

Homes of History: The Arnold/Boyer home

Written by By Ava Barlow, Staff Writer
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March 24, 2011 - In 1912, William Hayes and Ethel Braly Arnold built a home on what would later become Main Street in Leonard. Arnold owned the lumberyard in Leonard, which might explain why the house was built as a two story, but the upstairs was never finished. The Arnolds could keep a close watch on the house while it was under construction, as they lived in a house across the street at the time.



A large porch spanned the front and south side of the house - with large square support posts and the south portion of the porch screened in at some point in time. A large entry hall opened into the living room and the downstairs included a kitchen, dining room, two bedrooms and a small bathroom. There was a double fireplace that was a coal-burning unit and it heated two rooms at one time. Hardwood floors existed throughout the house, along with push button electricity, skeleton key door locks, and 11-foot ceilings in each room.

William died on March 14, 1940, and Ethel continued to live in the house until her death on Sept. 12, 1978. Many folks in Leonard remember Ethel sitting in the screened-in porch for hours on end. The Arnolds raised two daughters in the house, Ermine and Mariam.

Jerry A. Davis bought the house from the Arnold estate and sold it to Joe. T. Sudderth, who in turn traded the house to his brother and sister-in-law, Buster and Donna Sudderth.

Buster and Donna lived in the house for about four years in the mid 1980's. Buster added a master bathroom, using part of the south porch for this change to the structure, remodeled the kitchen and enclosed the backyard with a white picket fence.

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Buster and Donna later traded the house back to Joe T. for a house located on Westlake Drive, and Greg and Gwen Boyer brought their young family to Leonard with the purchase of the house in the fall of 1986. They had two sons, Tanner and Tyler, who were very young and Gwen found the screened-in porch the perfect place to allow them to play and know they were secure.

The Boyers turned part of the screened-in porch into a laundry room. They added central heat and air soon after moving into the house and replaced some of the ceiling fans and fixtures, but none of the fixtures were ornate or old.

Outside, a concrete driveway was poured and the porch was enlarged and had railing, spindles and trim added to it. The exterior of the home was painted in 1993.

On the inside, they added wallpaper, painted, changed all the push button electrical outlets to more modern ones, replaced carpet in some of the rooms, and removed a set of pocket doors and two single doors, which opened the house up more. The coal burning fireplace was made into gas log fireplaces and the chimney was removed when the roof was replaced in 1994. The Boyers also added a privacy fence that same year. The upstairs part of the house now has some flooring in it, but is still just an open space.

Gwen remembers a time when she answered a knock at the door in 1993 to find two older ladies standing on the porch. Mariam Arnold Haley and Ermine Arnold Peavy had returned to Leonard and wanted to see their old home. The sisters lived in Dallas at that time.

The house sits now with light pink paint on the outside and a beautiful blue roof. The added ornate spindles and trim make for a very lovely home.

Pictured, the original William Arnold house was bought in 1986 by Greg and Gwen Boyer, and this is the home (top) pictured right after they bought it and (bottom) several years later with the changes they had made.