

## Jane Van Middlesworth Sousa

(22 Feb 1862 – 11 Mar 1944)

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**Sousa, Jane Van M.** On Saturday, March 11, 1944, at her residence, New York City, Jane Van M. Sousa, beloved wife of the late John Philip Sousa. Services will be held at Christ Episcopal Church, 620 G st. s.e., on Wednesday, March 15, at 3:30 p.m. Interment Congressional Cemetery.

*Washington Evening Star, Monday, March 13, 1944*

### **Mrs. John P. Sousa, March King's Widow, Dies in New York at 81**

Mrs. John Phillip Sousa, 81, widow of the March King, died Saturday in her New York City apartment after a brief illness, it was learned here today.



**Jane V.M. Sousa**  
(d. 11 Mar 1944)

Funeral services will be held here at 3:30 p.m. Wednesday at Christ Episcopal Church, 620 G Street S.E., of which Mr. Sousa was a lifelong member. Burial will be in Congressional Cemetery by the side of her husband.

Mrs. Sousa, the former Jane Van M. Bellis of Philadelphia, met Mr. Sousa in that city in 1879. She was an amateur singer appearing with a company of which he was director. He said, "She was quite the loveliest little girl I had ever seen." They were married the next year, when she was 17.

For many years they lived in Washington, where Mr. Sousa was born and where he directed the Marine Band. He died on March 6, 1932 after gaining wide fame for his compositions and as director of the Marine Band.

Surviving are two daughters, Mrs. Hamilton Abert and Miss Jane P. Sousa, both of New York. A nephew, Osmond L. Varela, lives here.

*Source, p. 245*

Jane van Middlesworth Bellis was born in Philadelphia on February ? 1862 or 1863, the daughter of Henry Bellis and Louise Hyle Cornish. Henry Bellis was a carpenter (stair builder) and later the proprietor of a photographic studio on the Boardwalk at Atlantic City, New Jersey. Jane resided in Philadelphia until her marriage on December 30, 1879.

Jane, or Jennie was an amateur vocalist but apparently did not perform in public after her marriage. She was a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution but few other organizations. She was an excellent horsewoman and her other athletic interests were tennis, sailing and trapshooting. Gardening was another of her pastimes, and John Philip often mused that the vegetables she grew received such lavish care that they cost several dollars each. She nearly always declined interviews, remaining in the background, and was content with her life as a housewife. Seldom did she accompany John Philip on his tours except for those overseas.

Another of her interests was writing, and a few of her efforts were published. Among these were "By a Lady," a verse satirizing Sousa's song, "Love Me Little, Love Me Long," published in Town Topics (New York), March 15, ????, "A Chat from Australia," an article in the Musical Courier, September 13, ????, "His Lost Love," a poem in Harper's Weekly, August 10, 1912; and " ??? for Peace," a poem in Munsey's Magazine, March, 1913.

After the death of John Philip, Jane lived the rest of her life at the Sands Point home near Port Washington, Long Island, except for some of the winters, when she resided in New York City apartments. She died in her Manhattan apartment at 30 Sutton Place on March 11, 1944, and is buried in the John Philip Sousa plot in Congressional Cemetery.