

Family competes

Rhineers, rodeo, and riding go together

By KENDACE BORRY
WILLOW STREET - Near Willow Street, in Lancaster County, on just about any evening you can find them out behind the house, in the small arena, working their horses and practicing their sport. The entire family gets into the act and riding, roping, and barrel racing will be practiced as each concentrates on bettering his skill.

This is the Mike Rhineer family, with members Mike and his wife, Darlene, and children, Tammy, 16, and Mike, Jr., 15. Their sport is rodeo and love of the cowboy's sport is evident in their endeavors.

It probably all started when Mike, Sr., started rodeoing about 14 or so years ago. A local boy, he related

that he had tried some other sports, but rodeoing appealed to him and he's been involved ever since. Then later the children came along.

"I thought maybe the kids would get involved in rodeo," Rhineer related. "But I didn't expect it to be this much at such a young age."

According to the Rhineers, Tammy and Mike, Jr., who were born exactly one year apart, became active with horses at an early age. They started with a small pony, and have been riding for nine years each. They were each 12 years of age when they competed in their first rodeo.

Why rodeo? "It just seemed interesting,"

Tammy stated, while Mike, Jr. nodded his head in agreement. "Horses are fun to be around, and we both really like riding, and we liked the idea of competing for money. But horses are also fun for trail riding and pleasure."

Barrel racing is the favorite event of Tammy, and this is her third year in the competition. Her horse is Traveler Ben, a five year old Reg. Quarterhorse gelding that she raised and trained herself.

She won her first championship barrel racing buckle in 1975, at age 14. The award was received for being the high money winner in the Eastern Shore Ropers Association. Series of Rodeo barrel racing. She repeated her winning of the award in 1976. In 1977, she also won a rodeo buckle for a barrel racing championship at the Hampton-Hanover Rodeo.

Calling herself an "outdoorsy" girl, the pert teenager told that money she wins is saved for future years. She hopes to train horses, especially barrel racers, and give riding lessons. She thinks of the possibilities of going to college, too.

Both Tammy and Mike, Jr. take care of their own horses, feeding them, brushing them, cleaning the stalls, and caring for the saddles and equipment. Weather permitting, they work their animals about two hours each day.

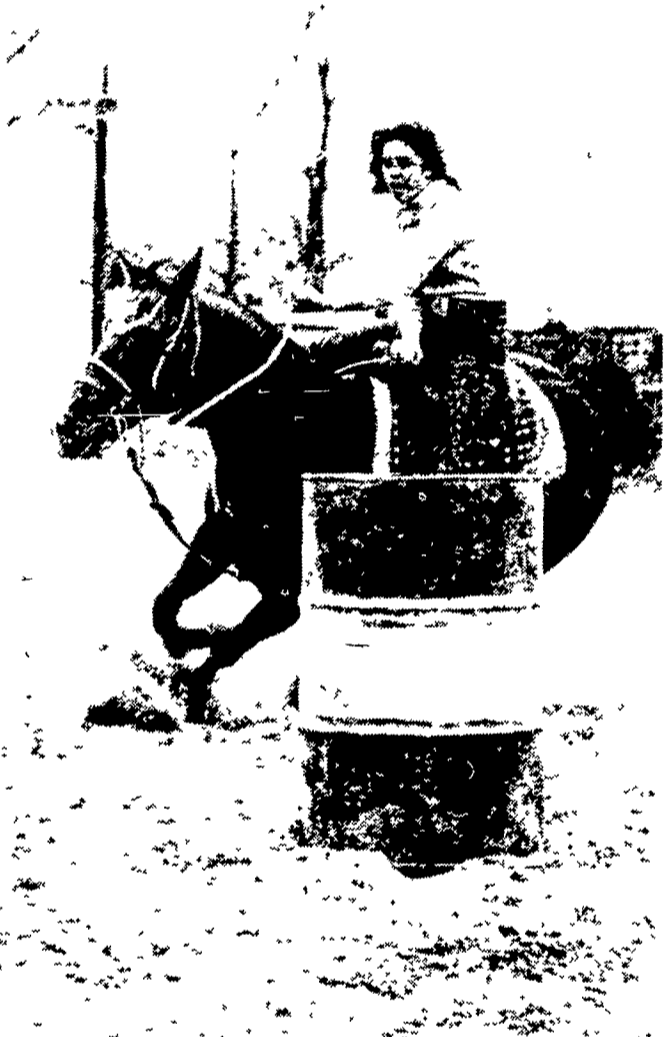
Besides the barrel racing, Tammy also ropes, team-ropes, and goat ties.

One highlight of Mike, Jr.'s life so far has been the winning of four championship belt buckles in one year—1977. Each were won at individual rodeos.

He team ropes, does breakaway calf roping, barrel races, goat ties, calf ropes, and also does trick roping. Both he and his father entered the American Rodeo Association finals last



The entire Rhineer family gathers down at the arena to work their horses. From left to right are Mike Rhineer and his wife Darlene on the horses, and Tammy and Mike Jr. in front.



Tammy Rhineer shows her winning form as she brings her horse around a barrel while practicing her racing skills.

year in the team roping and won the event.

Mike's horse is an 11 year old bay Reg. Quarterhorse. It was bought in Oklahoma and he has had it for five years.

This is the first year that Mike, Jr., has performed his trick roping in public—in fact his very first performance was given at the Keystone Rodeo held at The Buck a few weeks ago. But, according to his father, he has been working with ropes for a long time.

"He's been playing with ropes since he was about four years old," Rhineer explained. "But he really started working with tricks about three years ago."

Mike, Jr. explained. "One time at a rodeo I saw my dad's friend, Dick McCoy,

goofing around, doing tricks with a rope. I asked him how he did it and he taught me. He has shown me how to do all the tricks I know."

So now, in addition to competing at the rodeos, Mike, Jr., is also performing. He will appear in his white slacks and colored shirts at 15 different rodeos this Summer, entertaining the crowds with his variety of rope tricks.

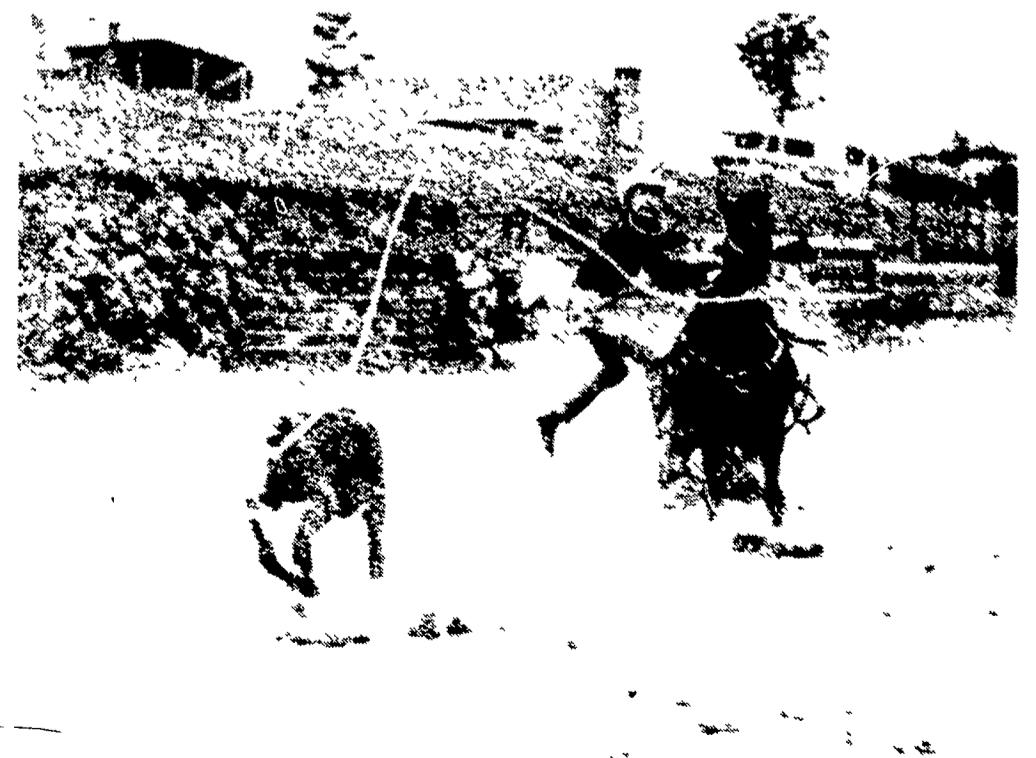
Mike's favorite event is team roping. This is his third year and he works with his dad and Dick McCoy, acting as the third partner.

"Rodeoing is different from other sports," Rhineer stated. "Everyone is on their own. There are no coaches, no teams, and the financing is your own. Winning is strictly on ability."

He went on to tell that he thinks the children have learned sportsmanship from rodeo and have made friends from all over the United States through their competing.

To help in improving their skills, motion picture films are taken of every event the family competes in. The handling of the camera is usually the job of Mrs. Rhineer. Then the film is soon developed and the family studies it to see where mistakes were made.

In the future, the family plans to continue their involvement with rodeo. Mike, Jr. wants to stick with his rodeoing and training and Tammy would like to have her own barrel racing school. At the present, her dad runs a once-a-year school on roping.



Calf roping is not something that is learned by just one practice. Here Mike, Jr. improves his techniques by roping at home in the arena.

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