



Catharine and Jean Witter, c. 1920.

BEGINNINGS

It has been my great good fortune to come from the large and congenial Witter clan. My father and most of his siblings raised their families in Northern California, so there were five cousins at holiday gatherings, and four more lived in San Marino, near Los Angeles. The whole family was spirited, close, and compatible. We shared fundamental values: loyalty to each other, to our friends and communities, to the University of California, and to our country.

My parents, Jean and Catharine Witter, were wonderful people, both as a young couple and as older people. My father was a true extrovert, with a twinkle in his eye and a joie de vivre. He often said, "You can be an optimist or a pessimist, but it's much more fun to be an optimist." He was a wonderful man, and great fun to be around.

My mother, Catharine, or Katy as friends knew her, was very special and adored by everyone. She was refined, gracious, talented and kind.

They were great examples to all of us, and made it possible for me to create a close family of my own with my dear husband, Jack Bates. Looking back, I see the foundation of my happy life in the labors and love of my parents, and the idyllic childhood they provided for me and my three brothers.





My father, Jean Carter Witter, was born in Wisconsin on January 3, 1892. When he was six months old, his parents moved their family to Paso Robles, California.

My grandfather was a lawyer, but the move to California came during an economic depression in the late 1800s, and few people could afford his services. The farmers that he had for clients could pay him only with goats and other farm animals. Young Jean had a paper route to earn money and had plenty of chores at home as well, such as milking the cows.

It was not a very happy time for the Witters because of their financial situation, so they moved north to Berkeley, and that's where Jean and his three brothers and sister grew up.

In Berkeley he had relatives, a first cousin, Dean Witter, who was five years his senior, and Dean's mother, Mrs. Willis Guy Witter, who Jean called Aunt Lizzie. My father was very, very fond of Aunt Lizzie, as she was of him. She had her own family, but she took a great interest in him. She attended some of his high school sporting events and kept telling him that he should go to the University of California in Berkeley, where Dean had gone.

Jean did go to Cal, and she even paid for his fraternity fees while he was there. One of the first loans he paid back after he graduated was to Aunt Lizzie.

Jean became a very successful and well-respected investment banker, but when he started out, he wore the leather off his shoes walking the streets, selling his wares, his stocks and bonds. He and Dean founded Dean Witter & Company in 1924, the year I was born. His three brothers all became members of the firm, too, as did two of Dean's brothers, Guy and Jack.

One of Dad's brothers, Ed, ran the Sacramento office. Another brother, Phelps, ran the Los Angeles office along with Guy, Dean's brother. The third brother, Wendell, who was 17 years younger than my father, worked at the San Francisco office with Dean's brother Jack.

My father's only sister, Esther, married a wonderful man, Fritz Janney, and had two daughters, Mona and Mary. When I was a child, the Janneys and Wendell, his wife, Florence Corder Witter, and their only child, Wendelyn (called Lyn or Wendy), were usually with us on the holidays. In the 1940s, the Janneys moved up to Portland, Oregon.

I was especially fond of my dad's brother Ed. He and his wife, Flo, just loved family. They and their sons, Ed Jr. and Bob, would drive down from Sacramento to our home in Piedmont almost every Thanksgiving and Christmas, even if

there was heavy fog. Whenever Uncle Ed made a speech at Thanksgiving, he'd get a little teary because he was so sentimental about his family.

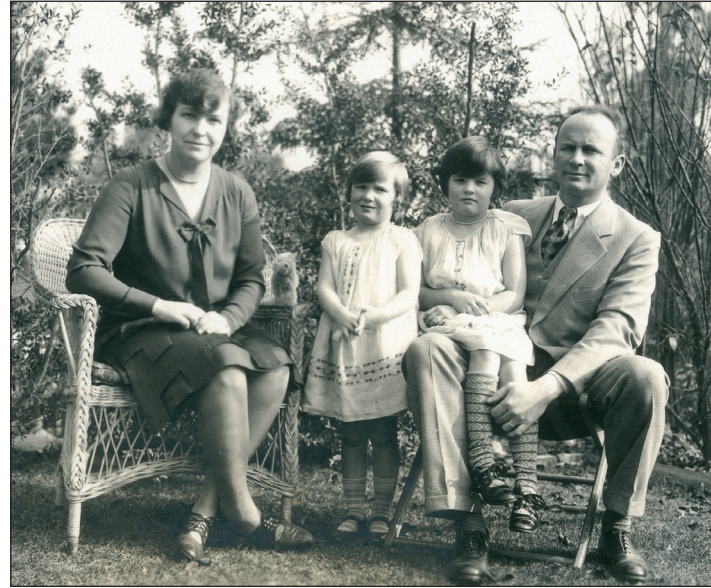
It was such a wonderful way to grow up, knowing how they all loved each other. When children are around that atmosphere, they pick it up.



My dear mother, Catharine Maurer Witter, was born in 1897 in Madison, Wisconsin, to Edward R. and May Rose Dickens Maurer.

My grandfather, Edward Maurer, was a professor of engineering in the Department of Mechanics at the University of Wisconsin. He was a very well-respected and beloved gentleman. Apparently his students admired him greatly, even though he was quite strict. In 1934, he was awarded the prestigious Lamme Medal for accomplishment in technical teaching from the Society for the Promotion of Engineering Education.

Grandpa Maurer's parents, my great-grandparents, were from Zurich, Switzerland and emigrated to Arcadia, Wisconsin. Their names were



The Janney family.



Dean Witter was born in Wausau, Wisconsin in 1887. He moved to California with his family in 1891, and after purchasing country land tracts in various areas of the state, the family moved to San Carlos on the Peninsula and eventually settled in Berkeley.

Dean Witter graduated from the University of California, Berkeley in 1909, and from 1909 worked for Louis Sloss & Company as a salesman on the California coast. With Charles Blyth he started Blyth, Witter & Company in 1914 and the two men ran the company until 1924, when he launched Dean Witter & Company...

The San Francisco office of Dean Witter, located at 45 Montgomery Street, was company headquarters;



the business expanded greatly over the years, partly through mergers. At the time of Witter's death in 1969 there were nearly 80 branches of Dean Witter & Co. in the U.S. and Canada and the company was the largest investment house on the West Coast.

Dean Witter interrupted his career to volunteer for duty in both World War I and World War II, during which he attained the rank of colonel.

During Dean Witter's lifetime, he found recreation in hunting and fishing and in enjoyment of the outdoors. In business and as a fisherman, Colonel Witter enjoyed pursuing the difficult task. He preferred the elusive trout to the easy fishing of a well-stocked pond....

— *The Dean Witter Foundation*



May Rose Dickens Maurer.

Johannus (John) Maurer and Katharina Mos von Wilen. My great-grandmother's first name, with its uncharacteristic spelling, was the origin of my mother's name, Catharine. When I grew up and married and had a family, we named our only daughter Catharine, too, with an "a" in the middle rather than an "e."

My grandmother, May Rose Maurer, was born in 1877 and lived until 1932. She died at a relatively young age of cancer, when I was only eight years old. I met her once, when my mother took me to visit her parents in Madison.

My mother had two brothers, Rollin and Eugene. I knew Uncle Gene very well, but I don't recall ever meeting Rollin. He lived on the East Coast with his family.

Because Grandpa Maurer lost his wife so young, after he retired he'd come out to Piedmont and stay with my family for a couple of months every other year. We became good buddies during those visits. He'd help me with my algebra and my geometry; he was very overqualified, with his prestigious career. I was not known as a fine student. *[laughs]*



Professor Edward R. Maurer and his daughter, Catharine Witter.

Dad went to the University of California in Berkeley, and during several summers he worked at Yosemite as a ranger to help pay for his tuition. It left him with a great love of the Sierras.

The summer after graduating from Berkeley in 1916, his cousin Laird Connor, who lived in Wisconsin, invited my father to visit. While in Wisconsin, he went to a house party, and all the other gentlemen were talking about a lovely girl, Catharine Maurer, who was going to join the party the next day. They got my father so excited about meeting this lovely lady that by the time the weekend was over, he and she were engaged to be married. The following year, she came to California to visit him and meet his family.

Mother was a student at the University of Wisconsin and felt she should finish before getting married. However, my father was a very persuasive gentleman, as everyone who knew him would attest. He persuaded her to get married instead of finishing college. He took the train back to Madison and they were married on Christmas Day, 1917. They had a choice of Christmas Day or the day after Christmas, because of his Army duties during WWI.



Rollin Maurer.



Eugene Maurer.

Grandpa Maurer.



*Jean and Catharine with their
1919 Nash Roadster...*



*...and with their first
child, Jean, Jr., in 1921.*

Once married, my mother joined Dad at Camp Lewis in Washington State, but when he was sent overseas in early 1918, she went back home to Madison to wait out his absence. She returned to college and graduated.

My father's oral history tells in detail about World War I, about going to the various camps for his Army training and serving in the field artillery. During the last year of the war, 1918, he was stationed in France.

When Dad returned to the East Coast from France in January 1919, he got in touch with my mother, who came down from Madison to Chicago to see him as he passed through on his troop train. He was being taken back to Washington State to be discharged

Mother left Madison expecting to return after she had a short reunion with Dad at the train station. They saw each other and waved. Dad got off the train and persuaded Mother to get on, then he wouldn't let her off! Because he was a captain in the Army, I guess he had a private cabin. He kept her on board this troop train all five days across to the West Coast! If he'd gotten caught, he'd have been court-martialed, I'm sure. *[laughs]*

Of course, she didn't have any luggage or any clothes, as she wasn't planning to go with him. What a sport! Dad would get off and buy things at the various stations along the line for her to take care of her needs. I just can't believe that story, but there again, he was a very persuasive gentleman.

After he was discharged, they lived in a little home on Eucalyptus Road in Berkeley. There their first child, Jean Jr., was born on January 31, 1921.

BUILDING A HOME AND A FAMILY



The young married couple and their baby son moved to a larger house at 116 Parkside Drive in Berkeley, and in 1923, along came their second son, William Maurer Witter. He was born on Grandpa Maurer's birthday, February 18th.

The house on Parkside Drive was darling, but it was very small. When I came along a year later, on February 5, 1924, there were suddenly two adults, three children and a dog.

I was born in San Francisco at St. Francis Hospital. There was no Bay Bridge then, so my parents would have had to take a ferry from Oakland to San Francisco, then a cab way out to St. Francis Hospital. My goodness, my mother was brave to travel all that way; she must have really liked her obstetrician. All went well, and home she came with me.

When I was three or four years old, I was dying to have a baby sister, but my mother said, "No more babies until we have a bigger house."



Grandpa Maurer and Jean, Jr.



*Nancy on Mother's lap,
with Jean, Jr. and Bill.*



At home on Eucalyptus Road.



The family's 1928 Christmas card.

Well, somehow there's that persuasive husband of hers, and to my delight, I was told that a new baby was indeed on the way. I was so excited about having this baby sister!

Well, wouldn't you know, the baby, born in 1928, turned out to be my brother Thomas Winship Witter, not a baby sister at all. I was so upset, I wouldn't even go see him in the hospital. But it didn't take long before Tommy became a living doll for me, and from that time on we were very, very close friends.

There we were, a family of six jammed into the Parkside Drive house for at least two more years.

Happily, my parents finished building their lovely home at 52 Glen Alpine in Piedmont in 1931, and we moved into it then, during the Depression. I remember my father saying, "It turned out to be a larger house than we had planned, but a little extra room never hurts." They always loved their wonderful, spacious home and entertained constantly in it.



Here I was, the only girl with all these nice brothers, and at the new house, I had a beautiful bedroom and bath all to myself. Heaven! Space, lots and lots of space for all my things.

There was a door from my room onto an outdoor sleeping porch with four or five beds. My father loved sleeping outside on warm nights. The rest of us could choose to join him or not.

Raising four young children during the Depression wasn't always easy. My family cut corners and saved money where possible. I was too young to understand or realize the hardships so many endured in the years of the Depression. I do remember seeing a sign that said "Hooverville" on the banks of the Sacramento River when we drove to the Ed Witters' one Thanksgiving in the early 1930s. Daddy told me that the people living under the tarps didn't have homes, and their tenacity made quite an impression on me.

My mother was very industrious. During the Depression, she learned how to make and bottle root beer and Coca-Cola so that her children would not spend money on soda. She had the old stove from 116 Parkside Drive put down in our big basement with its cement floor, and she mixed up wonderful drinks. After



116 Parkside Drive in Berkeley, the family home from 1923-1931.



The Three Musketeers.



Dad with Jean, Jr. and baby Bill.



Nancy.

she made the soda, she knew how to cap the bottles, and fortunately, not too many had their caps pop off unexpectedly with a bang.

Mother also used to do loads of canning. She had hundreds of Mason jars, and she learned to make beautiful preserves, jams, and jellies out of the fresh peaches and pears that came from the orchards around our summer home out at Diablo Country Club. It seemed to me I'd rather go off with my horse than be inside the house canning, so I never did learn how to do that. Oh, I was spoiled, spoiled, spoiled!

Our huge finished basement also had a big laundry room with a mangle and an ironing board. In those days we actually ironed the sheets before folding them.

My parents had various couples that worked for them over the years. The wife would do the cooking and housekeeping and the husband would be the butler, driver, and waiter. One or the other would always be better help. Either the woman would be great and her husband hopeless, or vice versa. One exception to that rule was two sisters, Emma and Tillie, who were both wonderful.

Our cooks were always very particular about the way they ran our kitchen, so much so that we could hardly go in when they were there.

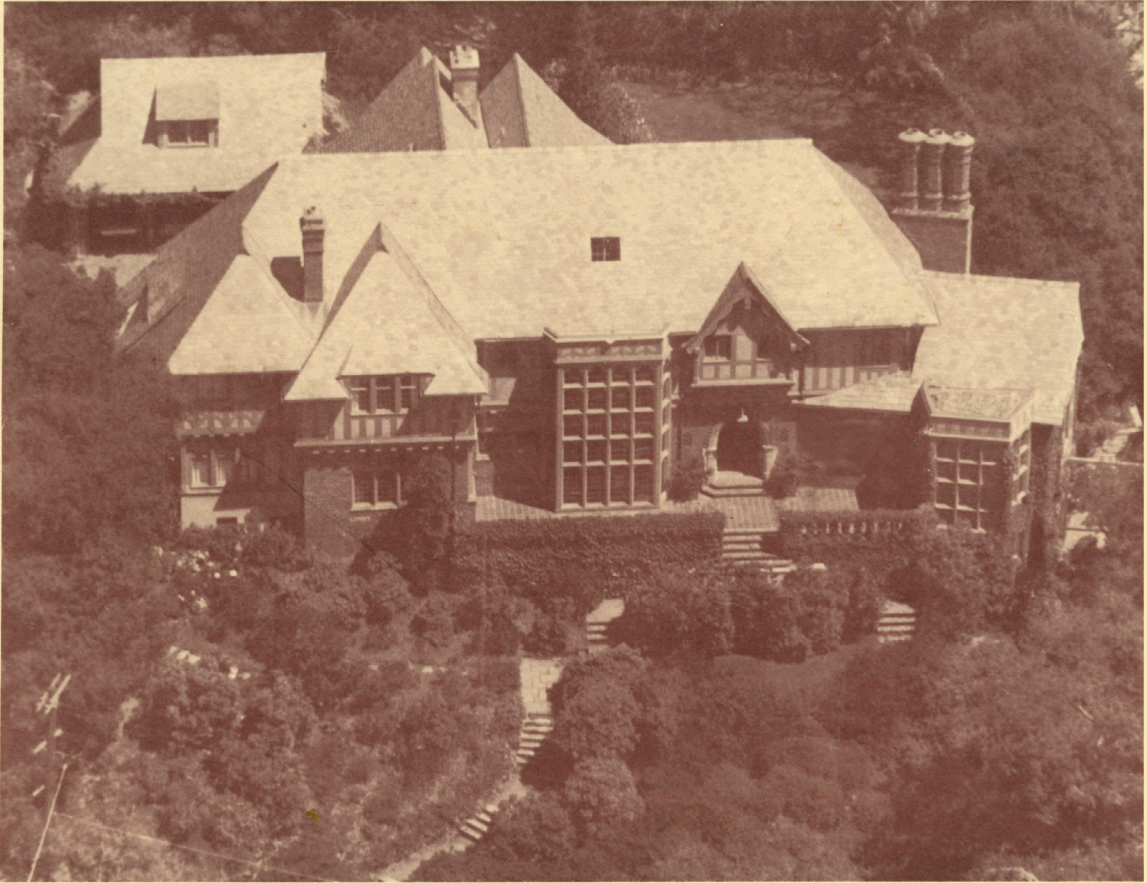
Jim was Dad's driver for many years. He took him to and from the ferry and drove Mother and the rest of us around during the day.

At the Glen Alpine house, our family ate our meals together in the breakfast room, which was very convenient, and saved the dining room for company.

When Mother and Dad arrived for breakfast, Mother would ring a little bell that had been put at her place at the table. The cook or butler would arrive from the kitchen, bring in their fruit, and pour each a cup of coffee. When they were ready for more coffee, Mother would ring the bell again and in would come the cook with refills.

Many years later, one of my granddaughters asked me what my bell was for, and was offended when I told her that we rang it for a servant. I was surprised, because I still see bells and buzzers sitting on the counters of hotels and shops. But

FINISH IN STYLE



A MOST DISTINGUISHED PIEDMONT ESTATE

This magnificent Tudor residence is situated on about three quarters of an acre, providing seclusion amid beautifully planted grounds. In 1930, Mr. and Mrs. Jean C. Witter commissioned architects, Williams and Westell, to design this stately mansion with particular regard for excellence. In every aspect of design and construction, the exquisite taste of the owners and superb skill of the craftsmen is evident.

The grandeur of the Tudor style is most apparent from the Glen Alpine side of this widely admired residence. Approaching from the rear, over a quaint cobble-stone drive, the charm of a country manor house is impressed upon the viewer. The floor plan is designed for comfortable family living as well as formal entertaining; it has been a cheerful, happy home for the Witters.

The regal reception hall is, in a word "Grand". A handsome staircase set against the great bay is a masterpiece which provides continuous delight. The skillful blending of the rich oak paneling, molded plaster and leaded windows make this entrance hall a memorable experience.

A sunny alcove with lovely bay windows and a stunning fireplace are features of the gracious living room. An arched doorway leads out to the enchanting garden pavilion. Leaded windows looking out to the lovely garden give the formal dining room a light and airy elegance. The cheerful breakfast room with its delightful diamond pattern windows lies beyond the dining room.

A hallway leads past a powder room to the library and comfortable guest room. Superbly matched walnut paneling, a marble faced fireplace and shelves lined with books combine to create an intimate atmosphere in the library.

The service wing includes a butler's pantry, a modern kitchen with generous cabinets and counter space, electric range, ovens, and other necessities. A passageway leads to the two servants' rooms and bath. The loggia and rear porch provide access from the courtyard, and garage. From the service hall, stairways lead to both the second and lower floors.



The paneled library is warm and intimate



Snug quarters for any young sailor



The majestic hand carved floating staircase



Perfect setting for gracious entertaining

FINISH IN STYLE



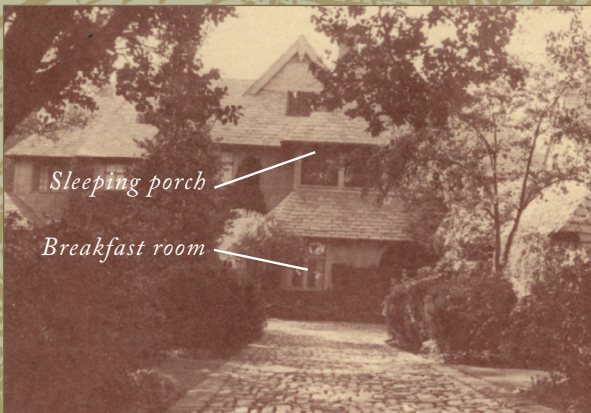
Cheerful master suite is spacious and sunny



Elegant and hospitable dining room



The enduring charm of an English Manor



Cobblestone driveway from Sotelo Avenue

The second floor hall also enjoys light from the sparkling window panes of the great bay. The master bedroom is spacious, with a bath and two dressing rooms. A cozy alcove with fireplace adds charm and warmth. There are three other master bedrooms with baths and dressing rooms. Each has its own individual character, but all must yield to the club room as being most unique. Finished like the interior of an old sailing ship, with bunk beds and fireplace, it would delight any boy! A sewing room, sleeping porch and service hall complete the floor.

A feature of the lower floor is the generous recreation room with its stage, wet bar, fireplace and off the hall, a dressing room. The balance of this floor contains a servant's bedroom and bath, laundry, drying room boiler and several storage rooms. Besides the two interior stairways there is also access to the outside.

This unusual property is conveniently located in the jewel-like setting of Piedmont, a city within the City of Oakland. The sweeping view and salubrious climate were early development attractions. Today, it is a well protected and unique residential community of nearly 11,000 persons. Though small in area, it is large in amenities and charm. The school system deserves its prestige, ranking among the best in the State. Other city services are considered equally fine which is a tribute to citizen interest and participation in community affairs. The proximity of Piedmont to both business and shopping centers is a blessing to commuters and families alike.