

R. R., Clayton, Indiana
August 15, 1962

Dear Friends and Loved Ones of Minnie L. Trotter:

In commemorating the life of Our Beloved Minnie, her photo and story, so recently prepared, are presented by her sons Wesley and Marshall, and by her bereaved husband, as a small tribute to a loyal, true and loveable mother. Such a life as hers deserves much more than we can give. Let her sweet memory remain with us always, helping to emulate the fine qualities she exemplified so well.

With no further serious interruptions, I plan to resume work in writing Part I, "A Mayflower Romance", having to do chiefly with ancestry, which I hope may be of much interest to you as it is to me in compiling it.

Relative to Part II, the story herewith submitted, it may be of interest to know that through the Romance of Desire Howland and Captain John Gorham, the ancestral line of Our Beloved Minnie, not only extends to the Mayflower Pilgrims, but far beyond, through England, originating in France in 1120 A. D. Desire whose parents were John Howland and Elizabeth Tilley, was native born in 1623 and married Captain Gorham in 1643, who was native to England. To that happy couple were born eleven children, six girls and five boys, the youngest boy, Schubael Gorham, who married Puella Hussey of Nantucket Island, headed the descendants of Minnie's line of ancestry of her mother, Louisa Annel Parsons.

To know Minnie the past ten years intimately has been a great privilege and a constant source of happiness. Now I feel crushed to earth without her, but I find myself in good hands as she assured me would be true in survival.

Hoping her portrait and story meet with your approval, I am

Sincerely,

Wallace D. Trotter

Wesley's address is:
R. R., Clayton, Indiana

Marshall's address is:
716 W. Kalmia Dr.,
Lake Park, Fla.

OUR BELOVED MINNIE
A Romance in Retrospect

1.

1962
Minnie Little Davis Trotter, a tenth generation descendant of the Mayflower Pilgrims, John Howland and Elizabeth Tilley, who on June 21, 1952, married Wallace D Trotter, passed away Thursday, May 17, 1972, after ten years of marital happiness, leaving in the wake of death, her grief-stricken husband.

2.

While deep in the throes of Father Time, hovering so closely near, a consoling letter from our son, Marshall, and from many others, was very helpful in such a trying time. In my great loss of our beloved Minnie, and in such a state of loneliness, I am quite overcome, left with the feeling that I cannot go on without her. This big house she left me is hardly big enough to contain my grief, but a little house would be no less sad and no less lonely.

3.

Since returning from Chicago in 1959, to make our home on the farm, often she would say that she wanted to be with me every possible moment. Little did I realize that she so keenly felt that time was running out. If on an errand, I should leave the house, she always wanted to accompany me, or know where I was going and when I would be back. Her love and devotion never ceased until the poor darling drew her last breath. The last two days of her life, she suffered loss of speech and ability to swallow, so pitiful to behold, in her last few hours! Her devoted son Wesley and myself stood by her side, helpless to do anything in her supreme moment which occurred about 8:15 P.M.

4.

Eitler
During our wedded life, and prior thereto, she would frequently say that she always felt that we were intended for each other, "To have and to hold." So it was for ten fleeting years in the evening of our lives, but now for me who is left behind, it is tears, tears, and tears, in the night and in the day. At times, I am unable to talk with friends with directly or on the telephone. Recently when Wesley and his family were away attending a horticultural society meeting, I found ~~that~~ waiting on customers was a helpful diversion. An elderly lady who came for apples, remembering Minnie when she was conducting the business spoke of her in glowing terms of esteem, as does everyone who ever knew her. She also thought her husband Arthur was very nice in permitting people to have without cost, the dropped apples.

5.

It was about seventy years ago when in our teens that we first knew each other, like children in the public schools do. Although not knowing her intimately, I always regarded her highly, and so remembered her through the years as a bright and lovely young lady. Later I saw her at Central Academy, a Quaker school, where I spent a year, but where Minnie took all her high school course, prior to a year at Eriham College, class of 1909.

6.

In 1900, the year of the first graduation class of the Plainfield High School, of which I was one of four members, the others being Cary Swern, Alexander Allen, and HESSIE PIKE (Judge H B Pike), my family took up residence in Danville, Indiana where my sister Evangeline, and I attended Central Normal College. At this time I met Miss Dee Sherrill, daughter of the Rev Joseph E Sherrill and his wife Annie Mitchell, whom I afterwards married in Chicago in 1910, one year after joining the business staff of The Mid-Day Club, where I remained continuously for fifty years, retiring in 1959.

7.

It was not until 1926, when with my family, Dee, Joseph, June and Anita, I was making an auto tour in Indiana, that I again saw Minnie, the one time until we were married in 1952. In passing her home, we paused to make a call, her husband, Arthur, a first cousin of my mother, having died a few weeks before on June 1. Minnie was not at the house, but returning from the Orchard with a little child, met us at the gate, holding by his hand a little shaver, whom she said was Wesley, eight years old, who kept squirring around his mother's skirt while we were visiting. Minnie said that she had another boy sixteen, who was some where around the farm, whose name was Marshall. Another twenty-six years rolled by before meeting again, which was shortly prior to our marriage, June 21, 1952. In the presence of many relatives and friends, the wedding took place in All Souls Unitarian Church, Indianapolis, Indiana, the Rev E Bardette Backus performing the ceremony. Marshall escorting his mother to the altar, gave her away.

8.

On August 9, 1807, Minnie first married Arthur Marshall Davis, who she said was always nice to her. His grand parents, Evan and Rebecca Davis were among the early settlers of Hendricks County, coming from North Carolina, in 1826. Rebecca's name was Marshall, daughter of William Marshall, Quakers, opposed to slavery. So prior to coming North Evan was required (probably by Rebecca) to dispose of his slaves given him by his father Thomas Davis, who in the meantime, 1823, moved from Surry County N.C. to Overton County, Tennessee, where all his family settled except Evan. Evan Davis and Rebecca Marshall were near neighbors, a mile and one half, of Alexander Little, Minnie's great grandfather, who having participated in the territorial government, helped to organize the state of Indiana, serving in the legislature.

9.

Minnie's husband, Arthur died June 1, 1926, at the age of sixty, leaving her a widow at forty-seven years of age. During their marital life of twenty-one years, they lived very happily, spending the first two years in Mexico where Arthur, representing his brother Eugene, was General Manager of a silver mining project near Hidalgo del Parral. On retiring from his mining and other business interests, Arthur returning with Minnie to Indiana, settled down to farming, livestock raising, and horticulture, all on the family homestead of Evan Davis, his grandfather, my great grandfather. Shortly before his death he had built a brick house on this same homestead of his father and grandfather, replacing a frame house which in turn had replaced a brick house which burned years before. It must have been occupied by Evan and Rebecca whose death occurred in November 9, 1854 and April 16, 1856, respectively.

10.

The new brick house built by Arthur and occupied by him five months before he died, containing six bed rooms, was large enough to accommodate his family of four, his aged father 90, and his mother 87 maids and guests, one bed room built downstairs for the special comfort of his parents, David Wesley and Amanda Davis. But soon afterwards they decided to take up residence at Fairhope, Alabama, thus leaving Minnie with her two young sons and Mary A. Eastman, a very helpful companion, a family of four to carry on. At the present moment the writer is the sole survivor, the sons being married and living elsewhere, occupying the place since Minnie's death on May 17, 1962. Carrying on to Minnie meant more than the big house for her, it meant the responsibility of taking over and directing the operation of half a section of farm and orchard, until her young son Wesley then only eight years old, was able to take over, which he did. But in 1952 the year we were married she was herself firing the big furnace at the age of 73.

11.

As shown in the History of Hendricks County, 1885, page 389, David Wesley Davis served his country in the civil war, mustered into service as a non-commissioned officer of a corporal, 98th Infantry, company B, under Major J. B. Roman and Captain B. P. Thomas of Denville, Indiana, August 15, 1862, 100 years ago today! He was mustered out of service as a musician, June 5, 1865. Recently I was informed by my sister Evangelina, that during his absence in service, his young wife, Amanda, made her home with his brother Josiah, my grandfather, who remained at home to look after his own affairs and those of his younger brother Wesley. They owned adjoining farms comprising a section of land, with no small work and responsibility.

12.

Minnie, as her only niece Virginia, writes me on June 26th, the 83rd anniversary of Minnie's birthday, "lived a long and full life", her only sister Amy, Virginia's mother, met the call in 1948, age 50; Samuel in 1960, age 77; Chester March 3, 1962, age 76, and now Minnie May 17, 1962, age 82 years, 11 months and 17 days. Her other brothers, Alfred Harrison age 73 and Donald Parsons, age 69, survive. Louise Annabel Parsons, her mother died June 7, 1925, age 66; and her father Thomas Harvey Little died May 29, 1941, age 87. Minnie who was prematurely born, seven months, weight 3 lbs or less, has often said that she must have survived for some purpose in the world, that she was barely saved at birth by aunt Ann McKnight assisting her mother, who knew how to restore breathing and how to nurse her back to life.

13.

her Minnie's life was fairly full, varied, romantic and interesting. She was quite charming, musical, and intelligent and sensible, but as I often reminded she made one mistake. She proved herself to be very practicable as indicated by her remarkable career right here on the farm and Orchard for fifty-five years in close cooperation with her husband Arthur and later ^{her} son Wesley for nearly a quarter of a century.

14

At the age of forty-seven, Minnie was left a widow, no will, no insurance, but left with grief in the loss of her beloved husband, and worry over debt and uncertainty of the future for herself and her two young sons. Recently, Arthur had purchased from his father and mother, the the homestead comprising the house and 80 acres amounting to several thousand dollars, thus making his holding of land and orchard half a section. Unfortunately at his death, it was not fully paid. On the advice of Arthur's brother Eugene, Minnie borrowed sufficient money to liquidate the parental debt, proceeding to make plans for hard work in the field and orchard. As he grew to maturity, and before, Wesley who chose to remain at home, giving up going to college, proved a great help to his mother, relieving her of many problems of work and responsibility. Marshall, her older son, whom she sent to Purdue became a graduate engineer and during this trying time in her life, was away in pursuit of a professional career. Both her sons were faithful, loyal, and cooperative, in her trials and tribulations, reflecting no little credit on her gracious and loving care and that of their father Arthur, whom they hardly knew, one eight and the other sixteen.

15.

In their respective vocations, Wesley in agriculture and horticulture, and Marshall, a professional engineer, they have both shown exceptional talent and ability, worthy of their parents and ancestry.

16.

While confronted with many problems, practical and personal, Minnie was especially unfortunate in losing her first infant a girl, and the second infant a boy. Both lie to the north of Arthur's burial in unmarked graves.

17.

In the early thirties, when a bank was hardly expected to help itself, Minnie was unable to borrow the sum of \$300, this amount being required to complete Marshall's budget to finish and graduate from the engineering course undertaken at Purdue University. Keenly feeling the importance of his graduation, only a few weeks away, Minnie felt that she must find some way to make it possible for him to finish. Although she had to chattel her furnishings, such as the kitchen stove, refrigerator, etc., she found this problem, like so many others, was not insurmountable. An old friend whom she and I both knew in school days, by the name of Art Blair, came forward with a helping hand.

18.

A sad thing in life occurred at the time she was a widow at 62, when her father, Thomas Harvey Little, was making his home with her, passed away at the age of 87, in 1941. His estate although practically penniless, it was necessary to undertake to settle it. In his generosity to his family, he had obtained bank loans exceeding his ability to repay. Although her youngest brother, Donald Parsons Little, a bachelor living in San Francisco, returned to assist her, they found it was impossible to salvage his beautiful home and farm on U S 40, which had been in the family many years. None all his children were born and raised.

OUR BELOVED MINNIE

19.

After our marriage in 1952, we settled in my home in La Grange, Illinois, near Chicago, where we lived happily seven years prior to my retirement October 1, 1959, when we came here to live in Minnie's home on her farm. While in La Grange, she was elected by way of her Little ancestry, to the La Grange Illinois Chapter of the D A R whose meetings were held in some of the fine homes of La Grange, Western Springs, and Hinsdale. In this association, she was very happy meeting some very fine friends, whose hospitality was shown by them in taking her to their parties and bringing her home afterwards. At the time of her death, she was retaining her membership in that chapter.

20.

Many years ago, the South Liberty Home Demonstration Club was organized in her home, which is active to this day.

In 1928, Minnie became a member of the Cartersburg Chapter of the O E S 519, where, taking an active part, held several offices including that of Worthy Matron. She also retained this association to the last. On April 27, Minnie was invited to have a sitting for their album of Past Worthy Matrons, one day less than three weeks before her death. I have placed an order for a number of these portraits, in the hope of having one to give with each story presented to her near relatives and friends, dedicated to Our Beloved Minnie. At her funeral, she was honored with a formal ceremony presented by Joyce Johnson, Worthy Matron, Nora Hathway, Virginia Tucker, Katherine Wright, of Cartersburg, and Violeta Kittle, R R Danville, Indiana, representing the five points of the Star.

21

Minnie's religious activities, although somewhat varied, were steadfast and faithful, remaining loyal to the Unitarian views held by her late husband Arthur, although raised in the Methodist Church, changed to a Quaker, and eventually a Unitarian. Minnie's father was a Presbyterian, her mother a Quaker. When living in my home in La Grange, I accompanied her to the Unitarian Church of Hinsdale; after coming here in her home, she accompanied me to the Salem Methodist Church nearby where we attended within a couple of weeks prior to her death. The Rev David McFall said he was always glad to see her and hoped that she would come as long as possible. Roy Pritchard, who many years ago worked for her in the Davis Orchard assisted her in leaving the church to her car.

22.

Minnie's gracious ways and attractive manners were quite helpful, but considering her handicaps of birth, she had a remarkable career. As she often said in walking with me, it was difficult to keep up with her diminutive size and little steps. For the same reason, it was difficult to outfit her in clothes and shoes. It is amazing what little shoes she wore. On March 21, I made a wall mark showing her height to be four feet and nine inches only one inch more than that of her grand son Jimmy 12 years old.

23.

It was about that time that Dr W C Stafford, making tests, indicated that she had diabetes, recording her weight at 106. The examining specialist, Dr J H Marvel, on March 23, confirmed the indications, but wrote her on April 5, saying that the "findings all would indicate to me that your diabetic tendency is under very good control. I believe it is so mild and so easily controlled that Dr Stafford can take care of any changes that might be necessary in your treatment in the future." So in view of this encouraging medical report, we felt quite hopeful of early recovery from her diabetes, proceeding carefully with her diet as prescribed and with her medical treatment.

24.

However it was of little or no avail, as during April her general health seemed to be declining, until in early May we became extremely worried. This situation prevailed until Minnie passed away on Thursday evening, May 17, 1962, about 8:15. Only the preceding Sunday, I had helped her into the bath tub, giving her a bath as was our custom for several months. Helping her into bed, she said as usual, you are so good to me. Before falling asleep, Minnie would say to me, "Goodnight dear, thank you Wallace for all the nice things you did for me today." These gentle words, so tenderly spoken, are a precious keepsake for my memory, as well as her abiding love and companionship.

As someone has said, "Love makes the World go round," as indicated by the romantic ventures of the many descendants of the Mayflower Pilgrims, and so truly exemplified in the life of Our Beloved Minnie. I would like to dedicate this story to her memory so dear to me and her friends and relatives, sincerely and respectfully.

WALLACE D TROTTER

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