

# Half Dollar Squares

(The Ark-N-Taw Barn)

For more than a decade of the 70's and 80's the Ark-N-Taw Barn played host to a youth club who called themselves the "Half Dollar Squares". This Youth Club was a spinoff from the Silver Dollar Squares who also danced at the "Ark-N-Taw Barn". Edie and Arkie Parker Ark-N-Taw owners loved square dancing, and more importantly, they saw a real value in supporting our youth in square dancing, and were dedicated to that end. They believed that square dancing should be a family affair. They allowed the Half Dollars to dance in the barn on Thursday's for a measly charge of fifteen dollars a night, which I am sure barely covered the overhead for the use of the barn. The clubs callers were Gene and Sue Miller and Bill and Nancy Grove. Bob and Mary Pearson and Bob and Shirley Stock served as adult advisors to the club during that time period.

The Half Dollar Squares had some notable accomplishments. They had an average membership of more than one hundred youth. They were the first youth club to register one hundred percent of its members to Kansas City's 24th National Square Dance Convention and from this group several youth were a part of the 24th National's very successful Youth After Party, an event which was talked about for many years later. Several Half Dollar Members were also a part of the 24th National Exhibition Group which performed at the 23rd National in San Antonio Texas in 1974. They organized another exhibition in the early 70's and performed at a Heart of America Federation Festival. In 1978, they took over two squares to the National in Oklahoma City. From this group of youth who went on to become active adults to square dancing, many of the adult clubs enjoyed the benefit of added members from the youth organization, and some of the newer clubs who organized back then were created from some of those youth. The foresight, the commitment, and the dedication of two very special people Edie and Arkie Parker shall never be forgotten. They not only believed in square dancing they proved that belief by their very actions, and we shall be forever grateful.

*Article written by Bob & Shirley Stock September 16, 2012*