureau of Investigation with a set sent by the Missouri State Penitentiary after Ray's escape in April, 1967, revealed the discrepancy.

Although both the F.B.I. and the Missouri warden, Harold R. Swenson, said the wanted poster was an error and a correction should have been received shortly after the original was distributed, Major Ragsdale said that his office had never received the correction.

Atlanta detective superintendent Clinton Chafin said that his office never got the correction and neither did the state police in Georgia and Alabama.

The warden said the mistake had no effect on the search for Ray.

Mr. Swenson told The Atlanta Constitution that it was the only instance of the wrong fingerprints being put on an official warrant bulletin that he could recall.

Mrs. Oneita Peters, a stenographer with the Georgia bureau, when she received a new wanted poster and noted that the fingerprints were different. She said the difference in the two sets of fingerprints would have been obvious.

Special Agent Frank V. Hitt said meanwhile the prints on the F.B.I. identification order "are Ray's prints."