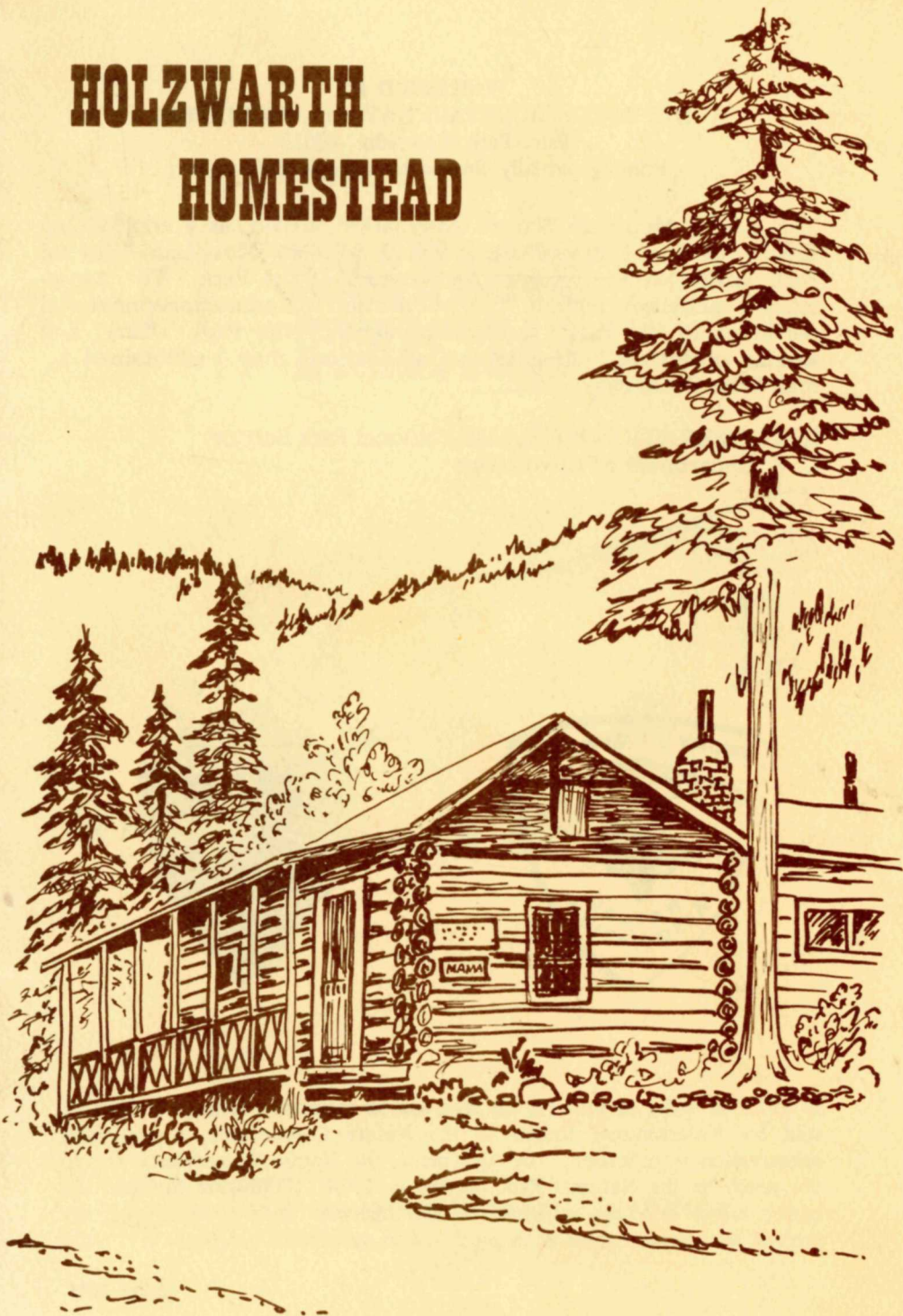


HOLZWARTH HOMESTEAD



ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK

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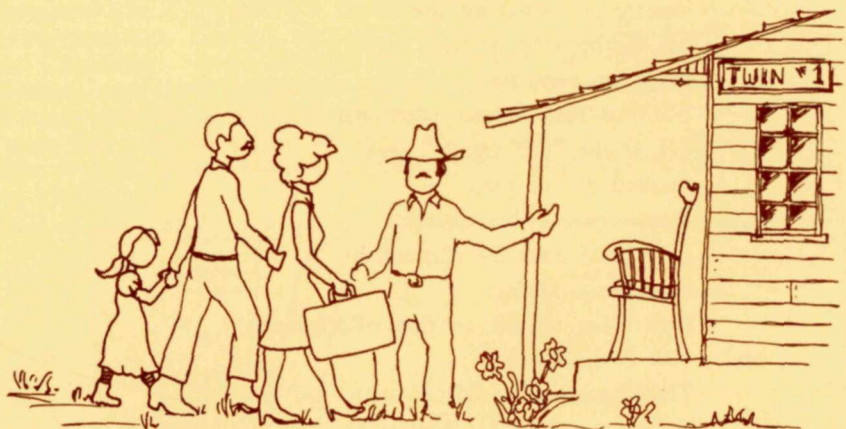
The Rocky Mountain Nature Association, which, as a cooperating agency of the National Park Service, Rocky Mountain National Park, assists in the interpretive program of the Park. The Association's activities include the publication of educational material pertinent to the Park, the development of the Park library, and similar objectives. Association publications may be obtained by mail from the above address.

IN COOPERATION WITH THE National Park Service
U. S. Department of the Interior



In 1973, in order to preserve his land and its memories, Johnnie Holzwarth sold his Neversummer Ranch to the Nature Conservancy, a non-profit conservation organization. By agreement, the Nature Conservancy re-sold the ranch to the National Park Service in 1974. Following the sale, the newer ranch buildings adjacent to the highway were removed and the original homestead cabins were preserved as an historic exhibit.

HOLZWARTH HOMESTEAD



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Linda Griffin, Barb Hicks, ~~Michael Kunde~~ & Molly O'Malley.
Line drawings by David Noe, *May Summers*

Welcome to the Holzwarth Homestead. We've prepared this booklet to help you explore the grounds and buildings. When you reach the homestead buildings, (just follow the road), you will enter the world of a 1920's pioneer dude ranch. The customs were different. The costumes were different. You're invited to spend awhile with the ranch folk as they engage in the activities of everyday life.

Before you start . . . a few REQUESTS

- No pets are allowed
- No smoking, PLEASE
- Everything natural and historic is strictly protected by law
- No motorcycles or trail bikes are permitted
- National Park Service personnel live in the "Off Limits" area marked on the map
- Please respect their privacy
- Save your trash for disposal in a proper container
- Park rules prohibit picking wildflowers

. and a few CAUTIONS

- The Homestead buildings are getting on in years. Please watch out for rickety steps, slanting floors and splinters
- And for those of you with youngsters having inquisitive fingers - - the cook-stove is often HOT and the axes, saws, etc. are SHARP

So, come on over for a visit. We're waiting for you!

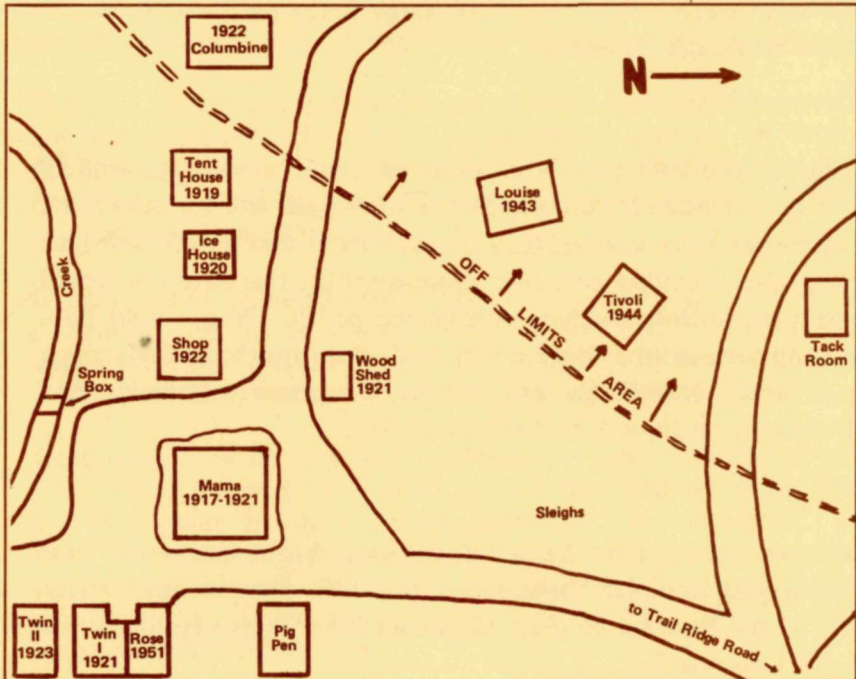
The Homestead Staff
Rocky Mountain National Park

NEVERSUMMER RANCH

John G. Holzwarth, Sr. and his wife to be, Sophia, immigrated from Germany as indentured servants in the 1880's. They came separately and in the 1890's they met in Denver, married, began raising a family and operated a successful saloon. If prohibition hadn't closed their saloon in 1916, they might never have ventured into the mountains.

But come they did in ¹⁹²⁰1917 when Papa, Mama, and their three teenage children claimed their homestead along the Colorado River. Times were often rough and the family had to be resourceful to make a living. They cut timber and ran a sawmill, broke and trained horses, hauled freight and raised hay. Papa was a taxidermist. Son Johnnie trapped fur-bearing animals. The most important source of income, however, was their guest ranch.

Beginning as Holzwarth's Trout Lodge, the venture grew into the Neversummer Ranch, one of the most successful dude ranches in Colorado. Johnnie and his wife ran the main lodge, while Mama, and later Johnnie's sisters, operated housekeeping cabins. Square dances, steak fries, fishing, and, of course, horseback riding were the keys to a fine vacation which drew tourists to the ranch for over 50 years, from the early 1920's until the ranch was sold in 1973.



As you go over to the homestead, try to imagine what it would have been like if you'd been arriving with the Holzwarth family back in 1917.

You would have arrived tired and dusty in your Model-T Ford after passing through the booming tourist resort of Grand Lake and the newly established Rocky Mountain National Park.

That old cabin by the road? It belonged to a man named Joe Fleshuts who stayed here in the valley from 1904 to 1909.

And that big scar on the mountainside across the valley? Why, work was still going on up there back in the 20's! What is it? A diversion ditch, begun in the 1890's, that carries water northward and across the Continental Divide to Fort Collins. They called it the "Grand River Ditch" because it took water from the Grand River that flowed through the valley. Today you'll cross that same river which, thanks to some fancy political footwork, is now called the Colorado.

If you'd been with the Holzwarths, out here, looking for a likely spot to homestead, you would not have seen the big meadows. You would have noticed that the glaciation that carved this lush valley also provided excellent drainage; but, the meadow would have been willow thickets and beaver ponds. You would have known, just as the Holzwarths did, how much back-breaking work would have to go into clearing the marsh to provide land suitable for raising hay to feed your livestock.

But once you got to the actual homestead area you would have known, just as sure as the sun rises, that this was to be your home. You would have set to work to make your dreams a reality just as the Holzwarths did.



Mama Cabin in the early days, Mama Holzwarth, standing.

MAMA CABIN - LIVING ROOM

Can you imagine spending an entire winter in this one room with four other people? That's what the Holzwarth family did back in 1917 - 18. The other rooms were added as soon as it became feasible, but to begin with THIS was the homestead.

The first things you notice when you come into the living room are the deer heads. In 1924 Papa Holzwarth took up taxidermy through a correspondence course. A wagon accident kept him from helping with the heavier ranch chores so he did taxidermy to bring in a little extra money.

In case you're wondering what Papa looked like you can read his description on his passport hanging on the wall. Of course, if that's not quite detailed enough for you, the pictures hanging on the wall are the wedding portraits of Papa and Mama.

Winters up here are cold and the snows are deep. Johnnie reports that, "In the spring of 1920, I opened the door on April 15th and there were five feet of new snow that fell that night!" To keep warm, you really had to bundle up heavily. Papa's solution to the cold was a buffalo coat. An exact replica of it is in the corner. Try it on and imagine wearing that around while performing the daily chores.

Along with the rough and tumble activities of the cowboys on the dude ranch, the niceties of excellent food, clean cabins and friendly atmosphere were also important. The hostess to provide all of these was Caroline Pratt Holzwarth, Johnnie's first wife.

Caroline was born in Kansas City, Missouri and first came to Grand Lake "in a basket". As a tiny infant, her family brought her to their summer home on the shore of Grand Lake. Caroline spent her summers in Grand Lake enjoying swimming, boating, horseback riding and picnicking. A childhood friend recalls the standard picnic menu to be "baked beans and pickles".

Caroline attended the University of Missouri and graduated Phi Beta Kappa. She went on to earn a master's degree in philosophy and music. The Pratt family, wanting the best for their talented daughter, arranged for her to go to New York to pursue her goals. But Caroline could not resist the lure of Grand Lake and returned to the mountain valley. She declared to her family that she was going to marry a cowboy. And so she did - - Johnnie Holzwarth.

Caroline died suddenly in 1965, but is well remembered by her family and the community to whom she was an inspiration.



Ladies on a picnic about 1919.

MAMA CABIN - BEDROOM

Cold winter nights and a warm wood stove -- a real inspiration for crafts and handiwork. The bedroom is a display of the family's work. Papa's handmade beds are here, and still sturdy. Mama's braided rugs are here, and all of her fancywork.

Mama had a very practical side, too. She had many a guest bed to cover. Her quilts had large pieces, such as our gray quilt. The material scraps are the discards from a Denver casket factory -- perfect for Mama's quilts.

The sewing machine is the oldest one in Grand County. Johnnie's wife Caroline brought this with her when she and Johnnie were married. Manufactured in 1871, it is very fragile, but still works. Johnnie added the electric motor as soon as he could to make things a little easier. Caroline also brought an heirloom from her family. The beautiful log cabin quilt was hand stitched by her grandmother.

Mama never would have displayed Papa's sword in her china cabinet, but we thought you would like to see it. The cabinet also has Papa's various medals and ribbons. Mama surely wouldn't have wanted the leather booties in her cabinet, either. They were not for a baby - - but for dogs, to protect their feet from the snow and ice in winter.

Johnnie didn't have too much time for handiwork, for the ranch chores kept him busy, even in winter. Johnnie has seen over fifty years of ranch work but his chaps hanging here have seen even more years. Johnnie bought them second hand in 1920 and they are still ready for the next rodeo.

The homestead staff has also found the bedroom an ideal place to work. Please examine our crafts projects displayed in the room. Do you think Mama would approve?

MAMA CABIN - KITCHEN

Sniff the air as you enter the kitchen. Do you smell our freshly baked sourdough bread? Or our sauerkraut? Or the lingering aroma of wood smoke from the cookstove?

The cookstove, named Admiral Blue, is the pride and joy of the kitchen. Ordered from Montgomery Ward and freighted here in 1920, it delighted Mama with all its modern conveniences - a self-cleaning top (anything she spilled burned right off!), infinite heat control as she moved her pans around on the top, a hot water reservoir on the side, warming ovens above, and even an oven thermometer.

Mama's well-stocked kitchen included a kraut board for slicing cabbage for sauerkraut, a sausage stuffer, a noodle board for "spaetzles", and a collander for rinsing dandelion greens for salad. Do you recognize any of the other implements?

Johnnie claims he invented the egg carton. He used old springs and created a box he could use for his dudes' breakfast rides - - on horseback without breaking a single egg.

Did you notice Papa's copper still on top of the stove? After prohibition closed his saloon in Denver, Papa had to make other arrangements for his drinking - - and he made his own - - two quarts of whiskey every two weeks.

The still isn't working these days, but help yourself to some homemade sourdough bread.

MAMA CABIN - BACK PORCH

"We used to have a bench out here and my father never allowed us to wash our face and hands in the house. We always had to do it outside. I can remember combing my hair and combing the frost out of my hair!"

. Johnnie Holzwarth, 1974

SOURDOUGH BREAD

To 1 C. sourdough starter add 3 C. warm water and 3 C. flour. Let stand at room temperature, covered 6 to 12 hours. Remove 1 C. to continue starter. Store in refrigerator.

To remaining batter add:

- 1/2 C. sugar (more or less to taste)
- 2 teas salt
- 1/4 C. oil, melted butter or melted margarine
- 5 to 5 1/2 C. flour - or enough to make a stiff dough

Knead until smooth and satiny. Shape into 2 loaves. Place in greased loaf pans and let rise 6 to 12 hours or until double in bulk. Bake in a moderate oven - 375°- until done about 1 hour.

SOURDOUGH PANCAKES

Follow steps for preparing starter as for sourdough bread. Remove 1 C. to continue starter. Mix together and add to remaining batter the following:

- 1/2 C. sugar
- 2 teas. salt
- 1 teas. soda

Let stand a few minutes to "work". then add:

- 1 or 2 eggs
- 1/4 C. oil, melted butter or margarine
- A little milk if batter is too thick

Cook on hot, greased griddle or skillet.

SOURDOUGH STARTER

Dry sourdough starter (that you can mix up later) is available in gift shops in Grand Lake and Estes Park or you may prepare your own:

In a 3 quart or larger non-metal container soften 1 package active dry yeast in 1 quart lukewarm water. Beat in 2 T. sugar and 4 C. sifted flour. Cover and let rise until light and slightly aged, 24 to 48 hours at room temperature. Stir mixture before measuring 1 C. quantity to begin starter preparation. Discard the remainder or share with a friend!

TWIN I

Twin I was the first permanent cabin Johnnie built for guests. Constructed in 1921, it was still being enjoyed by folks as late as 1973, the last year the Holzwarth family operated the ranch.

Johnnie's skill as a hunter is widely known, and proud he should be of the elk rack on the porch. This isn't even Johnnie's biggest trophy. He is on record for having shot the 12th ranked elk in the United States in the 1958-59 Boone and Crockett Club competition.

Twin I was constructed with the help of "Squeaky" Bob Wheeler, an experienced dude rancher who owned and operated Phantom Valley Ranch for many years. Even with Squeaky's help, though, Johnnie made a few errors in construction. Notice the two side beams? They are placed there to help support the roof under the weight of heavy winter snows. Look closer. They don't touch the roof at any point. Johnnie missed!

Making guests feel at home is part of every successful dude ranch and the Holzwarth ranch was famous for this. In the early days when things were rough, Johnnie had a few tricks to make people more comfortable. The uniquely-shaped board you see on the wood stove is one of the luxuries Johnnie provided. Guests kept this "warm one" near the stove and on cold mornings they had a hot seat to take to the outhouse!

Would you like to rent Twin I? If you had come as a guest in 1921, your bill would have been \$2.00 a day or \$11.00 a week, including all your meals and a horse, of course.

ROSE

Originally Twin I was where Rose is now situated. One year a skunk died underneath Twin I, and the Holzwarths couldn't get it out. So they moved Twin I aside, removed the skunk, and build Rose on the old foundation. They called it Rose because it "smelled better"!

SHOP

Papa Holzwarth's taxidermy shop was built in 1922, two years before he completed his correspondence course in taxidermy.

A prominent feature of the shop is the fleshing board - - the slanted, ironing board-shaped structure. The inside of animal skins were "fleshed" on this board.

The wooden trunk on the floor belonged to Mama Holzwarth and was her trunk for the voyage from Germany when she immigrated to the United States. Papa later turned the trunk into a tool box.

The big cow bells from Switzerland have a ring to them which once awakened the ranch guests. Caroline, Johnnie's first wife, was able to play a tune on them.



1932

The sleigh bells accompanied Johnnie on every winter morning through the pasture to bring hay to the horses. Another winter occupation was the running of trap lines for beaver, muskrat, marten and mink. Notice the snowshoes and traps stored in the corner. Johnnie many times ran a hundred-mile trap line!

Notice the bullet holes in the elk antlers. Johnnie SHOT these antlers off an elk which had gouged two of his colts. The elk took several days to right itself from the imbalance of the missing antlers.

TENT HOUSE

Over the years the Tent House, made of wood and canvas, sheltered many a traveler. Johnnie spent the entire winter of 1920 living in this tiny building!



WOODSHED

circa 1929

“You talk about being a man. I used to split that wood, and do it before breakfast, plus milk my cows”.

. . . Johnnie Holzwarth, 1974

ICE HOUSE

Every year about Christmas time, when the lakes were frozen, the Holzwarths hitched up the team and took the ice cutter and saws and set off to cut ice. The resulting 100-pound blocks of ice were stored in the ice house. Packed in sawdust, the ice would last all summer.



THINGS I WANT TO REMEMBER:



