

Genealogy Rocks!

Identifying Photos Of Your Ancestors

You've inherited a box of old photos from a relative. It would be optimal if the people in the photos were identified.

If not, hopefully older family members may be able to help or comparing ancestors in other photos. You can place an image in a specific time period.



Ceil Damschroder

First, identify the type of photo you have. Daguerreotype (1840-1860) is a shiny mirror-like piece of metal. The image is clear, although it may have to be held at an angle to view. Ambrotype (1855-1865) is an image adhered to glass with an added dark background. Because of fragility the photo is usually secured in a case. Tintypes (1856 to 1900) image was on a varnished thin sheet of metal (not tin). Available in several sizes, they often were in a cardboard sleeve.

Carte-de-visite (visiting cards) (1855-1900) always measured 2 ½ by 4 inches, the thin paper image was adhered to cardboard. Look for the photographers I.D. on the

back. These could fade in light. Cabinet Cards (1864-1920) were a thicker piece of cardboard with the paper photo adhered to it. The cardboard was standard, measuring 4 ½ by 6 ½. Look for photographer's I.D. on front or back. In 1935, Kodak introduced Kodachrome colored slides, and in 1942 introduced Kodacolor film for paper prints with much improved glossy paper.

Study women's hair styles, men's facial hair, clothing features, sleeves, collars, ties, hats, accessories, uniforms, backgrounds and props. These can be great clues to accurately determine the time period.

Dating Old Photographs (1840-1940) by Family Chronicle Publications and many books are available in the public library on types of photographs and fashion and styles in different time periods, as well as many websites.

❖ *Ceil Damschroder is a speaker for Larimer County Genealogical Society. Our monthly programs are held on the third Thursday at 6:45 pm of each month except December at the Old Town Library in Fort Collins. Please visit our website at www.lcg-sco.org or our Facebook page for event details.*