

BRANDON CEREMONY

We're here today to honor the people who lived at Brandon Training School and especially 2 people who lived at Brandon and who have died.

Caroline Viola Eastman was the daughter of Lettie Minor Eastman and Erwin E. Eastman. Caroline was born on March 13, 1932 in Orange Vermont. Caroline was born prematurely and weighed only 3 pounds at birth. That was quite remarkable, a testimony to her will and strength, that she survived at a time when medical care was so different from the care that we have today.

Caroline lived with her parents and older sister, Esther Helen. At the age of 7, Carolyn was brought to Brandon by the Overseer of the Poor and admitted to Brandon Training School. We can only imagine the reasons and the shock she and her family felt. Was it because the family did not have the money to care for her? After all, it was 1939 and the country was in the midst of the Great Depression. Was it out of frustration and the feeling of being incapable of meeting Caroline's needs because there was no help? Was it because of the advice of family, friends and doctors because that was what they believed was best for Caroline?

We can only imagine the fear and sadness that a 7 year old Caroline felt leaving her parents and sister, her home, and all that was familiar to her. We can only hope that someone at Brandon reached out to her, held her hand, consoled her and tried to understand the sadness, fear and loneliness that Caroline must have felt. Someone, some people, who have the kindness in their hearts of all of you who are here today. Someone who was there to help Caroline.

Caroline lived at Brandon Training School for 38 years and moved to Rutland at the age of 45 in 1977. Caroline lived in a boarding home in Rutland and worked at a number of part time jobs. Caroline enjoyed the company of others. She was fond of books and particularly scrap booking.

Caroline moved to the Royce Street Group Home, a part of the Community Access Program of Rutland. She became a part of the “Royce Street Family” and was enthusiastic about baking. She sometimes told stories about her childhood and was known occasionally to cause a little mischief. Although Caroline was small in stature and did not talk much, she made her presence known. She was a treasured member of the “Royce Street Family.”

Caroline lived at Royce Street until she was 76 and she died in her home surrounded by her friends and family.

To live in the hearts we leave behind is not to die.
Thomas Campbell.

Today Caroline Viola Eastman lives in our hearts.