



Mercer County Historical Society Newsletter

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Mercer County Historical Society & Essley-Noble Museum

1406 - SE 2nd Avenue
Aledo, IL 61231
Phone: 309/582-2280

Hours

April – Oct: Wed, Sat, Sun 1-5:00pm
Nov - March: Saturdays 12:00-4:00pm



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Early Mercer County Photographers

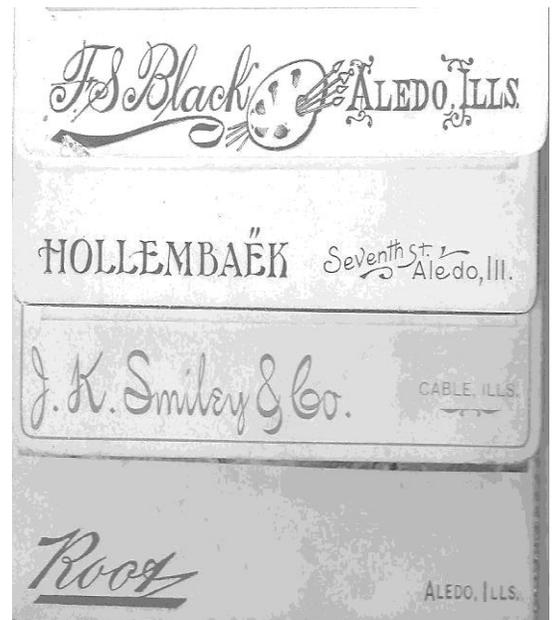
By Bill Bertrand

Professional photographers were not found in the 1860 Mercer County census report, although photography had rapidly expanded after the development of "carte-de-visite" or visiting cards in France in 1854 started a worldwide boom in portrait studios. Frequently known in the early years by the types of pictures they produced - ambrotypes, tintypes, ferrotypes -- these photographic pioneers were described by various terms. It took some years before there were photographers setting up studios in Mercer County, but in November 1860 Ed Wood was advertising in the Aledo newspaper as a "resident ambrotypist" in New Boston. By 1870 there was one each in Keithsburg and New Boston, and three in Aledo.

The Essley-Noble museum has hundreds of photos from Mercer County history, and amongst them are formal portraits taken by early photographers. As with many pictures held in family collections, it is all too common for us to find a portrait with no identification. This leaves us at a complete loss to identify the person in the portrait, which usually winds up being placed with other unidentified portraits and shelved away.

One tactic which can be helpful in searching for identification of the person in the portrait is information about the photographer. Most formal portraits have the name of the photographer printed or stamped on the card upon which the portrait is mounted. After some research we have found the names of 27 Mercer County photographers from the 1860s through the early 1900s and can even place a time period of operation for several. This can help MCHS members more than museum staff, for often you may have an idea that an unidentified portrait is one of a few possible choices. By placing the portrait in the right time period you may have the final lead to name the individual.

We do not claim that the following list is complete, and would welcome any information on additional photographers or any additional information of the photographers listed.



Benedict – William Benedict was listed in the 1870 census in NewBoston as a photographer.

Black – Frederick S. Black was in Aledo from 1892 to November, 1902 when he sold his business to E. T. Carlson.

Carlson – Ernest T. Carlson and Gustaf Lindell bought out Black in 1902, then Carlson bought out Lindell and moved to Kewanee in 1903. Carlson returned to Aledo in 1913 and continued until 1954 when he sold the business to John E. Johnson.

Forber – Frank A. Forber is listed as an Aledo photographer in the 1900 census, dying in Aledo in 1928.

Hilbert -- Al or A.L. Hilbert, according to the 1885 Iowa census, was a photographer in Fairfield, IA and was 36. It is not known if he was working in Mercer Co. before or after that.

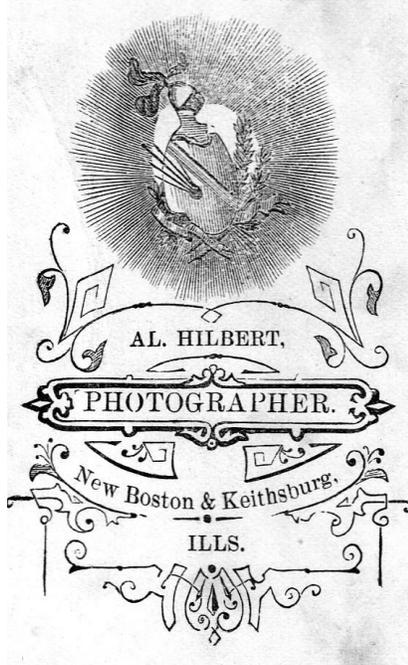
Hollembaek – Leonard C. Hollembaek lived in Monmouth according to census reports, but his parents were from Mercer County and some of his portraits are in the museum's collection, giving an Aledo address. He may have visited Mercer County on certain dates to take portraits.

Holmes – Wentworth V. Holmes of Joy did not list photography as a profession in the 1910 or 1920 census reports but must be the "W. V. Holmes Joy, III" stamped on portraits.

Keck – William M. was born in 1866. He was in Burlington in the 1885 Iowa census and by 1910 he was in Princeton, IL so he may have been in Mercer Co. between 1885 and 1910 where he advertised an "Art Studio, Joy, ILLS."

Long – H. L. (Henry Lyman) The 1880 census has him listed under Lyman Long, as a photographer living with his brother and sister-in-law in Keithsburg. By 1900 he was in St. Paul, MN.

Long – Samuel L. Long placed ads in Aledo newspapers in 1868 for his business as a photographer in Keithsburg. By 1880 the business appears to have been taken over by his brother, Lyman Long.



McDonald – Albert R. McDonald was listed as "photographer" in the 1870 census of Aledo, living with parents, Andrew and Elizabeth. Albert's obituary in 1922 said he was in business in Aledo for 16 years, 1868 to 1884, but no ads were found for him as a photographer.

McKee – Charles Ray McKee was in the 1900 census listed as a photographer. (At that time he was just 17, but lived next to Frank A. Forber, under whom he may have been learning the trade.)

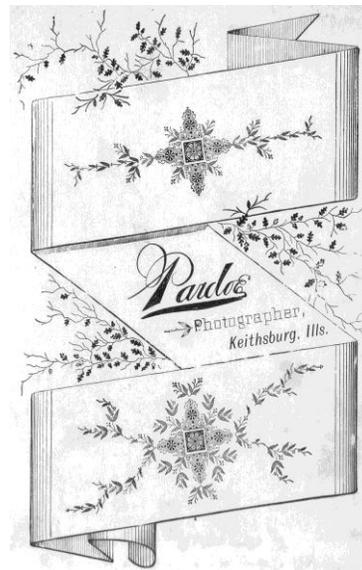
McKinney – Ward McKinney was an Aledo photographer, living with in-laws in 1900.

Nicol – John Nicol was listed as a Keithsburg photographer in the 1880 census.

Park – Effie P. Park was in business in Aledo from May 1895 to at least Jan. 1897 according to her newspaper ads. In May 14, 1895 there was a local news item: "Miss Effie P. Park has purchased the business of Fred Black, photographer."

Pardoe – Hunter W. had his business in Keithsburg from 1884-1887, then went to Muscatine in 1887.

Pollock – Charles V. Pollock was only 17 in 1880 and did not list a profession, but at some point he was a photographer in Aledo as evidenced by portraits at the museum.



Roberts – Carlton V. Roberts was listed in the 1900 census of Aledo as a photographer.

Root – William H. Root announced in the Aledo Democrat issue September 23, 1881 that he was starting business in Aledo. A February 1895 ad states that Hollembaek was a successor to Root.

Smiley – J.K. billed his business as an "Art Studio" in Cable. In the 1900 census there was a John K. Smiley, born 1867, listed as an artist in Kewanee, IL. So he may have been in Cable prior to 1900.

Selander – His first name is unknown but we have photos by this Keithsburg photographer.

Soderburg – Oattie Soderburg was in the 1900 census listed as a Keithsburg photographer.

Star Gallery – Ads first appeared September 29, 1869 for Star Gallery owned by McGregor & Co. and last appeared September 27, 1871.

Strong – Luke Strong advertised a new photographic studio in Aledo in the July 29, 1874 newspaper which carried a small news bit about his just opening a business. He was a partner with “Root” in Aledo ads from Jan. 4, 1882 through Nov. 28, 1883. From Dec. 5, 1883 through April 9, 1884 he advertised as Strong and Son. After that there were no more ads for Strong photography.

Waugh – Washington Waugh placed a January 6, 1869 newspaper ad announcing that he was in business in Aledo, and that he had “several years of experience in the business.” Waugh’s last ad in the Aledo Weekly Record appeared December 22, 1869 mentioning his “photograph car.” Rates were \$1.50 for 6 photos, \$2 for a dozen, gems .25 each or \$1.00 for 6. (Gems were tiny portraits, 7/8 by 1 inch, which became available in 1863 with the invention of the Wing multiplying cameras. They were popularized under the trade name Gem and the Gem Galleries offered the tiny likeness at what proved to be the lowest prices in studio history. Gem Galleries flourished until about 1890, at which time the invention of roll film and family cameras made possible larger images at modest cost.)

Wood – Ed M. Wood placed an ad in the November 20, 1860 Aledo Weekly Record stating he was a resident ambrotypist taking pictures in “all kinds of weather” in a car in New Boston.

Yerger – John Yerger placed an ad November 24, 1869, announcing a “New Jewelry Shop” in Aledo owned by “German Watch and Clock Manufacturer” John Yerger. John had “in connection with my jewelry” a “photographic gallery” where he was “prepared to execute any work in my line, in the best manner and at the lowest rates”. Photographs started at \$2 per dozen, “Gems” were 16 for \$1.00 and “Gems on Cards” were 16 for \$1.25. The last ad by Yerger was carried May 3, 1871.

More on early types of photographs and dating them may be found in the 2008 winter and spring newsletters, which may be accessed at the MCHS website.



Curator’s Corner

Thanks to the Chairman, Mary Flint and all the volunteers that made the 5th Grade Tour a success this year.

The spring open meeting on April 16th with President Truman was well attended. Thanks again Niel Johnson for your portrayal of our 33rd President.

Our new accessions are from: Shirley Reiser, Dino Vlahos, Kenneth Brokel estate, Rusty Ruggles, Fred Brown, Linda Morrow, Helen Bopp, Priscilla Kenney, D. J. Holmes, Ron Moffitt, Jean Wistedt, Wendy McNeil Laird, Nan Swanson, Jerry Hall, Dennis Henderson, Mabel Mayhew, and George Schlenker. Thank you to all who donated.

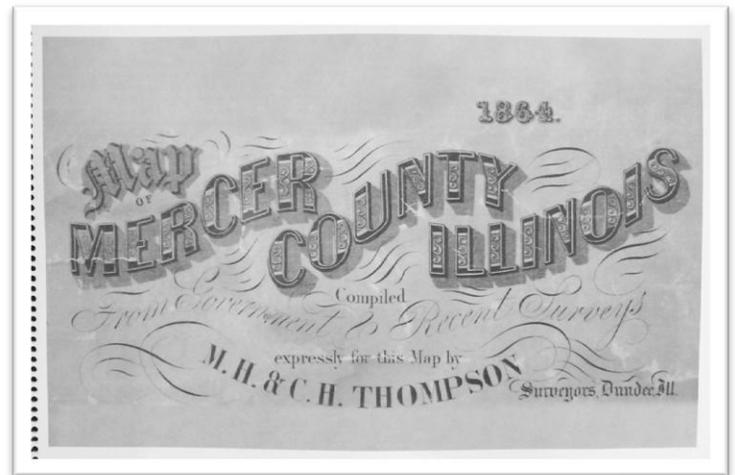
The Display Committee has done a great job changing many objects in the Main Building as well as in the Machine Shed. Have a great summer and visit MCHS soon!

Veda Meriwether, Curator



1864 Mercer County Atlas

Copies of the first known plat map of Mercer County (from 1864) are now on sale by the Mercer County Historical Society in the form of a plat book. It has been created from images taken from a map owned by the Mercer Carnegie Library and



currently on loan to the Essley-Noble Museum. Cost for this first printing is \$35 per book for members of the historical society and \$40 for non-members. If the book needs to be mailed, there will be an additional charge for shipping of \$8 for each book. They will be on sale in the museum during regular operating hours and at the historical society's booth at the Mercer County Fair.



Come to the Fair

Come visit our booth in the SW corner of the Merchants Building afternoons and evenings during the Mercer County Fair, July 10-14. There

will be displays and the popular "Name That Tool" contest. We will be selling the newly-printed Mercer Co. 1864 Atlas as well as other books available through the museum.



Fall Open Meeting

The date of our Fall Open Meeting has been changed to Monday, September 17, at 7:00 p.m. at the newly renovated historic Pope's River Church. The earlier date will provide more daylight as well as milder temperatures. The program will be on the history of the church and the recent renovation and speakers will include Douglas McCaw and Ronn Dillavou. Refreshments will be served and the meeting is open to the public.

The church, also known as Pope Creek Church, is located in section 7 of Ohio Grove Township. From route 94 south of Aledo turn west onto 40th Ave. (Sunbeam corner) and continue 1 3/4 miles. Then turn north (right) onto 160 St. and go 1/2 mile to the church and Candor cemetery.



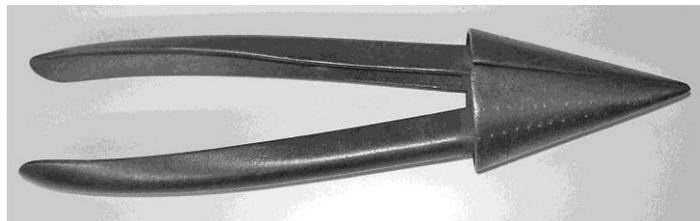
Calendar of Events for 2012:

- July 10-14** Mercer Co. Fair booth in Merchants Building
Exhibits & "Name the Tools" contest
- Aug. 25** Antique Days - Special exhibits & extended hours
- Sep. 17** Fall Open Meeting 7:00 p.m at Pope's River Church
See program and directions in current newsletter
- Oct. 31** Last day of regular hours
- Nov. 3** Start of Winter hours Sat. only 12:00-4:00



What is It?

The previous "What is It?" was a fleshing tool, used to scrape hides. When the grip of this item is squeezed, the pointed end expands. What is it???



This newsletter sponsored by:

Helping you achieve financial security
no matter where you re starting from

I want to make sure you get the personalized service you deserve, and that service includes helping you build and maintain a tangible plan for your financial security. Let's get together for an Insurance and Financial Review to plan for today and tomorrow.



Tracy Bigham
Aledo
309-582-5141



Lou Sutton Jr
Aledo
309-582-5141



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