

# Old Photo Album:

By Douglas W. DeCroix

**A**t *Western New York Heritage*, we often receive calls, letters and emails requesting a specific issue of the magazine. The motivation for those making the request usually involves an interest in the subject matter of this or that

article, but occasionally is of a more personal nature. Such was the case nearly a year ago, when I received a letter from Laura Elkinton of Belgrade, Mont., expressing an interest in our Fall 2009 issue. The reason for her interest was stated succinctly; "The child on the cover is my mother." The communication further revealed that Ms. Elkinton is the granddaughter of photographer Ernest J. Rawleigh, who created the original photograph for the *Buffalo Sunday Times* in October 1924. The little girl featured in the photo is Rawleigh's daughter, Gloria.

Upon request, Ms. Elkinton generously shared her

family stories, along with numerous additional photographs featuring Gloria as well as other members of the family. Thus this installment of the *Old*



Cover of the Fall 2009 issue of *Western New York Heritage*. The little girl standing left of center in the photo is Gloria Rawleigh, daughter of photographer Ernest J. Rawleigh, and mother of the contributor of the photos, Laura Elkinton.



# A Rawleigh Family Album

*Photo Album* revisits our cover of a year ago, while providing additional images of the family behind it.

Readers may recall from Fall 2008's *Old Photo Album* that Ernest J. Rawleigh (1883-1954) was an important local photo artist in the early-20th century. With early ties to the Roycroft community, Rawleigh served as General Pershing's photographer in World War One, and later worked with a number of Buffalo newspapers.

During this latter period, Ernest and Marie Rawleigh lived at 22 Crosby Ave. in Kenmore, N.Y., where Gloria and her brother Joseph grew up. Laura Elkinton was born in Buffalo in 1948, and remembers visiting her grandparents in this house and playing in the beautiful garden in the backyard. The house is still standing. She also remembers her grandfather – "E.J." – as an avid gardener, artist and photographer.

We hope you enjoy this collection of family photographs, courtesy of Ms. Laura Elkinton, and we offer her our sincere thanks for sharing her recollections and photos.



Gloria Rawleigh in the backyard garden at 22 Crosby Ave. in Kenmore, c. 1924.



Carving pumpkins. Gloria poses at far left in a photo reminiscent of the Fall 2009 cover image.





**Gloria with Santa,  
c. 1924.**



**Wintertime fun. Gloria  
(right) and her brother  
Joseph enjoy some time in  
the snow, c. 1924.**



**Gloria Rawleigh and feathered friends, c. 1924. Note that the turkeys and groundwork in the foreground have been carefully spliced into the photo. Gloria told her daughter that the turkey and pumpkin photos were also taken for the newspaper.**



**The Rawleigh house at 22 Crosby Ave. in Kenmore, N.Y., c. 1924. Note the newly-completed Kenmore Junior-Senior High School looming behind the house.**





**An older Gloria Rawleigh stands, with suitcase and doll, in the backyard garden of 22 Crosby Ave. The corner of Kenmore Junior-Senior High School (now Kenmore Middle School) appears in the background.**

**Ernest J. Rawleigh in World War One. He served as a photographer for General John J. Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Force.**







**"E.J. tuning in the 'ol radio."  
Photo taken in the late 1940s  
or early 1950s.**

**One of Ernest J. Rawleigh's  
business cards.**

ERNEST J. RAWLEIGH  
ORIGINAL STUDIES IN  
WATERCOLORS AND OILS  
ON EXHIBIT AND SALE  
22 CROSBY AVENUE  
KENMORE 17, N. Y.  
RI 7418



**Gloria Rawleigh was not  
only a photogenic child,  
but a talented artist in  
her own right later in life.  
This is a charcoal portrait  
she executed of her father,  
date unknown.**