

4.15 TWO Janes, and Johns by the Dozen



Jane

Leatherwood Dahlias

Maggie Valley/Waynesville, North Carolina

Jeremiah 29: 11-13

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”

TWO Janes, and Johns by the Dozen

September 8, 2023

One of the branches of our family tree is the Craig Family, that settled in Vermont in 1841. Robert Craig (1806-1885), his wife Agnes Purdon (1811-1886), and his whole family left their home in Scotland and traveled to America. The Craigs with Robert's parents, John James Craig (1778-1859) and Janet McIndoe (1786-1861), and siblings boarded a ship with their three surviving children Janet, Jane, and James. A fourth child named John (their names all began with the letter "J") had been born and died in 1840. Travel, and even living, in those days was more hazardous than we can imagine! It was a LONG trip across an often-stormy Atlantic Ocean, and, with numerous plagues and diseases across the world and limited medical knowledge that we take for granted today, travel by ship was not for the faint of heart.

On this trip, the younger daughter, whose name was Jane (1836-1841), died during the voyage on May 9. Jane's mother was expecting during the trip, and she gave birth to another daughter on September 6, which they also named "Jane" in memory of the daughter lost at sea. My own grandmother Aileen (Craig) Maytrott received a letter, which is now in my possession, from one of her cousins explaining this story.

The story was repeated when another son was born in 1846, this one named John in memory of the baby named John who was born in January of 1840 and died in July of that year.

This may explain why the name Jane was such a popular name to descendants of the Craig family and why so many descendants have the word "Jane" somewhere in their name. Consider Elsie Jane, Nancy Jane, and so on.

In the Maytrott family, we also have John Maytrott (1848 -1921) and son John Elmer Maytrott (1885-1887). In the Rapalje family there are so many "Johns" that we can hardly count them all, and they go WAY back in the family tree, not to mention a few of us whose middle name is JOHN. Consider the following piece that I wrote summarizing this a couple of years ago.

What's in a Name--John D. Rapalje

March, 2021

In 1624, Joris Jansen de Rapalie, a French Huguenot, and his wife Catalyntie Trico came to this country. Since this time, there have been many John Rapaljes and many more with different spellings of their last name. Including one who spelled his name Johannes, there have been FIVE Johns in our direct lineage back to Joris, the progenitor of the family, plus a few of us whose middle name is John.

Johannes Rapalje (1715-1750)

John D. Rapalje (1814-1855)

John D. Rapalje, Sr. (1874-1940)

John D. Rapalje, Jr. (1916-1999)

John Dawson Rapalje (2015-)

Johannes Rapalje (1715-1750)

We don't have very much information about Johannes. He was the son of Daniel Rapalje (1691-1737) and Aeltie Cornell (1692-1736). He married Maritje Van Dyke (1711-1743), and they had children Aletta, Lammetje, and Daniel. Our family descended from Daniel. It seems that most of our Rapalje ancestors were named John or Daniel (and a couple of Roberts!).

John D. Rapalje (1814-1855)

In the early 1800s, our Rapalje family owned and operated a mill on Flushing Creek at Newtown, Long Island, New York. John, his wife Ryme (Kouwenhoven), his parents Daniel D. and Rensie (Wyckoff), their children, and several employees all lived at this mill. During the span of about 7 years, both parents, grandparents, and three of the children in this family died, probably of a Cholera epidemic that struck New York City from 1849 to 1854. One of the two surviving children, Nicholas Van Antwerp Rapalje (known as Van), became the father of John D. Rapalje, Sr. (1874-1940), my own grandfather. The "D" probably stood for "de" from the name of Joris Jansen de Rapalie.

John D. Rapalje, Sr. (1874-1940)

I don't know very much about Dad's mother and father—Dad never talked about them very much. They both died when Dad was a young man. However, don't mistake Dad's lack of conversation about his parents for lack of compassion for them. For his entire life, Dad kept a half dozen pair of socks that had been folded by his mother Nellie (Seaman) while he was in his first year of college. For all these years, our mother (Grandma Bunny!) was the only one who knew. Then, as late as last year (2020), I discovered a small plastic box that NO ONE ever told me about. This box contains what appears to be ALL of Dad's father's cancelled checks for his entire lifetime from 1915 to 1940. Can you believe my Dad kept socks folded by his mother and ALL his father's checks for his entire life, for 60 years, carrying them with him whenever he moved, from New York to New Jersey in 1940, to Chicago in 1946, and to Florida in 1949??

I remember one thing Dad told me about his father—Dad's father was broken-hearted about the loss of his beloved wife, Nellie, of appendicitis in 1935! His dad lived another 5 years, while Dad was in college in Philadelphia at Drexel Institute of Technology, now Drexel University. It appears that his dad never really recovered from her loss!

John D. Rapalje, Jr. (1916-1999)

Let me tell you about MY DAD! I was blessed to have had a father who was a really GOOD man. Dad was born in Harrington, Delaware in 1916, but his family came from Long Island, New York. In about 1920, the family moved back to Long Island. He had no brothers or sisters, and he lost his parents when he was young, his mother in 1935 and father in 1940, but he did have some wonderful aunts and cousins that we were blessed to know. When I was a child growing up in Florida, I remember Dad's aunts telling me, "Your Dad is a GOOD man! When you grow up, you try to be like him!!" I have spent my life with this advice as my goal in life!

Dad graduated from Drexel Institute of Technology in 1940, after working to put himself through college. While in college, he had a vision of a "dark-haired woman across the river." That dark-haired woman turned out to be our Mom, Emma Marie Maytrott of Vineland, NJ, now fondly remembered by her family as "Grandma Bunny!" They were married for 54 years, during which time (you probably won't

believe this!) they NEVER had a fight! My siblings and I can confirm that we NEVER saw them argue, nor hardly ever disagree, about anything! That's because Mom always thought Dad was right! Dad and Mom were really in love! It was truly a marriage made in Heaven, and they set a wonderful example for all of us about how to have a very successful marriage and a GREAT family!

In 1946, when I was a year old, Mom and Dad moved from Vineland to Chicago. Dad used to say that they moved to Chicago because it was TOO COLD in New Jersey! Three years later, after the birth of Janet and Jim in Chicago, Dad drove his car into a snowbank. Soon after this, on October 12, 1949, we arrived in Florida, where Nancy was born! It was a LUCKY snowbank for me, because I would NEVER have found my Martha in Chicago!!

On my first day in Florida, we stayed at Three Lakes Lodge on Lake Eustis. It seems that I got away from my family just long enough to discover some ducks swimming on the lake. A few minutes later, I was found floating face down in the lake. It just happens that Dad had been a Boy Scout leader in New Jersey, teaching his scouts pressure-prone artificial respiration (before the discovery of CPR!). Dad gave me artificial respiration, revived me, and saved my life! As my aunts had been telling me, "Your Dad is a GOOD man . . . !"

I'll never forget a conversation I had with Dad one day when I was about 10 years old, that I should try to save money for my own college! "Someday you will need every cent you can get your hands on!" "Good grades are worth MONEY!" "Get good grades to get SCHOLARSHIPS and thus put yourself through college." This was ALL good advice that helped shape my life!

Dad LOVED TRAINS! Dad loved everything about trains, especially riding on them and taking pictures of them. We used to go to Leesburg (Atlantic Coast Line) and Wildwood (Seaboard Air Line) to take pictures of trains. We went to New Jersey on the train to visit our grandparents. In his retirement years, Dad and Mom were blessed with travel all over the country and Canada, of course, by train!

Dad loved the Methodist Church, where for years he served as church Lay Leader. In this capacity, he visited local churches, and frequently spoke in the services, especially on "Layman's Sunday." I will never forget one message he preached on Psalm 24, "Who shall ascend to the hill of the Lord?" Of course, the answer was "one who has clean hands and a pure heart." In his last year before he went home

to be with the Lord in 1999, Dad was in the hospital, and I was able to preach that message back to him. I remind Dad that “YOU can ascend the hill of the Lord, because YOU have clean hands and a pure heart, NOT because of anything WE have done ourselves, but because of what was done FOR us, by the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, the blood of Jesus.”

Dad loved to sing tenor! When I was a boy, I remember Dad sang tenor in a quartet in our Methodist Church. The song I remember most was called “For You I am Praying”: In this song, on the chorus, Dad had a solo for the first line, “For you I am praying,” then the rest of the song was sung in harmony parts. Mom and Dad used to sing a duet in church called “Transformed!” These songs still ring in my ears! I grew up LOVING harmony. When I was older, I LOVED to sing tenor with Dad in the church choir! He was SO good at singing, that with Dad sitting next to me singing in my ear, even I could sing tenor! Dad also sang in the SPEBSQSA (Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America!). I hope Dad is saving a seat for me next to him in Heaven! I understand there is a LOT of singing, a lot of harmony and worship going on over there!

In summary, Dad LOVED our Mom! He LOVED trains! He LOVED the Methodist Church! He LOVED the Lord, and he LOVED his family! “My Dad was a GOOD man— you try to be like him when you grow up!!”

John Dawson Rapalje (2015-)

At Mom’s 92nd birthday party, our son Philip and his wife Christina (Stone) made a very important announcement! They told us that they were expecting! Since our grandchildren so far were ALL girls, Mom said that she would put in a special request for a BOY! Five days later, she went to Heaven to deliver that request in person!! This boy was named John Dawson Rapalje, with the middle name “Dawson” commemorating Martha (Dawson)’s side of the family. We were SO excited about this choice of names, wondering why WE didn’t think of it ourselves when we were having our boys! Now, for the first time, for all the John D. Rapaljes we have had, we finally know that the D. stands for DAWSON!

Quite naturally, we began calling our grandson Dawson. In the back of MY mind, I could not wait to remind him of the REST of his name, that this was Dad’s name, and how much I LOVED the initials JDR! Then, when Dawson was about 5 years old,

he and his two sisters Jenna and Paige were studying children's Bible verses at church. Dawson's verse was JOHN 3:16!! The question immediately arose from his younger sister, "Where is PAIGE 3:16 in the Bible?" And, by the way, where is JENNA 3:16? The name JOHN seemed special. Then another reason came out: the sisters' names were Jenna Nicole and Paige Sierra, and THEY are called by their FIRST names. So John Dawson decided that he wanted to be called by HIS first name also! So, meet our ONLY grandson: John Rapalje!! He's only 6 now (probably 9 at the date of this publication!), so his life is still ahead of him! We look forward to seeing him grow! In the meantime, we will keep reminding John, "YOUR Dad is a GOOD man, . . . !"

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