

Family Genealogist (My Cousin Anna)

Joanna (DeBevoise) Lott (1881-1977)

Joanna De Bevoise, our family genealogist!!: Joanna DeBevoise was also officially known as Mrs. C.V.Lott, but to me and to many others, she was "Cousin Anna." She lost her husband of only 10 years in 1931 and never remarried, remaining a widow with no children of her own for over 45 years. When I, at the age of about 10 years (about 1955 if my math is right!), asked my father, "Where did we get this strange name of Rapalje?", he immediately sent me to Cousin Anna in Forest Hills, NY!! In those days, we cut open a brown paper bag and wrote on the inside to outline my first ancestral history, which I still have today.

With Cousin Anna's help, the Annals of Newtown by James Riker, and information that she had about the family tree, she was able to connect the dots for me, all the way back to Joris Jansen de Rapalie and his wife Catalina Trico who brought the Rapalje name to this continent! We have come a long way in genealogy since the brown paper bags of 1955, and I delight in the resources that are now available to us on the internet. Nevertheless, I am so thankful for the early start that I had in genealogy, thanks to my Cousin Anna. Like I said, we have wonderful resources available today via internet, but most of the "people resources" that I interviewed, especially Cousin Anna, are gone now -- gone but not forgotten!!

By the way, Cousin Anna warned me that there were OTHER stories out there about the Rapalje family and how Joris Jansen and Catalina came to America, but, she cautioned us, don't believe them! The single best resource, by far and away, is the Annals of Newtown, by James Riker.

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