

Meet Caroline Elizabeth Pratt

Caroline Elizabeth Pratt was born Sept 15, 1907 to Henry R. Pratt and Frances Lee Pratt. She was brought from Kansas City to Grand Lake in a basket in 1908 or 1909 by her parents and grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. H. M. Lee who always vacationed in this area and had a summer home on the shore of Grand Lake. Caroline spent summers swimming, boating, horseback riding, and picnicking. The standard picnic menu was remembered to be baked beans and pickles.

She attended the University of Missouri at Columbia and earned master's degree in philosophy and music Caroline graduated Phi Beta Kappa and was a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority.



Caroline married John Holzwarth in Grand Lake on September 25, 1931.

Neversummer Ranch - 1959



The following was written by Caroline Holzwarth after she rode a horse to Grand Lake at night to play bridge with friends.

Caroline's trip to town – 1932 – by Caroline Pratt

It was a perfect day, and fortunately there was an excuse for going to town, an excuse which could easily be exaggerated into a duty to relieve my domestic conscience of the burden of keeping the home fires burning. For three days snow had been falling, with so little accompanying wind that most of the fluffy whiteness had lain undisturbed wherever a tree, log, fence, stump, or even a telephone wire had interrupted its gentle fall from the skies; and the ground, even the road, was covered with its soft new blanket, unbroken except by an occasional squirrel's dainty little tracks, or the sweeping path of a porcupine, or the sturdy prints of a coyote's paws. The day was cloudy, with the kind mildness in the air that pearly gray skies seem to betoken when the winds are at rest and the forests are still. For three miles I rode through a land of silent whiteness, each tiny branch of each little jack pine holding its puff of snow, each broad branch of each tall, strong, graceful spruce bearing its mound of white. Sometimes the mounds looked like crouching cats, like the handkerchief rabbits Grandmother used to make and bounce off her hand to amuse us children; and sometimes the trees were dainty ladies of many generations ago, wearing hoopskirts and dresses of countless fluffy lacy ruffles. I lived in a fairyland that day. Yes, more than that. Surely if heaven were tangible, it would be like this in its silent purity.

Three miles from home live our next-door neighbors. Promptly after a storm, they plow the road out, so from there on the road was no longer mine alone; but still it was white, and after all, one family using a road doesn't spoil its solitude. In fact, that bit of life and industry only heightened my consciousness of the remoteness of our home and the simplicity of mountain life. The next seven miles were no less enjoyable than the first three.

I wonder which is more beautiful, starting out in a land made new and enchanting over night, or coming home in the evening through the same enchanting land you've become familiar with on the way down. By evening the clouds had broken just enough to make the sunset gorgeous – blue and pink and gold and silver and radiant. And then came twilight, and the closing of the clouds once more, as if a curtain had been parted only long enough to show the glory of a winter sunset, and then the gray half-dark of night in a land of snow. The stillness was more quiet than silence itself. The only sounds in my world were hardly sounds at all, but I could hear, or feel in some way, the soft crunching of the horse's hoofs in the loose snow and the rhythmic creaking of the saddle, and perhaps the faint falling of snow on snow as the horse's trotting feet sprayed it out from beneath them.

I sang a little bit – a hymn, a Negro song, a baby's lullaby – because song comes unbidden when the heart is exultant and at peace. My songs didn't even break the silence, for song and silence and night and whiteness and I were all one. Soon I passed a house, with its cozy lights telling me of warmth and home – joys and happy lives; and one more house, a house surrounded by snow-laden trees which sparkled on the border of the path of light from the windows. I thought of a shining-faced baby peeping out of a wooly hood as I looked at the house with its halo of fleecy snow.

Three more miles now, up a hill, through thick pine woods, across a flat – Suddenly there came the weird howl and sharp ki-yi-yi-yip-yip of a coyote, of a pack of coyotes, no, of a single coyote alone in the wilderness across the meadow from me. It is a sound that belongs to winter nights and sends tremors down your back, not shivers of terror, but thrills of intimacy with the mountain wilds, of awareness of life that we can't experience, of the loneliness of existence in a cold, harsh winter land.

Across a flat, then two more miles. The horse took a new interest in the trip as we started up the last hill, through the last tall spruces. The quiet thud, thud, thud, thud quickened slightly and told of more effortless progress as we came within scent of the barn. Perhaps I unconsciously hurried her a little more as I anticipated coming around the last bend in the road. Ah, yes! There it was – home, with its warm lights flung through the small-paned windows onto the snowy ground, and the odor of wood smoke coming from the chimney. At that moment the day and the night were sweeter, gentler, more friendly than at any time during my happy ride.



John and Caroline had a son, John G. Holzwarth, III born in Denver, December 1, 1933. On March 5, 1935 Virginia Lyman Holzwarth was born and ten years later, October 10, 1945, another daughter, Mary Frances Holzwarth. With each addition to the family, rooms were added to the house and in 1951 a new home was built west of the Colorado River.



Little John went off to college at CSU.





Virginia had many illnesses. Her arm was broken in 1942, she knocked cartilage loose in her knee in 1947 and had to wear a cast a month then had a tumor operation in 1947, and later strained her hip skiing.

Mary Holzwarth, wife of John III told Leslie Hamilton , RMNP, that when Virginia had the trouble with her knee that started the cancer. When Virginia was older, one leg was shorter than the other. On March 10, 1952 Virginia Lyman Holzwarth died when she was a senior in High School. She had cancer (Hodgkins) in her leg and her parents had the choice of cutting off her leg or trying to cure it. They decided to try the cure, but lost the gamble. Lyman was Herb (Caroline's brother) and Caroline's grandmother's maiden name, Agnes Lyman Lee.

John III married Mary Louise Blythe in 1954. John met Mary in California and she came to Grand Lake to work at the ranch. They had four children: Stephen Henry, John Carl-JC, Howard, and Julia Blythe. The boys live in Grand County. John worked with his father in ranching and the sawmill and ran the camping operation in the Kawuneeche Valley until the land was sold to the park. On June 12, 1977 John was injured in a motorcycle accident and was paralyzed. He presently lives in Grand Junction, Colorado and returns to the ranch about once a year.



Mary Frances (Fran) went to school at American University in Washington, D. C. and married William Needham on February 1, 1969 at Trinity in the Pines in Grand Lake. The Needhams operated the Neversummer Ranch in 1973-74 before it was dismantled. They have two children: Captain William A. Needham, III who is a nurse and spent five months in Kosovo and Caroline Elizabeth who lives in Phoenix and works in finance. They both graduated from Middle Park High School. Bill and Fran Needham lived in Granby where Fran has a bookkeeping business and Bill Needham owned Alpine Office Supply. Bill died in 2009 and Fran lives in Arizona.

Mr. and Mrs. John G. Holzwarth were honored Citizens of the Year at Middle Park Fair in 1964

Caroline was past president of Music Club and Women's Club of Grand Lake, past president of Middle Park YWCA, secretary of the local school board for nine years before reorganization.

Caroline Holzwarth died on November 21, 1965, Thanksgiving Day. She was 58 years old. Caroline's death (according to Patience Kemp) was sudden and unexpected. She had a massive stroke after a busy day at an ice cream social and after taking care of grandchildren, etc. The doctor had told her she had high blood pressure.

Johnnie also had Caroline's horse killed as he had saddled the horse for Caroline every day. The Holzwarth family had a tradition of burying the bridles along with the body.



Virginia and Caroline's graves – Grand Lake Cemetery

