

## BIOGRAPHIES & FAMILY RECORDS



### SAMUEL HIRST - HUTCHINSON PHOTOGRAPHER FOR 70 YEARS

Samuel Hirst was born Oct 1, 1864 in Darlington, Lafayette, Wisconsin to George and Elizabeth Bilbrough Hirst. George and Elizabeth came from Leeds, England in 1849 on the Queen of West. They had been married just a few days before they left. George was a millwright, who also learned photography. At the age of 8, Samuel and his parents along with his living brothers and sisters, Hanna, George, Lila, Frederick, William (one sister Mary Ann, died in Darlington) came to Hutchinson in 1872. He remembered taking the first Santa Fe engine over the new track from Newton to Hutchinson. When George Sr. came to Hutchinson he opened the first photography studio. When he decided to farm, his daughter Lila continued the business for several years. Samuel decided to also go into the photography profession after growing tired of working in a restaurant. The year was 1882 and he continued in the photography business for 72 years, within that time there was a 12 year break as a traveling salesman for a photography supply house. He learned photography from his father and added to his knowledge from another photographer that he brought in to teach him more about the business.

His studio was at 21 North Main and later in life he moved it to his "cottage studio" at 414 East B where he remodeled it and put in skylights for better lighting. It was just down the street from his home at 402 East B. When he first opened his studio he printed little folders with his picture on one side and one of the 4 local churches on the other. They really circulated as people were exchanging them if they did not get the church of their choice. But he mainly concentrated on portraits and he gained a reputation as a child photographer. He had taken over 20,000 photos by WWI, when he had to send his negatives, which were on glass, back to the photography supply house where they were cleaned and recoated, due to the shortage of glass during the war. On Oct 22, 1887 he married Myrta Rogers in Hutchinson, Kansas. They had 2 daughters, Lilah born in 1888 then Doris was born in 1901 but only lived a few days. He was able to put enough money away to buy a home in Manitou, Colorado, where he spent the months of July and August until 1945 when Myrta died. He wrote a column for the Pikes Peak Journal, called "Visitors to Manitou Springs." He was president of the Kansas Photographer Association and won prizes in 1899, 1900, 1904 and 1905. In 1903 he was a city councilman. What marked his term was he and Henry Hartmann began doing something about the floods that occurred in Hutchinson. He continued going to his studio until he was no longer able. Samuel died peacefully on Nov. 3, 1956 in Hutchinson, Kansas at 92 years of age.

Quote from article by Eileen Foley - July 26 1953 - Hutchinson News Herald

"The experienced photographer enjoys his work today just as much as 60 years ago.

If you should walk into his studio through a door with the sign, "Hirst's Studio — Walk In" you'd meet a white-haired man wearing a denim apron who would lead you into a room marked "Posing Room — Private," — and he'd smile."



Submitted by Nancy Moore  
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Nancy is Samuel's great granddaughter and is interested in photos or postcards that bear his name or logo

