

Finding Kansada Wood Rainwater's Maiden Name

by Susan Chance-Rainwater

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I first ran into Kansada Rainwater when I transcribed the complete set of Rainwater census records for The Rainwater Collection. Her name, in the 1900 census, is nearly obliterated by page damage, but it looks kind of like Canzada, and that's what I wrote down.

Her husband, John L. Rainwater, was born in Pulaski Co, Kentucky, so I checked for a marriage record in that county and the nearby counties, but didn't find one. So, I didn't know her maiden name.

I came back to Kansada recently, and wondered if there were any new records that would reveal her maiden name. No one on Ancestry.com seemed to have a clue.

In the successive census records after 1900, her name was recorded as Candice, Canzadia, and Kansoda. The Illinois death index calls her Kansada and Kausada. The entry at Findagrave said Kasandra, but the photo proved this to be in error, and I submitted a correction. The spelling shown on a photograph of the tombstone says Kansada, and I usually consider the tombstone to be the final word.

So how hard could it be to find someone named Kansada who was born in Kentucky in 1873?

For starters, it was clear that no one knew how to spell her name, so I did a lot of wild card searches – can*, kan*, *zada, *sada, and so on. What I learned was that there was a little flurry of girls named Canzada born in the 1870s in Kentucky. So nothing conclusive.

So I went back to her children hoping for a death record.

What I found was a marriage record for her son Stanford Willard Rainwater that listed her surname as Savorith. Wonderful – how many Savoriths can there be in Kentucky?

Well, none. Not just none in Kentucky, none anywhere. Savorith doesn't appear to be a name.

Back to square one.

So I decided to do the rest of the census records for her husband. Kansada died in 1927 and her husband moved in with Dee and Lovell Dalton. He's listed in their 1930 census household as brother-in-law.

Here's the problem with brother-in-law. Your sister's husband is your brother-in-law. So is your wife's sister's husband. So is your brother's wife's brother. And so on. The term isn't conclusive. Was John Rainwater related to Lovell Dalton or to his wife Dee?

My first and very wrong assumption was that Dee was John's sister. By working my way back in the census, I knew her name was Demolia, and agewise, she originally appeared to have been born after 1880 and married before 1900, so she could slot in between the censuses as a sort of invisible sister. But, when I looked for a marriage record, it became clear that her name was Demolia Wood not Demolia Rainwater, born in 1879. So not the invisible sister.

“Ah ha!” I thought. John Rainwater's brother, Josiah, had married Doretta Wood. Doretta must be Demolia's sister! Somehow, I had become obsessed with Demolia and had forgotten all about Kansada.

So now, I needed an 1880 census household containing Demolia and Doretta Wood in Kentucky. After a bit of searching what I found was a household, not with Demolia and Doretta, but with Demolia and *Kandus* – in other words, Kansada. John is Demolia's brother-in-law because Kansada was Demolia's sister. So, it's Kansada Wood.

Doretta Wood, by the way, isn't a sister to Kansada and Demolia. I still don't know what family she belongs to.

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