

## Mrs. James L. Phillips from Westerly, R.I.



Here's another lovely smile of a stranger from the United States. She is referred to as "**Mrs. James L. Phillips**", so we have her husband's name, and we have a location in **Westerly, Rhode Island**. The photo studio of Everett Scholfield and brothers started operation at 30 Main Street in Westerly, Rhode Island, in 1879. So this photo must have been taken after that.

But who was our sitter?



I think I found her – her name was **Emily A. Phillips née Rhodes!** Emily was born in 1835 as the oldest child of carpenter Charles Wild Rhodes (1807-1880) and his wife Frances. Seems that Emily lost her mother in 1840 when she was just 5 years old. She and her two younger siblings Annie Frances Rhodes (1837-1899) and Charles William Rhodes Jr. (1839-1915) were raised by their father's second wife Sarah née Brown. Sarah gave birth to two more siblings,

Henry Martin Rhodes (1847-1869) and Sarah L. Rhodes (1851 – ?). In 1850, the family was living in Providence, Rhode Island.

Emily married James L. Phillips, a farmer from Connecticut, on March 16, 1858, and the couple moved to Plainfield, Windham in Connecticut. Plainfield lies just 27 miles from Westerly, Rhode Island, where this photo of Emily was taken. The 1860 and 1870 Censuses do not list any children for the couple. Emily was widowed sometime between 1875 and 1880 and in the 1880 Census, she was living with the family of her sister Ann Waterman née Rhodes in Plainfield, Connecticut. And after that the trail goes cold on Emily – I don't know if she re-married and changed her surname (she was in her 40s when she lost her husband), or when she died or where she was buried. Her sister Ann passed away in 1897, and Emily was not living in the household of Ann's husband Jotham Waterman in 1900 anymore.

I always learn something new about the American history when I research lost American photos. I thought it curious that the Rhodes were from Rhode Island and was wondering if the surname had any connection to the name of the early settlement. And although it doesn't (Rhode Island officially acquired its name only in 1776), I did find out that the Rhodes were among the first settlers to Rhode Island from England as early as 1646!

*"ZACHARY RHODES commences the history of this family in Rhode Island. He was born in 1603, and settled in Rehoboth in 1643. In 1644, with other settlers, he signed an agreement forming a town government. In 1646 he left Rehoboth, crossed the river and bay to Rhode Island, and with others settled at Pawtuxet, where he became a large owner of land."* (Quote from [HERE](#))

Emily's father Charles Wild Rhodes had been born in 1807 in Pawtuxet, Kent County (Kent), Rhode Island, too. I cannot check his relations to the first Rhodes in Rhode Island, but I have a pretty good feeling they might have been related.

I have added Emily's photo to [FamilySearch](#). Hopefully someday someone will want to find her story!

