

Addison C. Moyer

The work of Addison C. Moyer has likely found its way into more homes than any other local artist. As the first and only professional photographer in Waterloo for many years, Moyer captured images that are touchstones of Waterloo's history.



Hundreds of early Waterloo settlers would have sat in his portrait studio on King Street. Within ten years, Moyer had become quickly established a reputation for producing beautiful family portraits and images of the local landscape.

In 1906 it was written: “His work is classed among the best produced in the county, and as a photographer of outside views his services are in frequent requisition . . . the excellence of his work brings patrons from all over the county.”

Moyer was born in St. Jacobs in 1874 and moved to Waterloo to set up his business in 1895 at the age of twenty-one. He had become fascinated by the emerging technology of photography at a young age and “the further he delved into the mysteries of the art the more interested he became.” His first camera was a small Kodak with which “he produced some very creditable pictures.”

In a 1902 advertisement for a Waterloo singing festival, Moyer promoted himself as an artist. “A good photo of yourself and friends will be a fine remembrance of the big time you had at Waterloo on the big Saengerfest,” he wrote. “My facilities for turning out first-class photos in my new studio in Letter’s Block are unexcelled.”

He soon became a prominent businessman and by 1912 began serving the community as a councilor. He remained on council for about seven years and in 1916 he became the deputy reeve for a year. Moyer was also involved in the community as a member of a fraternal organization called the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, a service group whose origins date back to mid-eighteenth century England.

Addison Moyer, who died on November 7, 1929 at his William Street home, was fortunate to be involved in a profession where technology was developing at a fast pace. In 1908, at the height of his career, a written history of Waterloo highlighted his work: “The good photographer is every whit as much an artist as the individual who uses only brushes and paints, and people are beginning to wake up to that fact more and more every day.”

Note: In the photograph above, taken by Addison Moyer, the photographer himself is at the left side of the photo, wearing a bowler hat.

Photo courtesy of the Waterloo Public Library.