



John Virgil Dedrick Photographer

By Brenda Lincke Fisseler

Let's take a break from the Spanish American War. This issue will feature John Virgil Dedrick, a photographer who was responsible for capturing the images of many Lavaca County Schools and school children.



John Virgil Dedrick

March 8, 1873-March 29, 1960

If a picture is truly worth a thousand words, then John Virgil Dedrick certainly had a lot to say during his lifetime. His career in photography spanned decades; and the evidence of his work is found in several states including the states of Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas and Washington.

John was born on March 8, 1873 in Butler Co., Kansas to Nelson Dedrick Sr. and Mary Williams Bogue Dedrick. According to his great-grandson, Dedrick started his photography career around 1907 in Oklahoma. He had a studio in Taloga, Dewey County, Oklahoma and he is known for his photographs of the scenes and people of the region, including Native Americans and rural settlers. His photographs are included in a three volume set of the county's history.

Before moving to Texas in 1910, Dedrick married Pattie Melissa Conde on October 2, 1909 in Kansas. By the time of the birth of his first child, John Morris, Dedrick and his wife were living in Weimer, Colorado County, Texas. John was followed by the birth of Pattie in 1912, Hattie Edna in 1914, Mary Jane in 1916, and Lord Edwin Nelson in 1919. All of the children were born in Weimer.

In 1921, Dedrick and his family moved to LaGrange, Texas where he leased two rooms on the second floor of the Masonic building which he would convert into a studio after which he would be open to the public.

In early 1924, Dedrick purchased the Nau Studio in Yorktown, Texas and leased the Paul F. Gips building on Main Street for his studio. According to the Yorktown News "Mr. Dedrick has made a very favorable impression on our people. He is a man of the progressive type and believes in boosting the town and its enterprises. His skill and ability as a photographer is recognized everywhere and his business experienced a wonderful growth."

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The newspaper also mentioned that he also owned a studio in Kenedy, Texas which was operated by his wife.

In the 1930 Census, Dedrick had returned to Weimer and working as a photographer. During the 1920s and early 1930s, Dedrick photographed many rural schools in Lavaca County including Sweet Home, New Kinkler, and Boethel as well as other area schools.

Note: These images are found on the Portal to Texas History Website.

By 1935, Dedrick and his family had moved to Tacoma, Pierce County, Washington. He remained in Tacoma until his death on March 29, 1960. He was survived by his wife, five children and 15 grandchildren.

In his obituary, it was stated that in Washington he was a photographer for the school system.

In a website created by his great-grandson, it states that Dedrick is known by collectors for his photographic postcards and some of his images are in the Library of Congress digital archives.



Mr. Dedrick, of the Dedrick Studio in Yorktown visited our school Friday morning and took a picture of our school, we are anxiously waiting the arrival of our pictures.



Sources:

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<https://www.findagrave.com>

<https://www.ancestry.com>

<https://www.familysearch.com>

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<https://www.emcnerney.com>

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