

## Nothing is obvious: reasoning to the parents of John Lysander Rainwater

*By Susan Chance-Rainwater, 17 Aug 2019*

John Lysander Rainwater was born in 1877 and died in 1961. In 1901, he married Hester Nicholson, his 1st cousin once removed. He lived his entire life in Wayne Co, Missouri.

The information for his death certificate was provided by his youngest daughter, Goldie Libla. She would not have known her father's parents, because they had died before she was born, so the information was from memories of what she had been told.

Goldie said that her father's parents were Robert Rainwater and Mary Jane Hale, a couple for whom almost no evidence exists. My research suggests that Goldie got these names wrong, but the names she gave contain the clues of her father's actual parents.

### IDENTIFYING JOHN'S FATHER, PART 1

To make my case, I want to look at one of the hinge pins – John's 1900 census record – where he is found living in the household of his uncle, George Rainwater. The important item here is "uncle." Because George and John are both Rainwaters, the word uncle tells us that George is one of John's father's brothers.

Based on the death certificate and the census record, this means that there should be a Robert among George's brothers. There isn't. George and John's father were among the children of Francis Asbury Rainwater and Sarah Ann Moore. Their children were daughters Mary and Myra, and sons Aaron, Rufus, Christopher, William, George, and Thomas. No Robert.

So the name Robert is probably wrong, though it's a clue and we'll come back to that in Part 2.

Of the known brothers, we are able to identify all of the brothers' sons and none of them were named John Lysander. There is only one of the sons of Francis Asbury Rainwater about whom almost nothing is known after childhood, and that's Christopher.

Given John's age, his father should have been born in or before 1857. Christopher was born in 1855. He's a brother of George, and he has apparently died before 1880. So John, if he is the son of Christopher, should show up in his mother's 1880 census household under the name Rainwater. But he doesn't.

### IDENTIFYING JOHN'S MOTHER

I want to now look at the woman Goldie named as John's mother, Mary Jane Hale, and in doing so, how the Hale family intersected the Rainwaters.

In about 1870, one of John's cousins, Aaron Vincent Rainwater, married Martha E. Hale, the daughter of David and Mary Hale. This is interesting, because in this era, where people literally married within a 10-mile radius, it was common to have multiple marriages within two

families. (*This also seems the place to point out that owing to two courthouse fires, and a burglary, there are no marriage records for the era in which these marriages took place.*)

Goldie Libla said John's mother's name was Mary Jane, and here's the problem. David and Mary Hale had a daughter named Mary, but she's listed as single in the 1880 census. For her to be John's mother, she would have had to marry before 1877.

So what if Goldie Libla was right about Jane, but wrong about Mary? What if Goldie just got the first name wrong?

David and Mary Hale also had a daughter named Kejana Jane<sup>1</sup>. In 1880, she is living in Ozark Co., Missouri as the wife of Robert Watkins. Their household contains two children, surnamed Watkins, John born 1877 and Mollie born 1874.

My spidey sense began to tingle. John Watkins born in 1877? What if John Watkins was John Rainwater? Was there any way to prove this?

Prove, maybe not. Reason, I think so. When I looked at my marriage records collection for Ozark Co, Missouri, there was only one Rainwater – Mollie Rainwater, marrying Sam Riley in 1894. The only Rainwater marriage in the county between 1858 and 1895.

If I'm right, Kejana Jane Hale married her Rainwater husband between 1870 and 1873. They had two children, Mollie and John Lysander Rainwater. Jane's Rainwater husband died before 1880, and she remarried, to Robert Watkins. Her Rainwater children were accidentally recorded under the surname Watkins in 1880.

## IDENTIFYING JOHN'S FATHER, PART 2

Back to Goldie Libla. She says John's father is Robert Rainwater. Now this makes some sense. John would only have been 3 in 1880, and Robert Watkins would have been the only father he really knew. He kept the Rainwater surname, but when he talked about Dad, it was Robert.

## CONCLUSION

On the basis of the above reasoning, I believe that Christopher G. Rainwater and Kejana Jane Hale were John Lysander Rainwater's parents.

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1 Some Ancestry.com trees read her name as Regina, not Kejana. In the 1860 census record, the name could be plausibly read either way; 1870 & 1880 say Jane, and Findagrave says Kejana. No tie-breaking record exists.