



USE OF PHOTOGRAPHS FOR GENEALOGY

By Dave Thomen
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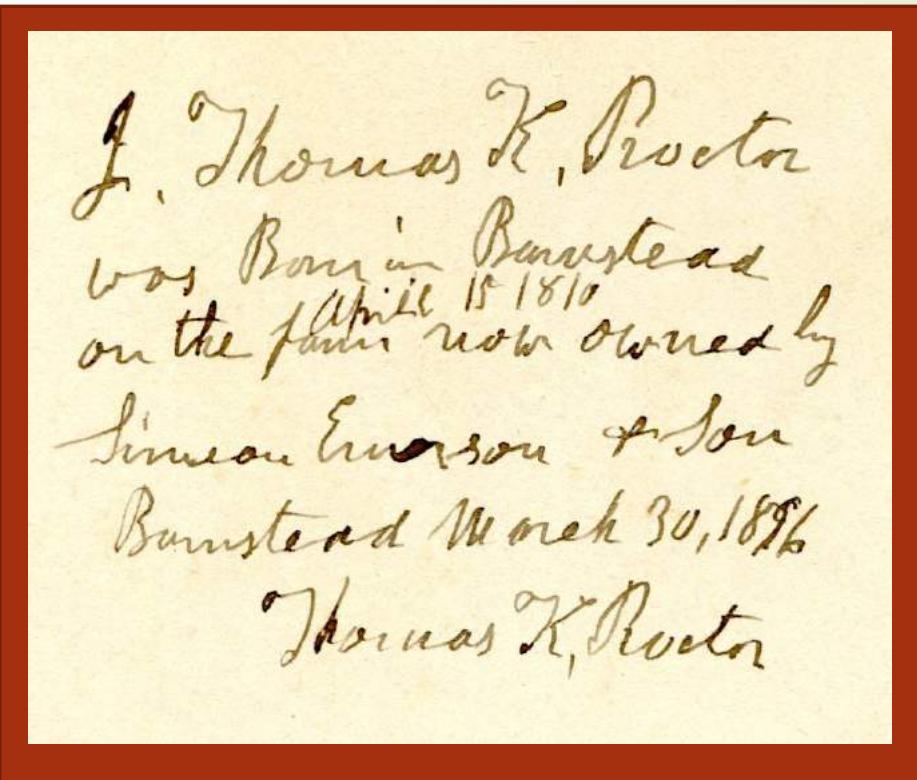
“In compiling a genealogy ... examine all possible sources of information”

“Family Photo Detective” by Maureen A. Taylor

THE IDEAL CASE



Person: Thomas K. Proctor
Format: Cabinet Card. Circa 1896



Lawville & Main Street
BIDDEFORD, MAINE

OBJECTIVE

My objective this evening is two-fold:

- ❖ Explore how to possibly identify unknown people in your older family photos
- ❖ Explore how to extract information from old family photos of known ancestors

Some topics we won't be covering in this presentation:

- ❖ How to preserve your old family photos
- ❖ How to scan and restore your old family photos

BACKGROUND OF EARLY PHOTOGRAPHIC METHODS

Daguerreotypes

- ❖ In 1839, the Frenchman, Louis Daguerre, patented this photographic method for capturing images on silver coated copper plates. This method was soon introduced into the United States.

Ambrotypes

- ❖ Introduced in 1854, this method captured images directly onto glass

“Tintypes”

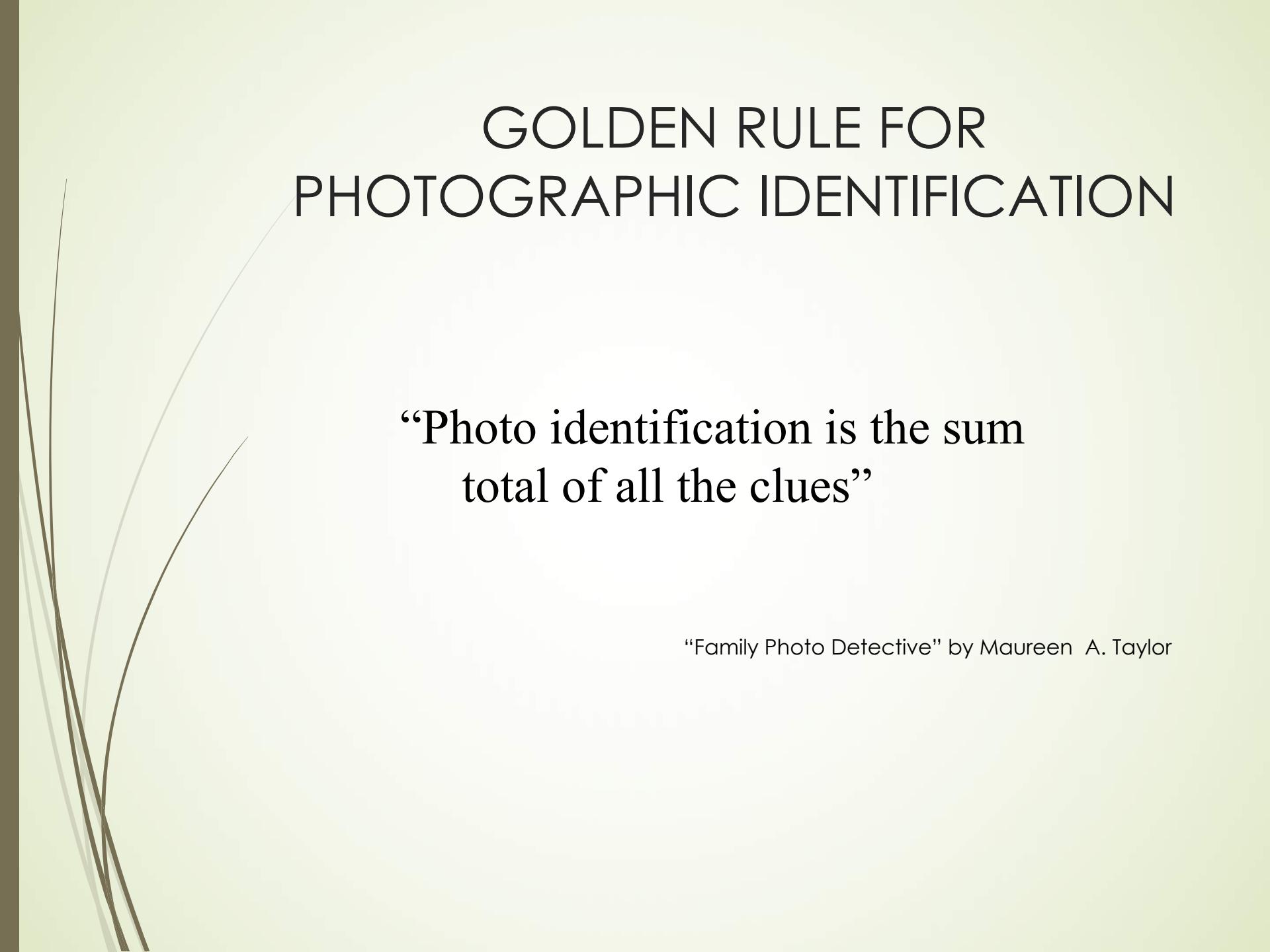
- ❖ This method of capturing images on black or brown varnished iron plates was patented by Hamilton Smith of Ohio in 1856

Paper prints

- ❖ The most common type of these were the card photographs. The “Cartes de Visite” was introduced into the US in 1859. The larger “Cabinet cards” was introduced in 1866.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES

- ❖ Daguerreotypes, Ambrotypes, and some Tintypes came in cases. As such, it may be difficult to distinguish between them by just looking at them.
- ❖ I would NOT recommend dismantling the cases yourselves
- ❖ Most cases did not include information as to who took the photo or when the photo was taken
- ❖ Daguerreotypes, Ambrotypes and Tintypes were actually negatives on some medium. As such, the photos are actually a reverse of the subjects.
- ❖ Most Daguerreotypes and Ambrotypes copies were individual. Although later cameras were equipped with multiple lens, enabling multiple copies of the same photo, the number of copies was limited by the number of lens. Not so with paper photos. The prints were made by laying the negative onto light sensitive paper, and exposing the paper to light. Copies were “unlimited”
- ❖ The reasons for the introduction of new methods were **Time, Convenience** and **Cost**



GOLDEN RULE FOR PHOTOGRAPHIC IDENTIFICATION

“Photo identification is the sum total of all the clues”

“Family Photo Detective” by Maureen A. Taylor

APPROACH

- ❖ Develop a strategy
- ❖ Gather your tools
- ❖ Assemble timelines and geographies
- ❖ Document the information you gather
- ❖ Develop your candidate hypotheses
- ❖ Examine all the evidence collected
- ❖ Assign weights based on the strength of the individual pieces of evidence
- ❖ Weighing all the evidence, eliminating infeasible hypotheses
- ❖ Identify the strongest hypothesis candidate(s)

CLUES TO PHOTOGRAPHIC IDENTIFICATION

- ❖ Annotations on the photo or in an album
- ❖ The studio that took the photo
- ❖ The cards stock on which the photo was mounted
- ❖ The clothing worn by the subject
- ❖ The hairstyle worn by the subject
- ❖ Locating other copies of the same or similar photographs
- ❖ Input from relatives
- ❖ Facial and other features
- ❖ Other

STUDIO INFORMATION

- ❖ In rare instances it will include the date of the photo
- ❖ Can give you clues as to time and location
- ❖ Using City Directories, Censuses and other resources, you may narrow down the window of where and when a photo was taken
 - Look for subtle details such as addresses and partners.
- ❖ Although finding the collection of actual negatives for these earlier studio is rare, information such as stock cards used or negative numbers can provide possible links.

DATE ON THE PHOTOGRAPH



1877.
Taylor & Preston,
188 Essex Street,
Salem,
Mass.

Person: prob. Mary Jane (Garland) Forbes
Format: Carte de Visite

CARD STOCK INFORMATION

- ❖ The thickness of the card stock
 - Earlier card stock was thinner
 - Thicker stock was introduced around 1869
- ❖ The color of the card stock
 - e.g. Chocolate brown/black were used 1877 – 1887
 - e.g., White colored cards with a pink or grey reverse was used 1883 - 1888
- ❖ The shape of the card stock
 - Initially the card stock had square corners (1858 – 1871)
 - Rounded corners 1871 – 1887
 - Beveled edges became common in 1883

COLOR OF THE CABINET CARD



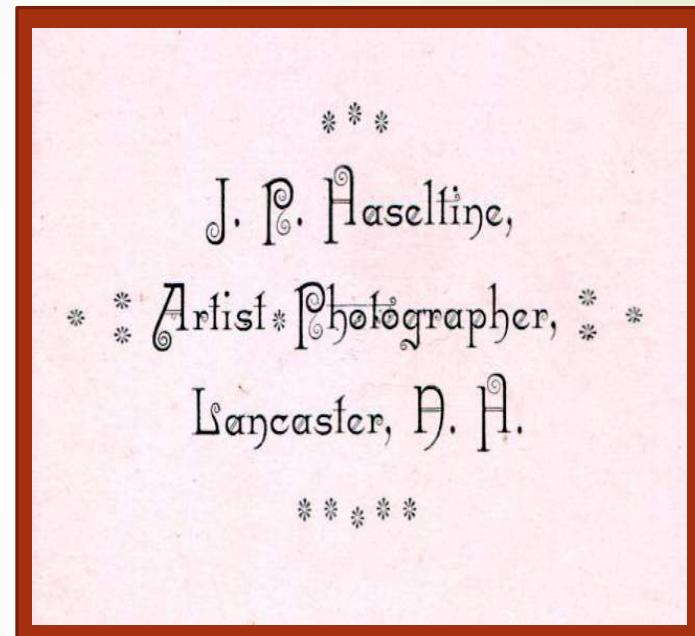
b. 1845



b. 1850



b. 1876



People: William Henry Harrison Forbes, his wife Addie (Wells) Forbes and their daughter Ellen
Format: Carte de Visite. Circa 1886

CLOTHING FASHIONS AND HAIRSTYLES

The subject's attire may give a good clue as to the date of the photo

❖ In women's fashions, things to note include:

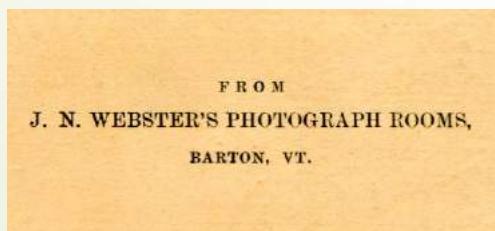
- Bodice
- Neckline
- Sleeves
- Skirts
- Accessories
- Hair

❖ In men's fashions, things to note include:

- Coats
- Shirts and vests
- Neckties
- Trousers
- Accessories
- Hair & Beard

WILLARD FAMILY C. 1864

Women's Fashions 1860-1865*



People: Oliver Tuttle Willard (b.1838) and Emma (Garland) Willard (b. 1842)
Format: Carte de Visite. Circa 1864

Bodice – Front buttons; pointed or round waists, military trim

Neckline – High, narrow round collar; some V-necks with lapels

Sleeves – Armhole over shoulder; some gathered into the wrist; some wide bell; some coat sleeves wider at elbow; variety of styles

Skirt – Full, pleated, some looped up to expose underskirt; worn over hoop

Accessories – Shawls, hair nets, wide belts; elaborate earrings and brooches

Hair – Center part; covers most of the ear, plain or braided around; short ringlets

* Fashion description from
“Family Photo Detective”
by Maureen A. Taylor

Whitcomb Family c. 1886



People: Lucia (b.1876), Emma (Fellows) (b. 1846), Richard (b. 1847) and Benjamin (b. 1881) Whitcomb
Format: Cabinet Card. Circa 1886

Women's Fashions 1883-1889*

Bodice – Tight waistcoat effects; bodice extends just below the waist

Neckline – High with low stand collar; fewer lace ties

Sleeves – Sleeves tight, three-quarter length, trim at bottom

Skirt – Draped overskirt, often apron-like in shape

Accessories - Muffs, jewelry

Hair – Frizzed around the forehead; bun in back

* Fashion description from
“Family Photo Detective”
by Maureen A. Taylor



1890's

Women's Fashions 1890 - 1896*



Bodice – Fastening obscured; end at or near the natural waist
Neckline – High neck with moderate stand collar
Sleeves – Tight to arm in 1890, with kick-up at shoulder becoming fuller each year; until large balloon "leg-of-mutton" shapes on upper arm; tight below
Skirt – Smooth at hips; front/side; gradual flare to stiff A-line effect; sometimes trim at the hem
Accessories – Round brooch; small earring; watch pinned to bosom; large fans; large parasols
Hair – Frizzed around the face; bun on top of head or in back

* Fashion description from
"Family Photo Detective"
by Maureen A. Taylor

Person: Unknown

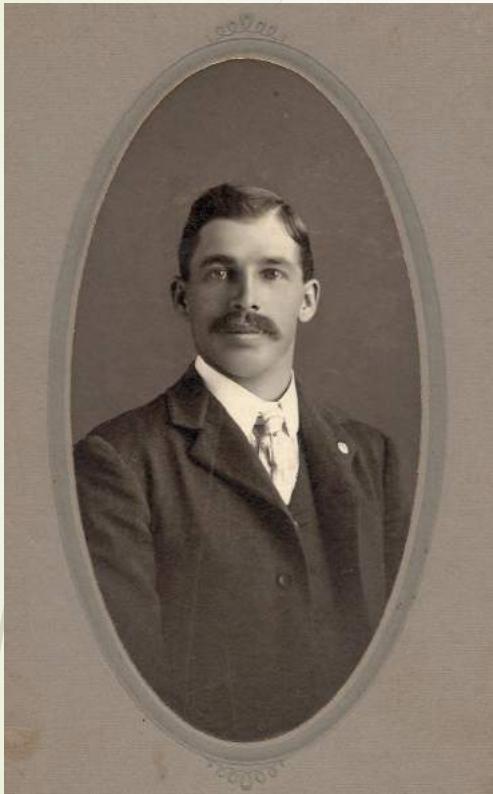
Format: Cabinet Card. Circa 1892



Person: Unknown

Format: Cabinet Card.
Circa mid-1890s

ELMER & EDITH FORBES c.1902



Women's Fashions 1897-1903*

Bodice – Fastening obscured; Pouched front pronounced
Neckline – High collar to the chin
Sleeves – Fullness increasing year by year on lower arm above the cuff only
Skirt – Smooth at hip front/sides; may flare below knee
Accessories – Round brooch; small earring; watch pinned to bosom; small decorative combs high on back of head visible from front
Hair – Soft but smoother around the face, less frizzing; drawn into back bun



* Fashion description from
“Family Photo Detective”
by Maureen A. Taylor

People: Elmer Irving Forbes (b. 1867) and his wife Edith M. (Stanley) Forbes (b. 1868)
Format: Cabinet Cards. Circa 1902

Ella Stroud Family c. 1907

Women's Fashions 1904-1907*



Bodice – Pouched front continues over wider waistband

Neckline – High collar to the chin; a few collarbone-level in summer

Sleeves – 1904: fullness on upper and lower arms; 1905-7: fullness only on upper, sleeves appear to be made in upper and lower sections

Skirt – Smooth at hips or soft gathers or pleats; generally less slim

Hair – Gradually gaining width around the face; coiled in back

* Fashion description from
“Family Photo Detective”
by Maureen A. Taylor

People: Ella (Hicks) Stroud and her eight children. North Carolina
Format: Paper Photo. Circa 1907

OTHER INFORMATION

- ❖ Tax stamps:
 - From September 1, 1864 to August 1, 1866
 - Gives you a clue to how much they paid for the photo
- ❖ Retouching:
 - Adopted in the United States after 1869
- ❖ Glossiness of prints
 - Images on plain paper did not exhibit a gloss
 - Albumen paper was adopted by most US photographers in the 1860s.
- ❖ Yearbooks
- ❖ Newspaper Ads

TAX STAMP

September 1, 1864 to August 1, 1866



TAX	PHOTO PRICE
2¢	less than 25¢
3¢	25¢ to 50¢
5¢	50¢ to \$1

* Tax Stamp rate information from
“Family Photo Detective”
by Maureen A. Taylor



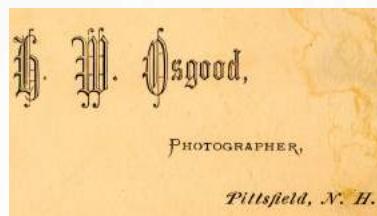
WHAT IS THIS PHOTO FROM?



TRAPS TO GUARD AGAINST

- ❖ Annotated names.
 - Don't assume they were written at the time the photo was taken
 - If on an album page, don't assume the photos weren't removed or swapped
- ❖ Studio information; Was this an original or a copy?
- ❖ Photos in a known family album
 - May not be of a family members
- ❖ Clothing worn by the subject
- ❖ Hairstyles worn by the subject
- ❖ Information from relatives

THOMAS HODGDON C. 1850



Studio – reverse side

*Thomas P. Hodgdon,
North Barnstead,
New Hampshire.
Born April 15. 1800.*

Inscription – reverse side

Person: Thomas P. Hodgdon, b. 1800 d. 1860
Format: Carte de Viste. Circa 1850 ????
Photograph: Henry W. Osgood b. 1842 !!!!

Men's Fashions 1850-1860*

Coats – Generous cut; vests

Shirt – Collar turned over the tie; Dress:
pleated starched bib front

Necktie – 2" wide half-bow

Trousers Fly-front; wide pant legs

Hair & Beard – Clean-shaven; end of
decade full beards appear;
oiled hair, long on top,
combed into a wave at
center of forehead; collar
length; side part; ear covered
later in decade

* Fashion description from
“Family Photo Detective”
by Maureen A. Taylor

PHOTOS FOUND IN FAMILY ALBUMS



Presidents



Celebrities

REVIEW



- ❖ When was this photo taken?
 - 1850s?
 - 1860s?
 - 1870s?
 - 1880s?
 - 1890s?
 - 1900s?

- ❖ What are the clues?

REVIEW (CONT.)

Assessment: probably 1890's



Shadell & Soner Latrobe, Pa.

**Edwin J Shadie was a
photographer in
Latrobe between 1880
& 1910**

From her fashion:

- Hair – bangs/frizzed around forehead
- Sleeves – tight to the arm; kick-up at shoulders
- Bodice – Tight, waist coats effect ends near natural waist; fastening obscured
- Skirt - Fairly smooth at hips, gradual flare to stiff A-line effect

10 Williams, William M 60	1	1	Laborer	11 Gen
153 Shadle Edna n m 27		1	Photographer	Ohio
— Alice n f 22 wife		1	Keeping House	Pac
— Edna n f 2 daughter		1		Pen
154 Jones Morris n m 65	1	1	Citizen	Mar

Name	Age	Sex	SS or M/F	Color	Comments	Gov. from	State from	Engaged	Occupation
Margie A.	26	F	11 17 1	bl	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Engaged	None
Stella Clivick J.	36	F	29 M/F 33	bl	Ohio	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Engaged	Photographer C
Alice E.	26	F	26 M/F 33	br	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Engaged	Photographer
Educa M.	34	F	32 3	br	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Engaged	Teacher
Mailay John	50	M	11 32 M/F 1	br	Pg. - Illinois	Pg. - Maryland	Pg. - Maryland	Engaged	Caretaker
* Normie G.	36	F	16 26 M/F 22	br	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Engaged	None

1880 (top) & 1910 (bottom) Federal Census, Latrobe, PA

Genealogy, Family Tre.. myAirWeb Stock Market Data - D... PBS NewsHour | WETA

Search DNA Help Extras

Save

Edwin J Shadle

In the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Directories, 1890

 Information	Name:	Edwin J Shadle
	Residence Year:	1890
	Residence Place:	Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA
	Residence Address:	Collins and Penn avs
	Business Name:	Shadle & Toner
	Business Address:	Latrobe, Pennsylvania R. R

Save **Cancel**

Find others who
Shadle In Put

FINDING CLUE IN KNOWN PHOTOGRAPHS

- ❖ In group photographs, where are the people standing?
- ❖ Who is in the picture? Who is not?
- ❖ Is that child in the dress a boy or a girl?
- ❖ Is there a house number, street sign or other landmark?
- ❖ Is someone wearing an heirloom piece of jewelry?
- ❖ Are there shadows?
- ❖ Is there a ring on the persons finger?
- ❖ Could this be of a special event?

REFERENCES

- ❖ Photographers
 - www.langdonroad.com
 - <https://pic.nypl.org/>
 - www.deadfred.com
- ❖ Photograph Types
 - www.craigcamera.com
 - www.eastman.org
- ❖ Books
 - Maureen A. Taylor, "Family Photo Detective"
 - Family Chronicle Publication "Dating Old Photographs 1840-1929"
 - Family Chronicle Publication "More Dating Old Photographs 1840-1929"
 - William Welling, "Collectors' Guide to Nineteenth Century Photographs"