

LINCOLN PHOTOGRAPH GALLERY

By Trava Olivier, 2018

While scrolling through Facebook on my day off I stumbled upon a blurb from the *Pipestone County Star's* "One thing you need to know today" post.¹ It mentioned that on November 15, 1889 a stone foundation was being added to the Lincoln Photograph Gallery in preparation for the coming cold weather.

Not being familiar with the Lincoln Gallery, I decided to research what information the museum held on this business. I discovered that on May 10, 1889 Mrs. R. L. Reynolds and Mrs. Ellis had arrived in Pipestone and were to open the gallery in the near future. I also learned that the studio opened on July 5th of that same year. Mrs. Reynolds advertised her work by claiming to be as good as the best, having the only ground floor gallery in the city, and having reasonable rates.² The Lincoln Gallery ran ads in the Pipestone County Star and the Pipestone Leader newspapers between July of 1889 and May of 1894. I was unable to determine if another photographer took over the studio at that time or if Mrs. Reynolds continued to operate without the use of advertising. The building stood at 211 East Olive (Main) Street, where the parking lot for Pipestone True Value and the Pipestone Fire Department is in 2017. That address shows the building was used as a photo gallery until 1904 when it became the office for Alexander Land Company. An article in the August 21, 1914 Pipestone County Star tells of the wooden building being removed from the lot. The 1921 Sanborn Fire Map shows the lot vacant but by the mid 1930's there is business advertising that indicates a new building had been erected and several individuals operated an "Eat Shop" at this location through the early 1950's.³

My initial reaction was to have more questions than satisfaction with what I had found so far! Who were Mrs. Reynolds and Mrs. Ellis? Why were they in Pipestone? Why was it called the Lincoln Gallery? Why were women operating a gallery in an era where women were seldom business owners and operators. My search then took me to trying to learn more about these individuals.

I discovered Mrs. R.L. Reynolds had been born Rhoda A. Lincoln, Mrs. Ellis was born Almira Lincoln and that both were sisters to Allen Gilbert (A.G.) Lincoln. A.G. Lincoln was a farmer in Sweet Township, Pipestone County and the person who had purchased the land for the Lincoln Photograph Gallery.⁴ These siblings were 3 of the 12 children born to Oliver & Almira (Denton) Lincoln in Yates County, New

¹ Pipestone County Star Facebook page, November 15, 2017, "*One Thing You Need to Know Today*".

² Pipestone County Museum, Research Library, "*Photography*" file

³ Pipestone County Museum, Research Library, "*Residential and Business Info by Address*" database, Lorraine Draper, p. 97

⁴ Farmers Leader, Pipestone, MN, June 6, 1892, Page 1, column 2, paragraph 11

York.⁵ A.G. Lincoln had left home at the age of 16 and made his way to Iowa where he worked for a farmer before coming to Pipestone County and purchasing 160 acres in Sweet Township.⁶

So I knew who these people were and why it was called the Lincoln Photograph Gallery but I was still curious as to why Mrs. Reynolds and Mrs. Ellis were operating a business in Pipestone. Through census records I found that Almira Lincoln Ellis had married Hosea Ellis in Rock County in 1873 and was widowed and residing in Pipestone County with Rhoda Reynolds and Mayells Reynolds, an 11 year old female, in 1895.⁷ Almira remarried Archibald Stretch of Brookings County, South Dakota on July 1, 1895 in Pipestone County.⁸

Being widowed and living with a family member provided a reasonable explanation to Almira's presence and role in the Lincoln Gallery. Now on to finding out why Mrs. Reynolds was here. Was she also a widow? And who was this Mayells Reynolds. All census records I was able to locate indicate the Rhoda did not have any children. Mayells does not appear on any other census records that I could find however I did find a Mae L. Reynolds on multiple census records. She was born the same year as Mayells in the same area of Iowa that Rhoda and Hugh were living to Oliver and Rosa Reynolds. I suspect Mayells and Mae L. were the same person and she was a niece to Rhoda but I haven't followed that line of research to date.

That left me with one final question to answer. Why was Rhoda Lincoln Reynolds in Pipestone operating a photo gallery? Records show Rhoda Lincoln had married Hugh M. Reynolds in Iowa in 1871. The 1880 Census shows them still residing in Iowa with Hugh working as a photographer and Rhoda as an artist.⁹ In 1895 Rhoda is here without Hugh. Not finding Hugh in any death records, I once again turned to census records and was able to locate Hugh in the Iowa census in 1895 also working as a photographer.¹⁰ Did that indicate that something had gone wrong with the marriage? In 1905 Rhoda turns up in Council Bluffs, Iowa and census records show her living alone and divorced.¹¹ In 1910 she is in Oklahoma living with Almira and Archibald Stretch (the same sister who had lived with Rhoda in Pipestone 15 years earlier).¹²

Finally, the questions seemed to be answered. It seems logical to assume the sisters were in Pipestone near their brother who opened a gallery in order to aid his sisters during what must have been difficult

⁵ 1860 United States Federal Census, Batavia, Genesee County, New York, Dwelling 376, lines 23-33; familysearch.org, Dec. 3, 2017

⁶ Pipestone County Museum, Research Library, "*Lincoln*" vertical file

⁷ 1895 Minnesota State Census, Pipestone City, Pipestone, MN, Page 27, Family 22, Line 33-35; familysearch.org, Dec. 3, 2017

⁸ Pipestone County Museum, Research Library, "*Marriage Records*" database, P. 42, last entry

⁹ 1880 United States Federal Census, Alden, Hardin County, Iowa, P. 22, Dwelling 188, lines 14-15; familysearch.org, Dec. 3, 2017

¹⁰ 1895 Iowa State Census, Hardin County, Iowa, P. 40, Dwelling 37, line 23 with the family of Arthur H. Treat; familysearch.org, Dec. 3, 2017

¹¹ 1905 Iowa State Census, Council Bluffs, Pottawattmie County, Iowa, Population Schedule card #308; familysearch.org, Dec. 3, 2017

¹² 1910 United States Federal Census, Ward 3, Enid, Garfield County, Oklahoma, Household 149, Line 8; familysearch.org, Dec. 3, 2017

times in their lives! It is likely that Rhoda learned the photography trade from her former husband during their marriage. Wanting to follow the story of Mrs. R.L. Reynolds to the end, I discovered that on January 27, 1926 she passed away in Yates County, New York at the home of another brother H.A. Reynolds.¹³ The same community she had been born into some 87 years prior. Her remains are interred in the Hopeton Corners Cemetery.

¹³ [Findagrave.com/memorial/61567612/rhoda-a-reynolds](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/61567612/rhoda-a-reynolds)