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October 16, 2005

[This is an actual Photo Dating Report done for a client,
and is provided as a sample with the client's permission.]

Objective: Date photograph of Lattin family with photographer's mark.

[Client name]:

Information provided by yourself.

Email [from client] dated 6 October 2005:

I'm going to "try" to forward a photograph that is of people with the same surname as my grandmother. The person who found the photo has no idea who they are nor do any of the active researchers who have asked for a copy. The photographer is J. A. Piatt and I am working on finding out when he was taking photos and where he worked/traveled as there was never a Lattin family in Mattoon, IL.

General description.

The photo has the following imprint:



Research on the photographer confirmed that John A. Piatt, Jr. was a photographer in Mattoon, Coles County, Illinois. Mr. Piatt, Jr., born May 1862, is listed as a photographer in both the 1880¹ and 1900² censuses. However, he is listed as a real estate agent in the

¹ 1880 United States Census, Coles County, Illinois, population schedule, Mattoon Township (west of Ills Cent RR), Enumeration District [ED] 55, Supervisor's District [SD] 5, p. 217 (stamped) p. 44 (penned), dwelling 376, family 428, John Piatt; digital images by subscription, Ancestry.com (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed October 11, 2005); from National Archives microfilm T9, roll 183.

² 1900 United States Census, Coles County, Illinois, population schedule, Mattoon Township, Enumeration District [ED] 30, Supervisor's District [SD] 13, p. 253 (stamped), p. 21A (penned), dwelling 416, family 445, John A. Piatt; digital images by subscription, Ancestry.com (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed October 11, 2005); from National Archives microfilm T623, roll 244.

1910³ census and as a farmer in the 1920⁴ census, so we can assume this photograph was created between 1880 and 1910.

However, the actual photo was not taken by Mr. Piatt, nor was it taken in Illinois. This image was created by Mr. Piatt as a copy of an original photograph that was taken about a decade earlier in Minnesota.



Date range for original image (est. 1882-1883).
Date range for creation of this photograph (est. 1891-1900).

³ 1910 United States Census, Coles County, Illinois, population schedule, Mattoon Township, Enumeration District [ED] 63, Supervisor's District [SD] 10, p. 295 (stamped) p. 1A (penned), dwelling 8, family 9, William Hewitt; digital images by subscription, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed October 11, 2005); from National Archives microfilm T624, roll 236.

⁴ 1920 United States Census, Madison County, Illinois, population schedule, Jackson Township, Enumeration District [ED] 28, Supervisor's District [SD] 7, p. 128 (stamped) p. 6B (penned), dwelling 139, family 142, John A. Piatt; digital images by subscription, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed October 11, 2005); from National Archives microfilm T625, roll 499.

Date analysis of original image.

The date for the original image in this photo can be narrowed to between 1882 and 1883 due to several factors:

The image can be given an initial date of the mid-1880's based purely on clothing style. The close-fitted, elongated bodices of their dresses, the equally close-fitting sleeves that cut above the wrist, and the draped fronts of their dresses (which are indicative of a bustle, although the bustles themselves cannot be seen) are all typical of the 1880's.

Corsets of the style these women are wearing were consistently worn during this period, and are cut so that the wearer was very constricted at the waist and through the rib cage, with broadened hips. The dark colors of the dresses are also typical. Even calico dresses were made in darker colors during this period. The dress style of the mid-1880's was characterized by a hip-length form-fitted bodice (known as a curaisse) over a slim bustled skirt. Sleeves during this period end above the wrist bone, and this too is apparent in the photo. The high necks of these dresses are also typical, and the bows and ruffled collars the women are wearing help to narrow the date of this photo further, since this style was most popular in 1882 and 1883. Their hair is also typical of the 1880's, worn close to the head with very short, curly bangs, a style which originated with Queen Victoria's daughter-in-law, the Princess of Wales.

Location analysis of original image and identity of subjects.

I also believe that this photo was taken in Minnesota because I believe I have identified the family in this photo. Although the couple in the photo is not named on the back, their children are named as Evie, Lucettie[?], Alfred Fay, Mary, Goldie, Luella and William. Using their children's names, I found a John & Orpha Lattin family living in Traverse County, Minnesota in 1880⁵. Their children are William, Sadie [Ludie?], Luella, Fay and Goldie. Alfred Fay seems mis-labeled as a female in this census (not too surprising with the name/nickname of "Fay", I suppose). Young children whose birth year is known can be especially helpful in dating photos, and this is true of the little girl, Goldie, in this photo. Goldie is listed as being 3 years old in the 1880 census, and she appears to be between 5 and 6 in this photo, which is consistent with a date of 1882-1883 for this photo, as discussed in the above section on clothing.

There is an Eva Day on the same page of the census as the Lattin family, and her parents' birth states match those of Orpha and John Lattin. I believe she may be the "Evie" from the photo, although my cursory search turned up no records of a marriage

⁵ 1880 United States Census, Traverse County, Minnesota, population schedule, T127 N, R47 W Township, Enumeration District [ED] 2, Supervisor's District [SD] 2, p. 373 (stamped), p. 35 (penned), dwelling 11, family 12, John Lattin; digital images by subscription, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed October 11, 2005); from National Archives microfilm T9, roll 635.

for an Eva or Evie Lattin. However, there is also a "Mary" on this same census page, shown as married to John Rosencrans. I was able to find the marriage of Mary Lattin and John Rosencrans in the IGI. The IGI record shows they married 18 Nov 1879 in Morris, Stevens, Minnesota⁶. The IGI also shows Mary Anna Lattin was born 26 Feb 1857 in Standard Corners, Allegany, New York and died 1 May 1920⁷. The Ancestral File shows that John Lattan married Orpha Samantha Wells 9 Oct 1852 in Wellsville, New Allegany, New York. The only child of John and Orpha's in the Ancestral File is Mary, but the Ancestral File does have Orpha's parents (Peter Wells and Patience Straight)⁸.

Date analysis for creation of this photograph.

I know that this is not an original photo because the "Superior Finish" mark is found on photos dating between 1891 and 1900, putting almost a decade between the date of this photo and the original image. Since we know that Mr. Piatt was operating as a photographer as early as 1880 and was still listed as a photographer in the 1900 census, I cannot limit the date any further based on census data.

However, I did find a city directory for Mattoon, Illinois that is dated 1895-1896, and shows Mr. J. A. Piatt with a business address of 71 East Broadway⁹, which suggests that this photo was not taken during that period. If additional city directories can be found, further research as to the photographer's address may allow the date of the reprint to be narrowed further.

While searching for the city directory mentioned in the previous paragraph, I also found an obituary for Mr. Piatt. He died in Jacksonville, Illinois on 15 December 1928, three weeks after being hospitalized for what is described as a "nervous breakdown"¹⁰.

⁶ "International Genealogical Index [IGI]," database, *FamilySearch* (<http://www.familysearch.org> : accessed 11 October 2005), John Clifford Rosencrans-Mary Anna Lattin individual record, film 1395899, batch 8433302, sheet 68.

⁷ "International Genealogical Index [IGI]," database, *FamilySearch* (<http://www.familysearch.org> : accessed 11 October 2005), Mary Anna Lattin individual record, film 1395899, batch 8433302, sheet 61.

⁸ "Ancestral File," version 4.19, database, *FamilySearch* (<http://www.familysearch.org> : accessed 11 October 2005), John Lattan-Orpha Samantha Wells family group sheet, film 1394405, ancestral file number 3PHG-2C.

⁹ Joyce Lewis, and Adolf Sumerlin, comps., *Directory of Coles County and the City of Mattoon, 1895-6 : Comprising a List of Residents, Business Houses, Churches, Societies, and Miscellaneous Directory* (Mattoon, Ill.: Mattoon Commercial Print, 1895; repr., n.p.: Coles County Genealogical Society, 2000-2002); digital image, Coles County Genealogical Society, Coles Co., Illinois Genealogical Society (<http://www.rootsweb.com/~ilccgs/directory/directory.html> : 11 October 2005).

¹⁰ Vanessa Deshazer [Src. #144 (SANNA1998@aol.com)], "Coles County [Illinois] Obituaries," transcripts, *Illinois Trails - History and Genealogy* (<http://iltrails.org/coles/obits9.html> : accessed 11 October 2005), for John A. Piatt ("Decatur Review", Decatur, Illinois, Wednesday, December 19, 1928).

To have a copy made of an old photo was not unusual, and given the quality of this image, it was more than likely copied from another cabinet card and not from a tintype, which would likely have reproduced as a darker image with evidence of scratches. The back of this photo has no photographer's marks, which would also be typical of later cabinet cards of the 1890's, and unusual for a cabinet card from the early 1880's. The couple in this photo is identified on the back of the photo as "Grandpa and Grandma Lattin", which suggests that it was probably a grandchild of this couple who lived in Illinois around the turn of the century and had copies made by Mr. Piatt of an older cabinet card.

Sincerely,

Karen Wallace Steely