

Fashionable Folks

HAIRSTYLES 1840-1900



MAUREEN A. TAYLOR

author of *Preserving Your Family Photographs:*

How to Organize, Present, and Restore Your Precious Family Images

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INTRODUCTION

Is there anyone out there who hasn't had a bad hair day or obsessed about the right hairdo for a special event? I doubt it. It's one of the things that link us to our ancestors—hair envy.

Throughout years of studying photographs, I have seen many fascinating details in nineteenth-century pictures, but it's often the hair that stands out. Short, long, curled and coiffed manes were as trendy as the dresses and suits worn in each period. Every fashion era has a hairstyle that complements it—functional or fanciful.

When you think about nineteenth-century hairstyle trendsetters, Queen Victoria and newspaperman Horace Greeley probably don't come to mind. Yet, as public personages both these individuals influenced how men and women wore their hair—just as celebrities do today. Our ancestors copied the “look” favored by contemporary famous personages and public figures, attempting to look like their favorite actress, politician or society beauty. Their choices often revealed much about their personalities and offered insights into their politics.

Just by looking at the hairstyle, we can learn both about a person's fashion sense and character. You'd never know it by looking at old portraits, but hair—on the head and face—was also a battle between the sexes! You can use this handy guide to study the tresses and trims in your ancestral portraits and learn when different hairstyles and facial hair were in vogue.

Changes in 6 hours

From Grey to Black

UNRIVALLED
CIRCASSIAN
HAIR DYE.
 for changing
 Light Red or Grey Hair
 to a beautiful
BROWN OR BLACK

Prepared & Sold Wholesale & Retail only by
JOHN A. JONES,
 Barber & Fashionable Hair Dresser.
 BALTIMORE AT THE CORNER OF HIGH ST.
BALTIMORE.
 Price \$1. per Bottle

The above mentioned Circassian Hair Dye is truly an important discovery, important to all who are so unfortunate as to have Red or Grey Hair or Whiskers, and wish them changed to a beautiful Brown or Black. It has been frequently tried, & in all cases, when used according to the directions, has given perfect satisfaction. It colors the hair black or brown at the option of the person applying it. It does not make the hair stiff & harsh, but leaves it in a soft, glossy & natural condition. It will not dye the skin or clothes.

Advertisement. Circassian Hair Dye, 1843.

Female members of the Circassian tribe from Northern Caucasus located between the Black and Caspian Seas in Russia were considered quite beautiful. Advertisements such as this led the average woman to believe that she, too, could have dark brown or black hair just like the idealized Circassian women.



1840-EARLY 1850s

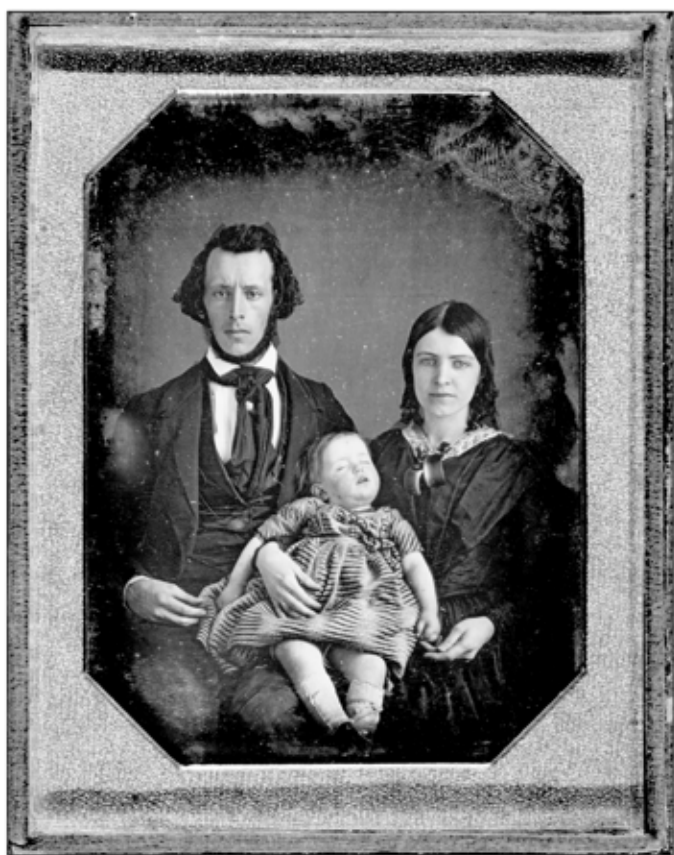
In the early 1840s women parted their hair in the center (a trend that would continue for most of the century) with front locks of hair and ringlets that looped over the ears. But by the end of the decade, all the fullness was at the sides and hair always covered the ears. These ringlets showed under the wide bonnets of the period that hugged the back of the head and framed the face. Large combs decorated their hairstyles, which were accented in the evening with feathers, flowers and wreaths.

Men may have admired Charles Dickens' mustache but, since beards were considered a French import, few actually grew them. Men's hair was ear-length and parted on one side. If a man had facial hair, it was probably a fringe beard under the chin.



*Unidentified man early 1850s. Mathew Brady Studio, photographer. According to the cataloging record, this resembles a portrait of Horace Kneeland, New York sculptor, in *The Atlas*, Dec. 15, 1844.*

In the early 1850s men parted their hair down the center back, then roughly brushed it forward. The top hair was oiled, combed forward and flipped back in this dramatic fashion towards the cheekbones. He has a full set of muttonchop whiskers that become an under-the-chin beard. His full beard frames his face and lends him an unusual appearance. He wears a dark-colored patterned silk around his neck, a light-colored vest and a jacket with a wide lapel. An unidentified sewn patch is on the right side of his jacket. There is a slight smile on his face and his light-colored eyes look amused.



Adams Family, ca. 1846.

Mr. Adams wears a tie and jacket similar in style to the previous image, this time paired with a dark-colored vest. His combed back hairstyle accents what appears to be a receding hairline. His beard lacks the fullness seen in the previous photo, but it also frames his face. Mrs. Adams is dressed in a dark silk dress and, as was the fashion for younger women, her hair is worn in long curls. It's a charming portrait of a serious couple posed with a sleeping female toddler on their laps.



Unidentified man. Mathew Brady Studio, after 1844.

An older gentleman who wears his hair tousled like the younger men of the decade. While he sports long sideburns, he lacks the under-the-chin beard. His hair is combed up in the front and out from the sides of his head. Look closely—it appears he's even combed his eyebrows up.

The Neil House Barbershop is a first-rate place for a smooth, pleasant and expeditious shave. Asbury also advertises himself as ready at all times, to attend anywhere in the city, for the purpose of shampooing ladies' heads, and dressing their hair. Gentlemen can have their razors sharpened and set for use on the shortest notice, at the same place.

Daily Ohio Statesman, December 3, 1851.

**To Promote the Growth of Whiskers,
Moustaches, and Eyebrows.**

Take one ounce of beef marrow and one ounce of mutton suet; simmer together gradually on the fire; add a quarter of an ounce of white wax while hot, and a little rosemary water. When cooling, add a small quantity of rum. Rub the part, on which you want the hair to grow, with a coarse towel. This is very necessary, the pores requiring to be acted upon before applying. This recipe is very precious, and of infinite value. Scent with a quarter of an ounce of essence of bergamot, or essence of lemons.

The Perfumer's Legacy Containing a Treatise Upon the Human Hair; Directions for Its Culture, Preservation and Embellishment, 1850.

MAUREEN TAYLOR

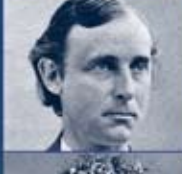
THE PHOTO DETECTIVE

In 1978, Maureen Taylor fell in love at first sight—with a shiny metal photograph known as a daguerreotype.

The people in the portrait looked so fresh, so touchable, that Maureen half expected them to step from the frame right into the present. And, although they couldn't speak for themselves, their photograph told their story. Looking closely at the details and the setting, Maureen felt all the history she had studied and the families she had researched come together and she knew that she had found the love of her life. By reading the clues of hairstyles, clothing, objects, and background, Maureen Taylor became the Photo Detective.

Maureen's ability to examine the evidence in photographs to identify people and places and even determine the dates of the images has brought her national attention. On October 12, 2007, *The Wall Street Journal* featured her photo-identification skills on the front page of the *Weekend Journal*, calling her "the nation's foremost historical photo detective." Her passion for photography and genealogy led Maureen to research Meredith Vieira's family tree for a segment of *The View* and Timberly Whitfield's family for Hallmark's *New Morning Show*. In addition, she has provided expert insights in numerous television, radio, and print media interviews. Maureen is the author of numerous books including *Preserving Your Family Photographs*, and the upcoming *The Last Muster: Images of the Revolutionary War Generation* (due out in 2010).

Images stream in to Maureen via www.photodetective.com and by mail, as people all over the world seek her help revealing names, ages, and stories behind mysterious family photographs. Maureen's videos, featuring fascinating and often amusing images from our past, appear on her blog, newsletter and at www.vimeo.com. To read Maureen's blog, go to www.photodetective.blogspot.com. To sign up for her monthly newsletter, go to her website at www.photodetective.com.



IS THERE ANYONE who hasn't had a bad hair day or obsessed about the right hairdo for a special event? Probably not, and this obsession is far from a modern phenomenon. Fussing over our hair is one of the things that link us to our ancestors.

Maureen Taylor, the Photo Detective, has studied the many fascinating details in nineteenth-century pictures. Early portraits tell us so much about the society, the times, and the trends, and the individuals they feature. And it's often the hair that stands out. Short, long, curled and coiffed manes were as trendy as the dresses and suits worn in each period. Every fashion era had its distinctive hairstyle—functional or fanciful.

Using the clues explained in this book, you can learn a surprising amount about your ancestors by studying their portraits. How they wore their locks for the photographer—whether straight or curled, clean-shaven or fringed, oiled or bewigged—will tell you a lot about them. Maureen Taylor's tips for “reading” the clues of clothing and hairstyles will help you discover when those pictures were taken, how old the subjects were at the time, and how wealthy they were. Hairstyles can even tell us a great deal about their personalities: Were they conservative or up on the latest trends? Who were their heroes and role models? What was their relationship to each other?

Maureen Taylor shares the mysteries of topknots and buns, braids and curls, burnsides and sideburns, to bring those old portraits to life. Once you've read this book, you'll look at hairstyles—even your own—with new eyes!



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