

A library where silence is not the golden rule

By DIANE SANDS

Children will find more than whispers and books in the Farmington libraries. In special sections of the buildings off away from adults, there are friendly places for children to explore.

There are books and records, puppets and songs, animals to pet and even a tree house to climb. Silence is definitely not the golden rule.

Jill Locke, Farmington branch senior librarian and children's coordinator, explained that quiet story hours have been replaced with a full range of programs to help children develop basic skills.

"The goal of the library is to provide children with informational, educational, recreational and cultural activities," she said.

"Each child who visits the library is an individual with his or her own personality, interests and skills. We try to help the child as an individual, taking reading ability, motivation and interests into consideration."

MISS LOCKE came to the Farmington libraries five years ago after graduating from Brigham Young University, where she acquired a background in music and humanities, and earned a masters degree in library science.

"I was happy to find a position in Farmington because my family had lived here most of my childhood. I

knew it to be a friendly, supportive community," she said.

Miss Locke described the role of children's librarians as a reading advisor helping to select books, a liaison between schools and library, and as a person who can help the child develop creative skills through exposure to music, drama and art.

Parents are encouraged to bring children to the library at an early age. Some begin while still in the womb, accompanying mother and an older brother or sister. The initial program begins at about age two.

Free activities are offered where toddlers can enjoy music, puppets, movies and skits. No registration is required for the classes held on a bi-monthly schedule.

"Preschoolers usually can't sit still for the full 30 minutes of the program," Miss Locke said, "but we don't expect them to. We have them join in the activities, singing and marching about the room."

"In one skit, about a blue bird and a cat, half play the part of the bird and the other half take the part of the cat. They make appropriate sounds and movements, meowing or chirping their way through the story. It's an early introduction into drama," she said.

MOST OF THE children's programs are built around a story which introduces an activity, the librarian explained.



Jill Locke, (left) watches some of her library visitors in the room that was designed for those who can't sit still for a full 30 minutes. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

"I will begin a series in the spring called 'Crazy Concoctions' for children at the fourth and fifth grade levels. We will demonstrate how to make invisible ink. It won't be hard to find a story in which a detective solves a mystery involving invisible ink, and I can begin the program from there," she said.

Miss Locke claims the services a library offers depends on its philosophy. The children's library goals include development of educational and cultural skills, motor coordination, intellectual agility, group interaction and communication.

"If we cut back our services, our patrons would object strongly because they know what we can do," she said. "The staff enjoys the interaction with the children, but it does require a great deal of planning."

The expansion of the children's program began in 1972 when the Twelve Mile Branch opened, but the planning for the total expansion of library services began in the early 1950s.

"The fact that we were able to break ground for two new facilities in the same decade came about through 25 years of hard work by many dedicated members of the staff and community," she said.

In addition to literature and the activities, the children's section is a display center for the youngsters' creations, a continually changing art gallery of cardboard sculptures, wax

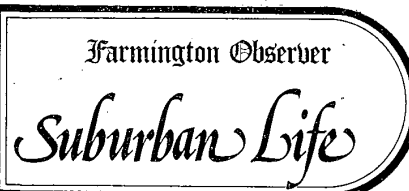


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drawings, foil art and macaroni collage.

There also are plants, stuffed animals, puzzles and real animals. Last month, there was a birthday party for two brother gerbils, Fuzzy Wuzzy and Squeaky. Two hamsters, Chopper and Patsy Possum also reside there. They are regular recipients of small presents from the children.

THE IDEA OF the children's tree house began with the building blueprints. Four structural supports are situated in the lower level of the children's room in the downtown branch and it was suggested that a castle be built around one of the poles. But a medieval castle did not fit in with the modern building and something repre-



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sentative of America was chosen in honor of the bicentennial.

Money for the existing house came from the Farmington Jaycee Auxiliary.

"Almost all the children who visit the tree house will curl up with a book or their private thoughts. They seem to like it because it is a place off limits to adults, a very private place just for them," Miss Locke said.

"Usually a toy is useful for only a short time. The child no longer sees it as a challenge and becomes bored with it. With today's prices, toys prove to be a big investment with a short life span," the librarian said.

"With a toy-lending library, a child can learn from the playing during a

Monday, February 14, 1977

several week check-out period, and then return it without expense."

THE STAFF OF the children's library has been requested to share their innovative programs with other librarians at the Michigan Library Association Convention to be held in April during National Library Week.

"We will demonstrate our Stone Soup activities for the children at the third and fourth grade level," she said.

"The program is a beginning course in 'coo' cooking (without stoves) using literature and recipes. We will share techniques in setting up this kind of program and how to tie it into a library theme. For example, the Raggedy Ann Salad and a story which would relate to the fictional character."

Tips offered to new genealogists

By PATRICIA HINSBERG

So you believe no skeletons skulk among the branches of your family tree? Tell that to genealogist Dr. Harold F. Powell, and he's likely to be skeptical.

"Everyone," says the Birmingham genealogist, "has an ancestor on the wrong side of the fence, whether religiously, economically, politically or otherwise."

Genealogy—the study of family ancestry—is, according to Powell, the third most popular hobby in the United States. It skyrocketed into the public eye through the book and television series "Roots," which detailed the results of author Alex Haley's

long search into his family background.

Powell, a former professor of educational psychology at Wayne State University, spoke Tuesday at Reuther Junior High School in Avon Township. His lecture was the first in Avon Township's third season of "Nine Tuesdays."

A prominent authority in genealogy, Powell has taught courses in the subject at Oakland University and starts a class next month at Oakland Community College. He teaches the research techniques through Birmingham's Center for Continuing Education.

He is an active member of the Oakland County Genealogical Society and

recently edited a book, "The Genealogy of French Families of the Detroit River Region," by Father Christian Denison.

POWELL, AS YOU might expect, digs avidly into the history of his own family, one branch of which he has traced as far back as 1150.

The gray-haired, bearded genealogist's involvement in the field dates back 30 years, when he journeyed via trolley from his home town Flint to the then-new Burton Historical Collection at the Detroit Public Library. He wanted to research whether his mother was due for an inheritance from property in New York City.

The inheritance never materialized,

but Burton's interest in his predecessors was ignited. Since his retirement several years ago from teaching, ancestry research has absorbed more and more of his time.

Through his careful digging, he's acquired many tips for fledgling genealogists. To start, he recommends first putting together a personal year-to-year history—your full name, those of immediate relatives, where you lived, worked, got married, and so on.

From there, start interviewing relatives, especially the older ones, about their parents, brothers and sisters—all details of family lineage.

"You'll find some of the stories you hear are not quite true," he notes. "For example, everyone claims a general in the family. But often you find that the 'general' in fact was of a much lower rank—maybe even a private—and that he didn't even spend that much time in the army, possibly even leaving before his discharge."

The "general" in Powell's family actually served under an assumed name, which suggests he was a "bounty-jumper." If so, he took money for serving in the place of some wealthy, drafted young man, deserted, then re-enlisted for money for someone else.

ANOTHER MYTH common to American families is that their original immigrant ancestors were "three brothers." "It's never one or two brothers, but always three."

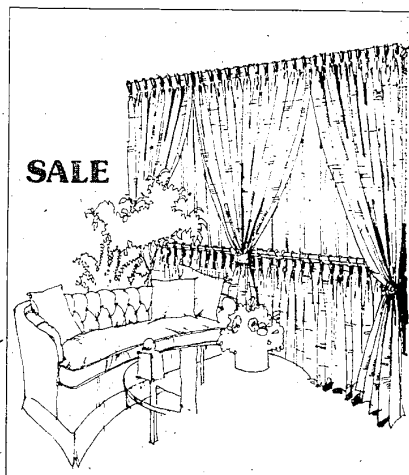
If this old saw is part of your family legend, Powell suggests you check it out carefully. Likely you'll find that, even if there really were three immigrant brothers, they probably came to the New World separately and at different times.

Don't assume your religion was handed down from your forefathers. Creed is one characteristic that zig and zag through the generations.

Countries are another genealogical booby trap, especially for those of European descent. National boundaries have changed drastically over time. If you know your ancestor's city or region, consult a history book to find out what country it was in.

No matter what your surname, don't assume it dates back hundreds of years. In the United States, surnames often were anglicized because record-keepers couldn't "read" foreign

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The Clumpetts visit

The Salt Company, a youth ministry of the Church of the Nazarene, will bring The Clumpetts to share a story they have to tell with residents in William Henry Community Center/Feb. 27. Meet the family of puppets are 14 young persons. The troupe has

a variety of programs which allow it to entertain nearly every situation and every age. The party at William Henry starts at 7 p.m. and is open to visitors. Telephone Clifford Green at 343-2222.