

My father was the only child of a widowed mother, who was always simply "grandmother" to us children. We never called her (or referred to her) by more endearing terms, probably because on the death of her husband she assumed life-long mourning, dressing always in long, full black skirts and shirtwaists that buttoned closely around her neck. A costume of such formality, together with an inherent reserve, inhibited spontaneous expressions and demonstrations of affection by her grandchildren. Father, however, always called her affectionately "marmie".

Grandmother's maiden name was Julia Foster. She had two sisters, Clara and Adele, and their father was John Foster, a doctor. He had a brother, who was an officer in the army at Fort Dearborn on the southern tip of Lake Michigan. John Foster visited his brother at Fort Dearborn, and together they purchased land near the fort in the first government land sale. The brother was transferred to another military outpost farther north on Lake Michigan, where he was killed by an enlisted man whom he had reprimanded for being drunk on duty. John Foster inherited his brother's share of the land they had purchased together.

Because of its strategic location, Fort Dearborn, established originally as a defensive outpost against the Indians, grew rapidly following the end of the Indian wars to become an important agricultural and industrial center. Early during its growth it was given the Indian name "Chicago", a name not intended to characterize industrial development but meant as a disparaging epithet for the swampy environment surrounding the site; the term ^{is} reputed to be the Indian word for skunk cabbage.

John Foster married Nancy Smith of Peterborough, New Hampshire and brought her as his bride to Fort Dearborn, where he practiced medicine

and was a member of the school board. They lived on Madison and Franklin Streets in what became Chicago, and Foster Avenue³⁴¹¹ bears his name. With the building of the railroads, Chicago grew from a small farming town into a major transportation and shipping center for the entire Mid-West. Not foreseeing the enormous appreciation in value (concurrent with the growth of Chicago) of the land they inherited from their father, Clara and Adele, preferring more civilized society, sold their shares to Julia and returned to Peterborough, the home of their mother. They became residents of New Hampshire and settled on Elm Hill Farm, Clara marrying a Bass and Adele an Adams.

Julia Foster married Maurice Porter, an Episcopal minister. They went to Europe on their honeymoon before settling in Racine, Wisconsin, where he had his parish. In Racine two sons were born, Maurice Junior, who died in childhood at the age of 12 or 14, and James Foster, my father. My grandfather died of appendicitis when my father was five years old, and following that tragic event grandmother moved back to Chicago to devote herself to the upbringing of her son and to various charitable enterprises.

Motivated by her religious beliefs to help alleviate the sufferings of others and to make her own sorrow more bearable, she established with the aid of women friends a hospital for children of the poor. At first a simple project in a rented house, where the sick would receive constant care, it soon expanded, with male financial and administrative assistance, to a professional institution. Dedicated to the memory of my grandmother's eldest son, it was named the Maurice Memorial Childrens Hospital.

My father received his early schooling in Chicago and was a