

# The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

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## A Little Piece of Heaven...

### McDowell Family Farm Will Receive Pioneer Farm Award at Custer County Fair on Thursday



Aerial view of the McDowell farmstead in the 1970s. The barn was later torn down. (Courtesy photo)

Four generations of the McDowell family are celebrating 100 years of owning and operating a little piece of farm and ranchland heaven in Custer County. The picturesque farm, which is two miles west and two miles north of Arnold, has hay fields, corn, pasture, four spring fed ponds and a river running through it. With 100 years behind it, the McDowell farm and ranch is steeped in family history with the original two-story farmhouse and original farmstead.

In celebration with the family, the Aksarben Foundation, which has teamed up with the Nebraska Farm Bureau and the Nebraska Association of Fair Managers, will present the Pioneer Farm Award—an award that recognizes Nebraska farm families who have consecutively held ownership of land

in the same family for 100 years or more—to current owners Roger and Sandra Stockall during the Custer County Fair on Thursday, August 3, at 6:45 p.m.

Horatio McDowell, father of Thomas McDowell, was born in Indiana and later moved to Iowa. Horatio's father and grandfather, who lived in Kentucky, served in the Revolutionary War.

Horatio and his wife, Elizabeth, had 12 children; they lived in Kentucky and later moved to Iowa. Their son Thomas McDowell moved from Iowa to Missouri and later to Nebraska. Thomas and his family of 12 children migrated from Missouri to Nebraska in the early 1900s. The family moved to the Gothenburg area in 1904. Okie McDowell, son of Thomas, was born in Missouri.

In 1912, Okie and his family moved to the vicinity of Arnold where they lived for two years, then moved to Garfield Table, where they lived until 1917. In 1917 Okie and his wife Electa purchased land from Sylvester and Orpha Tubbs, three miles northwest of Arnold along the South Loup River. They purchased it for \$15,032.00. They built a two-story house, barn, chicken house and shop. Robert McDowell was born in this house. There was a big barn on the farm with stanchions for cows, horse stalls and a haymow for feed storage. Eventually, the barn was removed and replaced with a small horse barn.

The house is still standing today and is the residence of Justin Stockall, great-grandson of Okie and Electa McDowell. Many improvements have been

made to the house; however, it is still the original siding.

From the 20s to the 50s, it was a difficult time to make ends meet because of blizzards, tornados, World War I, World War II and the Great Depression. They witnessed drought which wiped out the crops, and if the drought didn't get them, then hail decreased crop production. The family milked cows and sold cream and eggs to the creamery in Arnold. Electa raised a huge garden to provide food for the family throughout the year. They also raised chickens for eggs and meat. Okie raised horses and farmed with a team of mules for many years. Corn was picked by hand and tossed into a wagon driven by mules. At one time, Okie cut ice in the river and stored it in straw for use throughout the year.

Early on, they planted three tree strips on the land north of the house and an ash grove south of the house. It was a challenge to keep the trees watered so they would survive. The tree strips are still there today.

Okie and Electa had three sons and one daughter. They all attended Crossroads Elementary School and Arnold High School. The oldest, George, moved to Idaho after marriage and had an irrigated farm. Kenneth and his wife lived in Arnold, and he was in the gravel and road construction business. Daughter Inez was a nurse and lived in Grand Island, Nebraska. Robert was born on the family farm in 1921. He married Betty Pinkston in 1942. After marriage, Robert and Betty lived with Okie and Electa. In 1954 Electa sold the farm to Robert and Betty, and she moved to Arnold.

They lived on the farm and assumed the farming responsibilities after Okie died in 1945. They raised three daughters: Sandra, Jane and Joe, who helped with farm and ranch chores such as irrigating, haying and doing livestock chores.



Bob and Betty McDowell purchased the farm in 1954. (Courtesy photo)

Through the years, Robert and Betty began to raise more cattle and had a feedlot and a cow/calf herd. Robert was very good with horses and always had many on the farm for work and recreation. Through the years, they made improvements, including building four small fishing ponds in a wetlands area. They also were one of the first in Nebraska to have a guest ranch. They provided their guests with horses, cattle, fishing and hunting experiences. They started irrigating in the 1950s, using sprinkler pipe and pumping water from the river. Through the years, they changed to irrigation wells, gaited pipe and then to pivots.

Robert raised several different breeds of cattle, including Herefords, Angus and Crossbreds. He was one of the first in the area to introduce the use of Charolaise bulls.

The farm and ranch has expanded since its beginning from 480 acres to almost 2,200 acres today. Pasture land was purchased that was next to the original farm and additional pasture north of Arnold was added to the ranch.

Robert lived his whole life on the farm. Betty moved to town after Robert died, but she continued management of the farm. The farm and ranch is now owned by Roger and Sandy McDowell Stockall and managed by their son, Justin.

## Colbi Smith Named State Golf Champion

### 13-Year-Old Brings Home Award

Colbi Smith is officially the best golfer in the state in the boys 12-15 age division, after bringing home the Nebraska State Champion plaque last week.

Colbi started competing in the Nebraska Junior Golf tour in the summer of 2015, and this summer, at the age of 13, Colbi competed in 12 tournaments in Central and Eastern Nebraska. He placed in the top six in all tournaments and brought home seven 1st place medals.

At the end of the season, Colbi was ranked 4th out of 72 boys in his di-

vision. The top 12 were invited to the championship tournament at Dakota Dunes Country Club in Dakota Dunes, South Dakota, held on Thursday, July 27.

The golf course is a private course designed by Arnold Palmer. It is bordered by the Missouri river and has many big cottonwood trees, lush grass, many narrow fairways and plenty of water hazards and sand traps throughout the 18 hole course.

Colbi played a sold round and finished the day seven strokes over par

with a 79.

At the conclusion of the tournament, an awards luncheon was held in the clubhouse, where Colbi received his award.

After a scorecard playoff, Alex Heilbrun from Nebraska City placed 2nd and Aiden Nelson from Omaha placed 3rd. Each finished 11 strokes over par with a score of 85.

Colbi, who will be an 8th grader at Arnold Public School, is the son of Robbi and Shelley Smith.



## County Fair Time

Aubree Stutzman, age 10, (center) shows her dog “Hoss,” a 2-year-old German Short-haired Pointer, in showmanship, at the Custer County Fair. This is Aubree's first year showing in the dog class. She earned a red ribbon in obedience and a blue in showmanship. Her mom, Lori, said there was a good sized group of kids that showed their dogs, including Toni Oberg and Kylee Lehmkuhler of Arnold. These girls also did well. Watch *The Sentinel* for complete results of how all the Arnold 4-Hers did at fair this week as soon as results are available.

