

JULIA FRANCES MAYERS CORSCOT

Contributed by the John Bell Chapter, D. A. R.

Julia Frances Mayers Corscot, wife of John H. Corscot, daughter of Major Charles George Mayers and Catherine M. Mayers was born in the town of Westport, near what is now the village of Waunakee, May 31, 1850. At an early age the family moved to Madison. During her childhood days she resided on the shores of Lake Monona, and frequently related tales of visits to the Governor Farwell home, an octagonal house located on the bank of Lake Monona, in the 900 Block on Spaight Street. It was in this building, afterwards known as the Harvey Hospital, (named in honor of Governor Harvey who lost his life at Pittsburg Landing during the Civil War) that, as a school girl, she worked in relief work scraping linen for lint to relieve the wounded soldiers in the hospital. It was a great pleasure as a young girl to pay visits to the War Museum in the State Capitol Building and to see Old Abe the Battle Eagle in his cage in the basement. Later when Old Abe died it fell to the lot of her father, Major Chas. G. Mayers, Major and Quartermaster of the 11th Wisconsin Regiment, to prepare and mount this famous War Eagle, (he having learned taxidermy in England as a source of amusement.)

When the lesson of Memorial Day came home so vividly she was active in providing, gathering and arranging flowers for Memorial Day the ladies assembling in the rotund of the State Capitol building on the morning of Memorial Day. Frequently in those early days the Indians, coming either across the lakes by canoe or riding around on ponies, came to her door offering for sale baskets and bead work, and begging for anything and everything that they might see.

Her early education was obtained in the public schools of Madison and later she attended two private schools. During the later years of her life she took an

active interest in the Chautauqua circle work known as the C. L. S. C. and graduated in the course with the class of 1892. Possessed of a fine mind she was deeply interested in educational work. With her father, Major Charles G. Mayers, who was one of the founders of the Madison Literary Society she frequently attended its meetings.

She was the first Librarian of the Madison Institute, the forerunner of the Madison Free Library. It was then housed on the second floor of the City Hall. Here she wrought a powerful influence in the molding of the character of the young people and in inspiring the readers with a desire for the best literature.

On October 2, 1871 she was married to John H. Cor-scot, for twenty-one years City Clerk, an Alderman in the Common Council in 1865-1866 and Mayor of the City of Madison from 1893 to 1895 inclusive. Taking up her residence in the East End of the city, then sparsely settled, she devoted much of her time to the culture of flowers which she freely gave to her friends and neighbors.

At this time the Wisconsin State Horticultural Society was founded, she and her husband being among the charter members. Exhibits were held in the Assembly Chamber of the State Capitol Building, premiums being offered, and these were looked to as among the social affairs of that day. Frequently she exhibited flowers and acted as judge at the State and Dane County Fairs. At that time both of these fairs were held on the grounds now known as Camp Randall and used during the Civil War as a rendezvous for soldiers departing for service.

Among her friends and neighbors she ever lent a helping hand. For many years she was an active worker in the Madison Benevolent Society, a charitable organization supported by the voluntary contributions of the citizens. Her home was one where great hospitality of the genuine old fashioned type was dispensed. Because of her genial nature and especial qualifications she was called upon to be the first Presiding Officer of a Chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star organized in Madison in

1874. This, however, was disbanded soon after its organization, by the Grand Master, who ordered all Chapters to disband. Again in 1849 when Monona Chapter No. 50, E. S. was formed she was chosen its first Worthy Matron and presided for three and a half years. In 1894-1895 she was a Grand Officer of the Order of the Eastern Star in Wisconsin. On the occasion of the only meeting of the National Education Association ever held in Madison she worked untiringly as a member of the Woman's Entertainment Committee.

She was brought up in the Episcopal Church, being a Sunday School pupil, teacher and later for several years was President of the Ladies Guild of Grace Episcopal Church. Her death occurred March 10, 1908 at her home in Madison.

JULIA ANNE DARST CONOVER

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Julia Anne Darst, daughter of John and Rachel Williams Darst, was born on a farm on Lost Creek near Troy, Ohio. Her father was a German Baptist minister, although his ancestors on the father's side were probably of the French Huguenots, who came into Scotland and later into Ireland. From Ireland the first Darst, Paul by name, came to this country with Lord Baltimore.

Julia Darst passed her girlhood and young womanhood in Dayton, Ohio, as it was impossible in those days to obtain an education in the country. On November 28, 1849, she was married to Obadiah M. Conover and came with him to Wisconsin. After a short sojourn in Milwaukee, they removed to Madison where Mr. Conover became a member of the University Faculty, first as tutor, then as professor of Ancient Languages and Literature.

Mrs. Conover became an active and useful influence in the social life of the University and of the little frontier