

Caroline Foster Dead At 102

First Lady Of Fosterfields Dies

By PHIL GARBER

MORRIS TWP. — Tributes for Caroline Foster, one of Morris County's noted women, have characterized the author, farmer and politician as an amazing woman, ahead of her time.

The 102-year-old Miss Foster died quietly yesterday at Fosterfields, the 186-acre farm off Mendham Road where she had lived for most of her life.

Miss Foster, a township resident since 1881, had predicted two years ago she would live to celebrate her 104th birthday.

Miss Foster's interests ranged from farming, fishing and writing to politics, art and carpentry. In 1973, she donated Fosterfields to the Morris County Park Commission to be developed as New Jersey's first "living farm."

The Foster home, set amid an elegant stand of tall spruce trees, was built in 1854 by Paul Revere's grandson, Gen. Joseph Warren Revere.

"If she had lived in another era, she could have been a great lawyer or a master mechanic," said Mrs. Barbara Hoskins, 31 School House Lane, Washington Valley.

Mrs. Hoskins first met Miss Foster in 1955 when the two collaborated on their book "Washington Valley, An Informal History," a book about the area's historic homes.

"I never knew anyone like her and I never expect to again," said Mrs. Hoskins.

Miss Foster was a highly independent woman who often clashed with her strict father, Mrs. Hoskins said. At one point in her earlier years, Miss Foster decided she wanted her privacy and built her own home on the Foster farm.



Caroline Foster, shown presiding at the dedication of her estate last year.

Another time she had asked her father for a car but he refused. Then on Christmas day 1922, a group of her friends bought a new Ford, wrapped it in a red ribbon and left it in front of the Foster home.

The next day, Miss Foster drove the car two hours to visit her aunt in Hartford, Conn.

Miss Streeter remembered Miss Foster as a woman with a dry wit,

a style ahead of her day and always lots of fun. She stood out from the crowd, especially when she would attend dinners dressed in a stylish tuxedo, Miss Streeter said.

Miss Foster was elected to the Republican County Committee in 1921 — the year of women's suffrage. She served on the committee until 1972.

"She could have been a great women's libber if she had lived in the right era," said Mrs. Hoskins. "She didn't run for office because women just didn't run for office in her day."

As if politics, golfing (she started the Morris County Gold Club) working the farm or building a house weren't enough, she also raised prize herbs.

One time an electrician working

in the basement of the Foster home saw the herbs, thought they were a narcotics patch and called the police, said another longtime friend, Beatrice Black, Whitehead Road, Washington Valley.

Police raided the home at midnight and the feisty Miss Foster reportedly reprimanded them for not having the courtesy to come during the day, said Miss Black.

She also founded the North Jersey branch of the Herb Society.

Mrs. Thomas Streeter, Miss Foster's friend for some 56 years, characterized Miss Foster as very intelligent, opinionated and independent.

Currier and Ives prints, most obtained in auctions, were another of her many hobbies.

During one auction, Miss Foster became embroiled in a heated bidding contest for a Currier and Ives print.

"At one point, she turned around to the other bidder and said, 'You just want to resell this. I want to live with it,'" said Miss Black.

Miss Foster bought the print when her competitor immediately bowed out, said Miss Black.

And when the work was done, there was always fishing. Miss Foster was a top fisherwoman, Miss Black said.

One time, the two women went off to fish in the brook off the Whippany River behind Fosterfields.

"In less than 15 minutes she pulled out two of the most beautiful trout I've ever seen," said Miss Black.

Miss Foster is survived by two cousins, Mrs. Jean Patterson and Lemuel Thompson Jr., both of Morristown.

She was a graduate of Miss Dana's School in Morristown. She was a member of 30 organizations, including the Washington Association, Washington Valley Community, N.J. Historical Society, Morris County Historical Society, Madison Historical Society, Canal Society of N.J. and the Morristown Women's Club.

The funeral will be held 11 a.m. Monday at Fosterfields.

Double your savings
now during *flemington's*
exciting

AUGUST