

A Tavistock quartet

VINTAGE VIEWS

By Tim Mosher

Tavistock and District Historical Society

Nothing is recorded about this photo, so everything we know comes from the picture itself. There's no written record of who the four musicians are and why they're posing. It's clear that they're an ensemble because of their clothes (including all white socks) and someone asked that they gather for the picture. It's also clear that it's a John Lemp (1884-1957) photo because of the artificial painted backdrop, especially on the right, that appears in many of his studio pictures over the decades. Mr. Lemp's studio was located on the second floor at the back of his pharmacy; today a private residence on Hope Street West.

A pharmacist would have easy access to a wide variety of chemicals and so it was natural to have a side business of photography in the pre-digital days because a specific set of chemicals was required to develop the analogue-type photos.

Dating photos with no record of when they were taken is often based on clothing fashions, hair styles, motorized vehicles and landmarks, but here, most of these

aren't present. The clothes appear to be custom-made and the hair styles are very neutral, so dating this picture is especially difficult. I estimate it was taken in the mid-1930s.

If you have a copy of this picture, or if you know the names of any of the four young people, please contact me at my email address, below, to let me know and I'll pass on the information to the Tavistock and District Historical Society.

This week's history mystery: It's possible this was not the photo sold to the quartet's families because there are about five problems with the picture that professional photographers would be critical of. Two are fairly obvious and the other three are more subtle. Professionals very often 'bracket' pictures, i.e. take more than one photo of the same thing using different camera adjustments, and then only use the best one, so this image might have been rejected and a better one sold to them. However, this is the only picture of its type in the Lemp Studio Collection. The mystery is, name the two clearest problems in this picture that would tell Mr. Lemp this is not the best example of his photo craft. This question is open to all ages. Email your answer to tim_mosher@hotmail.com.

The answer to last week's history mystery: The question was, "What is the name of the very old method of finding water for a windmill or the like that's still practiced today and is disputed by the scientific com-



(JOHN LEMP, LSC #9071 PHOTO)

Four youth pose for John Lemp in his studio at the back of his pharmacy.

munity?" The first person to provide the correct answer was Carla Bechtel of Baden who wrote, "divining using a divining rod" and a close runner-up was Craig Wilker of

Kitchener who wrote, "water witching." A third possible correct answer would have been dowsing.



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