



# FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHS

Lockport, New York

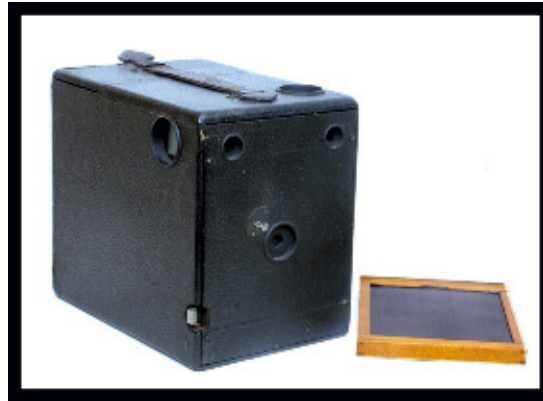
ca 1900

(LETTER FOUND WITH THE PHOTOGRAPHS)

### BEGINNING THE STORY

Sometime in the early 1970s I stopped at a yard sale near Lockport, a town on the Erie Canal northeast of Buffalo, New York — very likely in the yard of the house on the following page. There I bought a box of photographic memorabilia; a box camera, a small stack of envelopes full of fading photographs and two boxes of 4"x5" glass plate negatives.

The camera, an Imperial Camera Company Model A, is almost certainly the camera used to take most of the glass plate negatives. The Imperial Camera Company existed from 1898 to 1904 before being bought out by a larger company but I have found no record of this specific camera. I know it existed — here's a photograph of it.



Now, 40 years later, I took a serious look at the fading photographs and found that there were notes written on the backs of some of them. I also found a letter, with no date, apparently written from a cousin who had “moved out west” and was returning the photographs to his stay-at-home cousin in New York. Not all of the photographs had notes and not all of the negatives of the photographs were in the stack of glass plates.

However, there were enough to piece together a narrative — and this small book is it.

Apart from the given names in the notes and letters there is no information about the family.

*Greetings and salutations, Cuz*

*Thank you for sending me pictures of the family and home place. It don't seem like eight years since father died and Vera and I went west to work her folks farm but I guess it has been.*

*I'm sorry take so long to return them to you. Vera and I enjoyed the pictures so much we hated to send them home. Also, they got to us in the middle of harvest and you know what that means. Crops were good but always could be better. We had near 200 acres of wheat this year and about half that of corn for the stock. It's all in now and getting toward winter so I have a little time to write you a letter. Being a farmer sure keeps a body busy but you already know that.*

*It's hard to believe that Phillip is a lawyer and married into a rich Buffalo family. He and I were in the same grade at school but he stuck to it and graduated. First one of us to go to college, does Phillip still recognize us. Ha ha. Frannie sure is sure pretty. That's the first picture I've seen of her.*

*Far as that goes, it's hard to believe that you and Jennifer are married and have two girls. Jennie and Emma must be getting big by now.*

*A tintype man came to Hastings last summer, Vera and I and our little Edward had our picture made. I'll put one in with this letter.*

*Your homesick cousin*

*Bernard*





*I don't know if you ever knew our great uncle Elías. He was our grandfather's younger brother. He must have been driving this rig for 50 years. He came over from his place near Rapids to visit just before grandfather died.*

*Elías died a couple of years ago.*





*Gretta had pups every spring until  
two years ago. I swear she must be  
momma to half the farm dogs in  
Niagara County.*

*She's getting pretty old now.*



*Neighbor Richardson's boy, Jacob, with Emma and Gretta. I believe that Gretta thought Emma was one of her pups. Jacob was just a tad when you left. He's grown in to a strapping young man. His folks moved into town but Jacob's helped with the farm for the last three or four summers during school vacation and during harvest. He's a smart lad. He loves farming but I'll bet he goes off to school somewhere.*





*This is the newest of all the pictures. Forepaugh and Sells circus set up in a field just outside of Lockport this August. They had been in Buffalo and were going to Rochester next. Phillip and Frannie took the train out to Lockport on a Friday night so the four of us could get up early and get into town to see the Circus Parade. We left the girls at home with father and mother for the day.*

*They parked the circus train on a side track just beyond the new Union Station. The parade started there with a team of six white work horses pulling their steam organ out in front then elephants pulling all the animal wagons with pretty girls on horseback and lots of clowns behind. By the time we got to the field where they had their tents all set up it seemed like half the town was following along.*

*We stayed all day and saw all the shows in the big tent and along the side. The Grange had a food tent set up so we didn't even have to bring lunch. Some of the side shows were a little naughty for Jennifer's taste but Phillip and I enjoyed them. Frannie didn't seem to mind but she's a city girl.*

*As Phillip and Frannie were getting on the evening train back to Buffalo they told us that they were going to have a baby in January.*

