

## **Unknown hero**

*by Harry Zirkelbach 01-18-2010*

**Of my four grandparents, three had passed before I was born.**

**Grandma Catherine Zirkelbach was that survivor.  
I didn't meet her until I was ten, and she died several years later.  
I recall no serious conversation with her about her life, family.**

**There was never a Zirkelbach family photo , she with her children,  
with contemporaries, or with her sisters and their parents.**

**All family history was oral, no photographic support.  
The source, dad and his sisters, and often those narratives  
were not firmly fixed in my mind, as it might have been  
had photographs been available**

**From every accounting, the Zirkelbachs had been poor, happy-go-lucky.**

**Mom's mother died shortly after Mom was born, apparently from some  
complication of that pregnancy. He father passed when she was in her early 20s.,  
long before she married.**

**Mom adored her father. He was modestly wealthy.**

**There are many photo records of that family. In oral accounts of that family,  
the availability of a photo of the individuals enhanced my memory of incidents,  
and individuals.**

**Mom was a Hernon, and tales of Hernons were uniformly joyous, funny, frivolous.**

**I had observed that tintype family photo all shared features.**

**Individuals dressed carefully for the photo, were neatly arranged around the  
matriarch, often seated. The only flesh showing, the face, clean, dignified, sober.  
Group, or individual, photographs of all families were posed in a uniform manner.**

**Each stoic set of faces shared the appearance I came to expect to see in the casket,  
eyes closed.**

**Those family photos would not be unlike current available props in historical  
settings, the prop, the headless mannequins, so any wanting to Wyatt Earp, Annie**

**Oakley or the like, pops their head in the proper space, and viola, they are in  
Tombstone, or wherever.**

**Family photos I saw as a youngster, tended to be repetitive,  
except for the heads.**

**My hero for this page, is unknown to my knowledge.  
This hero has no age, male or female identity,  
but changed phonographic family history.**

**This was the individual, who relaxed to the assembled gathering,  
told a humorous story, and when he was satisfied with arrangement  
of both setting and individuals,  
simply said to everyone, SMILE.**