

What a card

VINTAGE VIEWS

By Tim Mosher

Tavistock and District Historical Society

The early Tavistock Gazette published very brief notes every week about local communities. In the June 12, 1902, edition, the column about New Hamburg said, "Raymond the magician is showing here this race week." The Gazette of Sept. 6, 1944, under the tiny title, "Fair Opened," wrote, "Magic tricks by Clifford Wettlaufer," performing as part of local entertainer Fred Funk's program of singing, tin-whistle numbers and a dance with Mr. Funk conducting an orchestra at the Tavistock Fall Fair.

This photo is most likely of young Raymond as the clothing and photography give a lot of clues. His very formal wing-tip collar was common in 1900, and he might be wearing a stiff,

one-button bosom (a fake shirt-front), sometimes called a dickey. Dickey came back in fashion to a certain extent about 65 years later when I remember some boys in my public school wore false turtlenecks under their open shirt collars (a small piece of fabric over the chest, attached to a rounded neck to give the impression of wearing a full turtleneck).

The studio setting and posing stool are consistent with the earlier period. By the 1940s, men's suits, collars and photo studio settings were vastly different. Also, this photo was made on a glass negative, which was the international standard of picture taking 125 years ago, whereas by the 1940s celluloid/film had almost entirely replaced the heavy, fragile, light-sensitive glass negative type.

The photographer was very likely Adrian O. Murray, who operated a photo studio in Tavistock from 1896-1903.

Little is known about both magicians/illusionists, but Wettlaufer is a well-known surname in the Tavistock area. If you have any information or photos of either



(PHOTO BY ADRIAN MURRAY; LSC SCAN #0038) **Local magician Raymond had a variety of tricks up his sleeve. Here, he's creating the illusion of a card floating midair.**



(PHOTO BY ADRIAN MURRAY; LSC SCAN #0039) **Raymond played on the stereotype of the magician who pulls a rabbit out of a (top) hat.**



(PHOTO BY ADRIAN MURRAY; LSC SCAN #0037) **Card tricks and illusions were clearly an important part of Raymond's act.**

Raymond (which could be a stage name) or Clifford Wettlaufer, the magicians, please contact me at the email address below.

This week's history mystery: This question is open to all ages.

How does Raymond's illusion of holding the playing card mid-air work? Note that this is not a trick photo; the card really is between his hands "floating." The first reader to send the correct answer

to me at tim_mosher@hotmail.com will have their name and the name of their community or rural route number published in the next edition. All answers must be received by 10 a.m. Sept. 30.

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