

## Discovering Your Ancestors

More and more Americans want to learn the history of their families. Genealogy websites make available numerous old records, such as ship registries, marriage certificates, and death certificates. And now there's another option: photo detectives.

With deep knowledge of social history, photo detectives hunt for clues in old photos. Hair styles, clothes and fashion, and the objects in the pictures help detectives identify dates, places, and professions. For example, a photo of a woman with unusually short hair in the 19th century could mean that she had scarlet fever. A person sick with the disease often had their head shaved. Or a photo of a baby carriage could be an announcement that the infant had died. These are only two examples of the many facts photo detectives must know.

Photography was invented in the 1830s, but the process was very troublesome. Families had to visit a photo studio for pictures. But when Kodak invented the snapshot in the 1880s, families could easily take pictures of birthdays, holidays, and everyday life. Unfortunately, most people didn't mark the pictures with names or dates. It is now difficult for descendants to recognize the people and places in these old pictures. Photo detectives can help.

You can see the whole lesson from your teacher, please ask them to send it to you before the class.

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