



# THE DODGE FAMILY ASSOCIATION

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*From the desk of Faith Dorothy Dodge Nelson:*

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Either I am crazy or I am a saint. I always receive one of these reactions from strangers upon hearing that I am mother to eight. My children, two girls and six boys, range in age from four to twenty-three years, and so span the pre-school to post-college experience, with one or two at each level. Like most American homes, ours is a busy one. Doing the laundry, making certain that each person is well-fed in spite of conflicting schedules, chauffeuring to soccer practices and piano lessons, and just trying to keep things picked up in the house fill my days. As if trying to fulfill these tasks weren't enough, I also home school three of my children. This adds creating lesson plans, teaching, and grading papers to my regimen. I often collapse in bed as soon as I get the younger boys down for the night.

Of course the real task I have is to raise children, to instill character in them. This is the part of my job that I find so mentally fatiguing. Teaching my younger boys to work without complaining, to be truthful even if it gets them in trouble, and a host of other lessons they need to learn, wearies me. The worst aspect in training them is dealing with sibling rivalry. Hardly five minutes elapses without one of them teasing, insulting, or slugging his brother. I confess I am not always the patient mother and some days I do think they will drive me crazy!

Probably my busy routine is what makes me enjoy breaks from schooling as much as I do. My crazy schedule is momentarily suspended and I can enjoy 'halcyon' days. Last week was one of those treasured breaks. My two college students who attend different schools in different states both had spring break at the same time, and we decided to fly them home. Anticipating having all of my children home for time together, I planned the fun activities we would all do such as movie watching and, one of our favorites, thrift store shopping, as well as the projects they could help me with, such as washing woodwork, cleaning upholstery and recycling the pile of metal out back. Even when I have vacation from school, I want to make the most of it.

My dreams don't always match reality. A break from schooling is certainly a break, but it doesn't negate the work of caring for a family of ten. Needless to say, none of projects were tackled last week, but fortunately we got to a few of the fun things. Our week together was topped off by a wonderful Easter celebration. Sunday night, as my husband Joe and I sat in bed, ready to turn off the light, a couple of our teenagers stood in the doorway to our room, talking to us. For twenty minutes or so, they chatted about what they had done that week, the funny things they had observed in their younger brothers, and plans for the rest of the semester. Part of me was tired and wanted to go to sleep, but the wiser part recognized the sweetness of the moment. How wonderful it is to have a teenage son and daughter who enjoy talking their parents and want to linger over the conversation!

There is a passage in the Bible that talks about reaping what you sow and not being weary in doing good. I'll hang in with those unruly younger boys (if they don't drive me crazy first) looking forward to the day that they will stand in my doorway talking with me, not wanting to leave. Perseverance teaches patience, and I intend to learn my lesson.

Speaking of perseverance, those Dodes from the **TRISTRAM** line have waited a long time to have their own genealogy printed. That perseverance is about to pay off. Plans are almost complete to start printing the **TRISTRAM DODGE GENEALOGY**. This hardcover, two-volume set is anticipated to be over 1200 pages and will cost \$110. We are accepting pre-orders, and you will want to order early; only 500 copies will be printed. Simply complete the form at the bottom of this page and return it along with payment. You will receive your copy 'hot off the press' as soon as they are published.

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