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YES, SHE WAS A BEAUTIFUL BABY!

IN THE FASHION OF the late Victorian era and early 20th century, baby photographs were, as a hobby, being made into postcards. Justine Lydia Spinner was recorded in 1907 by her parents, prominent Barringtonians Mae Lane and George Spinner, with words that would presage her future. It was her first birthday, and on the back of the postcard was written: "Well, what do you think of me? My Momma says I am a terror, but what good are girls if they don't know things. Lovingly, Justine."

Well-wrapped in her fleecy clothes for a Barrington winter, she would come to know things. In 1928, at 21, she graduated from Northwestern University with a degree in zoology and minors in chemistry and philosophy. She wanted to be a doctor.

Fate would call Justine to a different life along the Gunflint Trail in Northern Minnesota. First with her mother, who had purchased the Gunflint Lodge, and later with her husband Bill Kerfoot, she developed the Lodge to become one of the premier northern wilderness resorts.

The "tiny terror" (if she was indeed) fulfilled what was written. She lived a courageous life in those Northwoods until age 94, her soft baby clothes becoming deerskin coats and raccoon hats. That merry baby face would change to become the wise, weather beaten visage of a woman who lived a hard life, but one that she chose. Her legend lives on, in her book, "Woman of the Boundary Waters".

Had she written her postcard inscription 20 years earlier, it might be about embracing the rugged life she chose: "An infinitesimal speck in the cosmos, I stood beneath a great white pine—matriarch of a fast vanishing tribe. And I knew I was home. I was 21, the year was 1927." 