

October 15, 2018

In 1959 my father, Norman Frost, sent a picture that he thought was of his aunt, Lavinia Goodell, to a lady named Dorothy Thomas who was writing an article about Lavinia Goodell. I saw that picture on his desk when Ms Thomas returned it. He had never seen Lavinia himself since she died seven years before he was born. The only people he knew who had known her were his father and his grandmother, who was Lavinia's sister. The picture he sent was unidentified and since it was in a box of family pictures he thought it must have been Lavinia. I knew it was not because as a child I liked going through family pictures with my grandmother (who was my grandfather's second wife and not actually kin to my father or me or the Goodells). I remembered seeing the picture my father had sent, and I remembered that my grandmother had not known who she was. I also remembered seeing a daguerreotype of Lavinia with her father. When I found the daguerreotype and showed it to my father, he commented that the other lady was better looking anyway and seemed uninterested in doing anything about it. He was near the end of his life and he had already suffered a heart attack.

I really thought no more about it until fairly recently when I happened to see an article about Lavinia Goodell on the computer accompanied by the "wrong" picture! I was horrified. My brother advised me to let it drop, but it continued to worry me. Just last fall I took to Berea College Library a letter explaining what had happened. I also gave them the original copies of Ms Thomas' letters to my father and I included two daguerreotypes of the "real" Lavinia Goodell (which were in very bad shape). The pictures were, however, obviously the same person as the woman in the picture of Lavinia Goodell sent by Beverly Wright. I destroyed all unidentified pictures before I moved to a retirement home, so I no longer have the original of the picture that my father sent Dorothy Thomas.

*Dorothy Thomas*