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Welcome to Butte, America’s Story. I’m your host, Dick Gibson.

Angelo (or Alrick) Dusseau was born in Burlington, Vermont, in 1842 or 1843, of French-Canadian parents. He traveled west, to Wisconsin, by the time he was 23 years old, working as a carpenter on a railroad and as an engineer for a steam line in Missouri. By 1869 he was in Montana, employed as a practicing musician in Helena.

A.J. Dusseau’s true calling – as a photographer – began in Deer Lodge about 1874, and he was in booming Butte by 1876 or 1877. One of his first studios in Butte was on “Upper Main Street” at a time when there was no north or south Main, reportedly above the Post Office, when it was on the west side of Main between Granite and Quartz. His studio may also have been just south of the corner of Copper and Main, on the east side.

By 1882 his residence and studio were both in “The House that Jack Built,” a two-story building on the corner of Broadway and Main where the Hirbour Tower stands today. His sign, “Dusseau the Photographer,” was emblazoned across the Main Street side of that building until it was replaced by the Hirbour in 1901. In 1902, in partnership with George R. Thompson, Dusseau’s studio was at 219 East Park and the family was living at 720 Utah Avenue. Thompson continued the photography business after Dusseau died in 1908, and there was still a photo studio at 219 East Park in 1916, and I believe the home at 720 Utah is still standing.

Among Dusseau’s photographic work is a portrait of Louisa Earp, wife of Morgan Earp. The portrait dates to about 1877, probably shortly after Dusseau moved to Butte. Louisa and Morgan were probably together in Montana at various points in time from the late 1870s until early 1880. It’s not clear when they married – some reports say 1875 – nor is it clear exactly when and for how long they were in Butte, but there is little doubt that Morgan was on the Butte police force from December 1879 until March 1880. He joined his brothers in Tombstone, Arizona, soon after he left Butte, and was wounded at the gunfight at the O.K. Corral in October 1881. He was shot and killed in Tombstone in March 1882 at age 30.

Dusseau’s wife Amanda, from Missouri, was 17 years younger than A.J. Their daughter Elmira was probably born in Butte in 1888. A.J. Dusseau died August 28, 1908, leaving a rich photographic legacy.

As writer Edwin Dobb has said, "Like Concord, Gettysburg, and Wounded Knee, Butte is one of the places America came from." Join us next time for more of Butte, America’s Story.