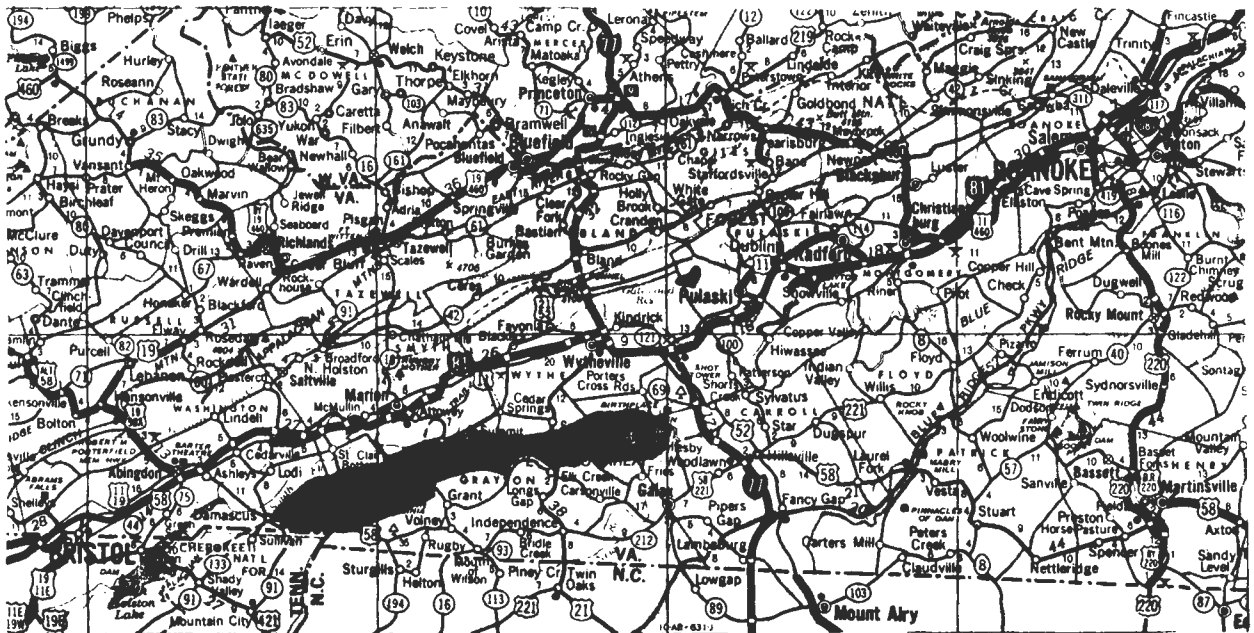


A BIOGRAPHY OF SUSAN KATHERINE [CARSON] CAAUWE

Susan Katherine Carson was born March 27, 1873 near Galax, Grayson County, Virginia to J. Edwin and Sena [Edwards] Carson. Susan was the sixth of ten children born to her parents that included five sons and five daughters.

The Carson family lived on a farm near Galax near the Appalachian Mountains in southwestern Virginia. It was in this area where Susan's mother was also born. The now existent Blue Ridge Parkway bypasses Galax a few miles to the southeast and the North Carolina border is only five miles directly south of Galax. Near there in Jefferson, Ashe County, North Carolina was the birthplace of Susan's father.

This area in Virginia where Susan spent her early years was mountainous and the mountain people there were superstitious. A story she later told her own children was about an experience that her mother, Sena, had. Mrs. Carson, who took care of the medical needs of the people in the community, was returning home on horseback one night after helping a sick neighbor. It was on this late night trip that she saw for herself the ghost that she had heard about many times before. Investigating the ghost more closely, she discovered a neighbor's white mule that had gone through its fence to feed on lush bluegrass in the hollow. So ended the superstition about the "Ghost of Sleepy Hollow."



The Virginia mountain people hunted for both food and sport. Susan related stories of how people used dogs to chase deer. She could hear the dogs barking miles away. Sometimes they would get the deer - sometimes not.

Susan and her family lived in Virginia until the mid-1880's. In the spring of 1881, two of Susan's sisters and one of her brothers died. Many children at that time in that part of the country died from Black Fever. This was possibly the reason why the family decided to leave the mountains of Virginia and move to the prairies of Nebraska.

In August of 1884, Susan, age 11, and the other five remaining Carson children (another of Susan's brothers had died in 1875) left Virginia with their parents. They traveled by covered wagon for four months, and in December, 1884 arrived in Pierce, Pierce County, Nebraska.



Later the family moved to Stanton County, Nebraska. Susan became a teacher in the Carson School south of Pilger in 1893 when she was 20 years old. She told about having to stay with children overnight in the rural school house waiting out a Nebraska blizzard. During that time, the

stovepipe blew down, sending out lots of smoke. Several of the older boys got up on desks and replaced the pipes.

Another blizzard Susan remembered was the big one five years earlier in 1888. She told of her oldest brother, Rufus H. Carson, having to go Pilger from Pierce. He started out on horseback and just east of Norfolk on the "bottom" road that followed the railroad tracks, the storm struck. When the horse started stumbling, he would reach forward and break the ice from its eyes and nostrils. He eventually reached Pilger in one of the worst storms ever recorded.

It was at the Carson School while Susan was a teacher there that she met Peter Caauwe. They became acquainted at rural school programs that were given for interested people in the district and surrounding area. It was called a "literary society". In those days, social gatherings also included such things as box socials, baseball games, and picnics. Peter owned a ¼ section of land just east of the Carson farm and south of the Carson School at the time Susan taught there.

On July 26, 1897, Susan Carson, 24 and Peter Caauwe, 35, were married at the Baptist parsonage in Stanton, Nebraska. They built their first house near Pilger, Nebraska. It had two rooms with nine foot ceilings and was heated by a stove. Water had to be carried a distance equal to two city blocks from a neighbor's well. This was the first of many places they were to live.

At home, the family had a foot pedal organ. Susan and Peter sang a few church hymns such as "Jesus Lover of My Soul" and "Abide With Me" while Peter played the organ.

Susan and Peter contributed a great deal to the people in the communities where they lived. They had good neighbors they became friends with and tried ways to get the neighbors together. They organized a literary society in the home school near the Lackey farm. It was successful for three or four winters.

A large part of Susan and Peter's lives was spent in Stanton County, Nebraska. From 1897 to 1898, they lived in their first house near Pilger. In 1898 and until 1899, they rented a farm that was also near Pilger. It was during this time, on November 28, 1898 their first child, Lee Carson Caauwe, was born.

In 1899, the family moved to the Sandy farm south of Pilger and they lived there until 1902. Sena Marie was born August 1, 1900 and Edwin Peter was born January 1, 1902. During the year of 1902, the family again moved and this time to the Miller farm, also south of Pilger. It was during this time that Susan and Peter's next three children were born. Rufus William was born September 26, 1903, Frank Walter on September 7, 1905 and Fern May on August 30, 1908. Fern died three months later.

Susan and Peter's last child, a daughter named Barbara Mildred, was born May 3, 1910 on the Spence farm north of Stanton where they had moved in 1909. The family lived there until 1911.

In 1911, the Caauwe's sold their farm and moved their family to Sugar Grove, Pennsylvania. They bought farms there, but in less than one year sold out and returned to Nebraska. During the last months of 1912 and 1913 they wintered in Pilger, Nebraska.

On March 1, 1913, Susan and Peter moved their family to the Peterson farm southeast of Stanton and they lived there two years before they moved to the Lackey farm, ½ section, southwest of Stanton in 1915. They lived there until 1919 when they moved to the Clark farm north of Wayne in Wayne County.

After living on the Clark farm until 1923, the Caauwe's bought the 80-acre Dean farm southwest of Wayne and lived there a year. They traded the farm for an acreage on the east edge of Wayne. It was here they spent the ten years between 1924 and 1934. From Wayne, they moved to Norfolk, Madison County to a house on property owed by their son Frank. It was here they spent their last years.

Susan and Peter Caauwe both died in a Norfolk hospital. Susan died at the age of 68 on February 5, 1942. She was preceded in death by Peter who had died a year earlier at the age of 79 on March 31, 1941. They are both interred in the country cemetery north of Pilger in Stanton County, Nebraska.

"A Biography of Susan Katherine [Carson] Caauwe" was written by Jan [Wenke] Mills, daughter of Barbara Mildred [Caauwe] Wenke who was the youngest daughter of Susan Caauwe.

The material for the biography was gathered from the four sons of Susan Caauwe - Lee Caauwe of Wayne, Nebraska; Edwin Caauwe of Wayne, Nebraska; Rufus Caauwe of Norfolk, Nebraska; and Frank Caauwe of Norfolk, Nebraska.

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