

Campo Bello Estates Is Site Of Griffin Home

By Mary Brown
Citizen Homes Editor

Although Frank J. C. Griffin died in 1960, his spirit, love of and interest in Arizona history still live on in the home which he and his wife Gay bought 11 years ago when they first came to Tucson for his health.

Transplanted Hoosiers of Indiana, the Griffins made a lasting contribution to their adopted state soon after their arrival in Arizona. He spent a year reconnoitering the east side of the Santa Cruz river after poring over maps by early Spanish explorers showing that an ancient Pima village existed at one time across from the present Tubac. Later he and his wife donated land which they had acquired in Tubac for Arizona's first state park. The land was occupied by the old Tubac Presidio.

He also revived the Tubac Weekly Arizonian, first newspaper in the state, and published it as an historical quarterly. It was incorporated in 1957 and published in this form until his death. He also spearheaded the restoration of Tubac, the state's oldest town and the first capital of the Arizona territory.

The home, in Campo Bello Estates west of North Oracle Road, combines antiques brought from their Indiana home with Indian and Southwestern artifacts garnered

after their arrival here. Many of the early works of Ross Stefan, Arizona artist, who also played a prominent part in the restoration of Tubac, are seen on walls of the home.

Her father's interest in history was inherited by his younger daughter, Gwendolyn, who is working on her master's degree in that subject at the University of Arizona. Gwen hopes to continue on to a doctorate. Younger son Frank Jr. is a law student at the U of A. Mr. Griffin's older son, William, manages his father's engineering company in Southwestern Indiana of which Gay is still an officer. An older daughter, Patricia (Mrs. Robert Lee) lives in South Newton, Ind.

Gay, who worked closely with her husband on his research as well as on the Tubac, Arizonian, has been active in Arizona Press Women for some eight or nine years and has carried on his work in Tubac as an active member of the Santa Cruz Art Association.

In fact each February when the annual Art Festival is held, she opens up a little restaurant, El Presidito, which was part of the building housing the newspaper. This is a labor of love as far as Gay is concerned since it's practical-

ly impossible to staff it for the one week of the festival. Gay feels, however, that refreshments should be available for Festival visitors, so she rounds up family and friends and spends that week making sandwiches, brewing coffee, and serving pies and cakes.

The present home bears little resemblance to the building Mr. Griffin and Gay bought more than a decade ago.

The original structure was built of brick. They enlarged it with several additions of adobe. Three patio areas were added, as well as a dining room, an office, a foyer and a swimming pool.

History wasn't the only thing the Griffins learned when they first came to Arizona. After buying the house they ordered the pool installed. It was to be ready when they returned from Indiana that June. When the July rains came, the pool was so overrun with frogs, there wasn't any room for people. That's when the patio wall went up — to keep out the frogs.

Walls throughout the house are in adobe painted white in living areas, pink in the master bedroom, yellow in Gwen's room. Carpeting in the living room is gold and in the dining room and foyer on lower lev-

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als; it's in an avocado green tone. Ceilings in living areas are beamed. Centering the living room is a hand-carved teakwood sea table with small matching chairs which slip under the table. An antique cranberry hobnail oil lamp has been wired and now hangs from one of the ceiling beams.

Hallway going from the living room to the master bedroom and Gwen's bedroom is again carpeted in the avocado green tone. Cabinets on one wall are in a stacked design with doors which pull down and out rather than sideways.

Apparently when the children were small, they were rather vigorous in their handling of the doors because written on the inside of one in blue ink is this message from their father, "Don't glam towels. Stop trying to tear door off."

Since Frank Jr. was married about a year ago, his bedroom on the other end of the house has now been turned into a TV room and study. An antique desk in one corner is flanked by a swivel type chair which belonged to Mrs. Griffin's father when he started out in the blacksmith business.

A large office at that end of the house has desks where Gay and her husband did much of their work together. Files are filled with facts they garnered on Arizona history as well as old maps and other materials.

The patio to the north of the home off the living room is bordered by raised brick planters filled with flowers. Aluminum furniture has bright red canvas seats and backs. Wind bells suspended in the trees tinkle with the breeze. In this area Gay is nurturing several tomato plants along and looks forward to quite a crop.

Citrus trees are planted beyond the patio wall to the south on part of the 10-acre property and palo verde, eucalyptus and arbovitae trees are seen both in the patios and outside the wall.

But even with this avid interest in the Southwest, their former home hasn't been forgotten. On the hall going to the bedrooms water colors by Lester C. Nagley Sr., depicting scenes of Brown County, Indiana, are displayed.