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They've a Story to Tell

Genevieve Collier Recalls Life as a Rancher's Wife

16th in a Series on Arnold's
"Young at Heart"
Residents

By Darlene Rimpley

Shades of the past swept over me, as I sat and listened to Arnold resident Gen Collier play the piano - a player piano to be exact, and as I looked around her home, I saw other antiques.

She actually didn't have to do much on the piano to play "Ally Cat." The piano has been adapted to electricity, so all Gen has to do is open several little doors, push some buttons, and the music plays. If she wants to go back in time, there are pedals she can pump, and she can also play it as a regular piano. The piano, which was probably made in the 1920s, using perforated paper rolls to make the music, was purchased by Gen at a Stapleton estate sale.

Genevieve Wade was born on July 30, 1935, to George and Hazel Wade at their family ranch home eight miles north and west of Ringgold, with Dr. Nellie McGraw of Tryon being the attending physician. "Gen," as she is called, was the oldest of three surviving children.

When it was time to attend school, she stayed in Tryon with her grandmother Popham (which, incidentally makes her relation to the Rimpleys) to go to McPherson County School.

Her future husband, Jack Collier was born on July 9, 1927, in Kearney in the old Good Samaritan Hospital to John and Helen Collier. John was the station master at the depot in Stapleton until it closed when the trains no longer ran on the line from Kearney to Stapleton. Jack finished school in Stapleton, and his love of ranching, even at this early age, took over, and he and his dad purchased the TLV (Tierney's Little Valley Ranch) from Joe McClure, and Jack moved a small house over to the ranch. The ranch name was changed to Plus Reverse F, and still goes under that name, as well as just the Collier Ranch.

Jack's cousin introduced Jack and Gen in 1950, and on May 18, 1952, they were married in



With rolls of music laid beside her, Genevieve Collier sits at an antique player piano that she acquired at an auction a few years ago. Gen says she has received a lot of enjoyment from the piano. (Sentinel photo)

the Episcopal Church in North Platte. And so their journey into ranching as a couple began.

There was a sod house just a short distance away from the house, and for that day and age, was quite large. It had two good sized bedrooms, a living room, dining room, kitchen and utility room, with an attic. The kitchen had great cupboards in it, and the couple salvaged part of them when they saw the state of the house. Gen has one of the drawers in her living room, mounted on legs, that she uses for a small table.

Just recently, a man from the State Sod House Society was at the ranch to look the house over. Although it is in disrepair, parts of it still stand. At one time, after Gen's parents left the ranch they had lived on for years, they made the sod house their home, living there for several years. Gen said when their oldest daughter, Jackie, would disappear from their house, she

knew she had gone down to see Grandma.

Any woman who has lived on a ranch knows the work involved. Helping in the hay fields and with the cattle when needed, raising a garden and canning and freezing, milking cows, raising chickens, churning her own butter were some of the fun things that go with being a rancher's wife.

Gen recalled one summer when they had three high school boys who boarded with them to help in the hay fields. She had to cook three meals a day for them, and "they could really eat," she said.

To add to the ranching chores, three daughters were added to the family: Jackie, Judy and Brenda. The girls went to Hall School, and when they were being driven the six miles or so to school or picked up after school, they would hunt coyotes on the way. As Gen said, "We

could make a few dollars that way, besides cleaning out the coyotes from the ranch."

The three girls all graduated from Arnold High. Of course, all three were "horse women," helping when needed. Brenda was also the 1975 Logan County Rodeo Queen.

On several occasions they had some serious scares. One year there was a prairie fire that started on the Wiley ranch east of them, and got very close to their house. Jack was fighting the fire, and Gen and the girls evacuated and went to a ranch west of them. Another time, when a tornado came through west of Arnold and went as far as Thedford, the Colliers spent quite a while in the cellar until they were sure the danger had passed.

Registered quarter horses became a big part of the family's

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Danger is All Part of the Job

One time when Gen was helping with cattle, she got too close to a baby calf and the mother cow took her, got her to the ground, and mauled her. They took Gen to the Callaway hospital where it was determined she "only" had broken ribs.

School vs. Love

Gen made it through the 11th grade at McPherson County School, but love won out and she opted for marriage rather than go through her senior year. She eventually attained her GED from Arnold High, and is a proud alumnus and has served as an officer.



Arnold EMTs (From left) Cassy DeLosh, Nancy Cool, Tom Dennis and Heather Hagler take training using the department's new Lucas Device - a portable, life-saving chest compression system. (Courtesy photo)

Halloween Parade and Costume Contest is Friday

Children are in for a treat this Friday, October 28, as the third annual Halloween Carnival, Costume Contest and Parade through downtown businesses will be held, with fun starting at 9:00 a.m. at the Arnold Community Center.

The Chamber-sponsored event will have both adult volunteer helpers and members of the NJHS and NHS running the Carnival games from 9:00 a.m. until the conclusion of all judging. Various games, including bobbing for apples, PLINKO, bowling, miniature golf, Guess the Quantity, poke a pumpkin, darts, marble race, in addition to a few new games this year, will offer a lot of fun, candy and various prizes.

Judging of costumes starts at 10:00 a.m. prompt with emcee Holly Hornung Remund. Group themed costumes will be judged first with three winners this year because of the large number of entries last year. Three adult individual winners will also be chosen. Three winners in 10 different kid age groups will also be determined.

Children and parents will then head out to the 20 some listed downtown businesses who will be welcoming trick-or-treaters from 10:30 until 12 noon.

And also don't forget to bring your decorated pumpkins for the pumpkin decorating contest, with age groups from 5 and under up through adults.

Chamber Looking Forward to Good Turn Out for Craft Show

Twenty-five crafters and home-based businesses will be setting up in the Arnold Community Center this Saturday, October 29, and sponsoring organization, Chamber, is hoping for a great turnout from not only Arnold residents, but people from out of town as well. The event, scheduled from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., has been well advertised in the surrounding area, and Chamber has been working to make sure businesses are included in places to patronize as people come to town. The fourth grade class will have concessions throughout the day to raise money, and there will be drawings for three, \$10.00 Chamber Bucks.

SILENT AUCTION

Items continue to come in for the Finch Memorial Library's silent auction to raise money for masonry repairs. The auction will be held at the community center during the craft show from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. A full list of items received for the auction can be found on page 5.

Crop Field Report

For the week ending October 16, temperatures averaged near normal in the east and two to six degrees above normal across western Nebraska, according to the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. Rainfall was minimal this past week.

Corn mature was 96 percent, equal to last year and near the five-year average of 93. Harvested was 54 percent, near 36 last year and behind 40 average.

Soybeans harvested was 62 percent, behind 73 last year and 74 average.

Winter wheat emerged was 90 percent, ahead of 79 last year and 73 average.

Alfalfa fourth cutting was 86 percent, near 95 last year and ahead of 94 average.