

Mary E. Nicola, 1913-1995

GUERNSEY --- Funeral services for long-time Guernsey resident Mary E. Nicola, 81, were held Tuesday, May 23, 1995, at 10 a.m. at the United Presbyterian Church here, with Pastor Larry Athorn officiating. Interment followed at the Wheatland Cemetery, between her parents and her late husband, Ben E. Nicola. Mrs. Nicola died Tuesday, May 18, 1995 at the Platte County Memorial Hospital in Wheatland.

She was born June 1, 1913 in Cold Springs Harbor, Long Island, N.Y., the daughter of Daniel and Maude Emma Cornwall. When she was a young girl, her family moved to Mitchell, Neb. She remembered her brother, Dan, and her gathering potatoes that harvesters had left in the field just west of Mitchell, in order for her family to have food. Later, her family moved to Wheatland.

In Wheatland, during her high school years, she worked a late night shift in the laundry and tried to attend school during the day. When this was impossible, she quit school and went to work for Ben Nicola in Guernsey. Later she worked as a waitress and later as a cook in the cafe that was on Maple near the corner of Ninth Street. On July 16, 1935, she gave birth to her son, Charles R. Cornwall.

She soon went to work in Guernsey working for Ben and marrying him. Ben and Mary owned the Guernsey Grill and Ben's Bar. They also had the apartment house across from the park on South Dakota Avenue. During this time they were in partnership with Ben's brother, Roy, operating the Guernsey Hotel. Ben finally bought Roy's share when Roy moved to Torrington. Mary kept cooking, waitressing and keeping books for all of these businesses.

Mary and Ben sold the Guernsey Hotel to Joe Roberts in 1958. Prior to Ben's death in 1966, they had also sold the Grill and Bar. After Ben died, Mary went to work cooking for the various owners of the Grill, which in recent years has been owned by LaVerne Borthwick, and has been named the Trail Inn. Mary finally retired in the mid-1980s.

She is survived by her son, Chuck, and daughter-in-law, Thelma, both of Guernsey. Also surviving are two sisters, Edith (Mickey) Bullard and Helen (Peg) Merback and her husband, Herb, all of Wheatland, four grandchildren, Diana McCarty of Laramie, Dan Cornwall of Torrington, Cynthia Westerman and her husband, Jim, of Gillette, and Teresa Cornwall of Laramie, two great-grandsons, Scott and Nat McCarty of Laramie, two nephews, Pat Moore and his children and grandchildren and Tom Moore, and her niece, Sandra Stellpflug and her husband, Glen, and their children and grandchildren, and by her niece, Crystal Nicola. Mary is also survived by the Oregon Trail Bank staff, board of directors and shareholders, the members of her TOPS chapter, her many past employees and employers, business associates, neighbors and friends.

Serving as pallbearers were her nephews, Pat Moore and Tom Moore, grandsons Dan Cornwall and Jim Westerman, and great-grandsons Scott McCarty and Nat McCarty. Serving as honorary pallbearers were Glen Gorman, Chet Frederick, Tony Testolin, Chuck Frederick and Doug Frederick.

A memorial to the Guernsey Rescue Unit would be appreciated by the family. The Platte Funeral Chapel of Wheatland was in charge of the arrangements.