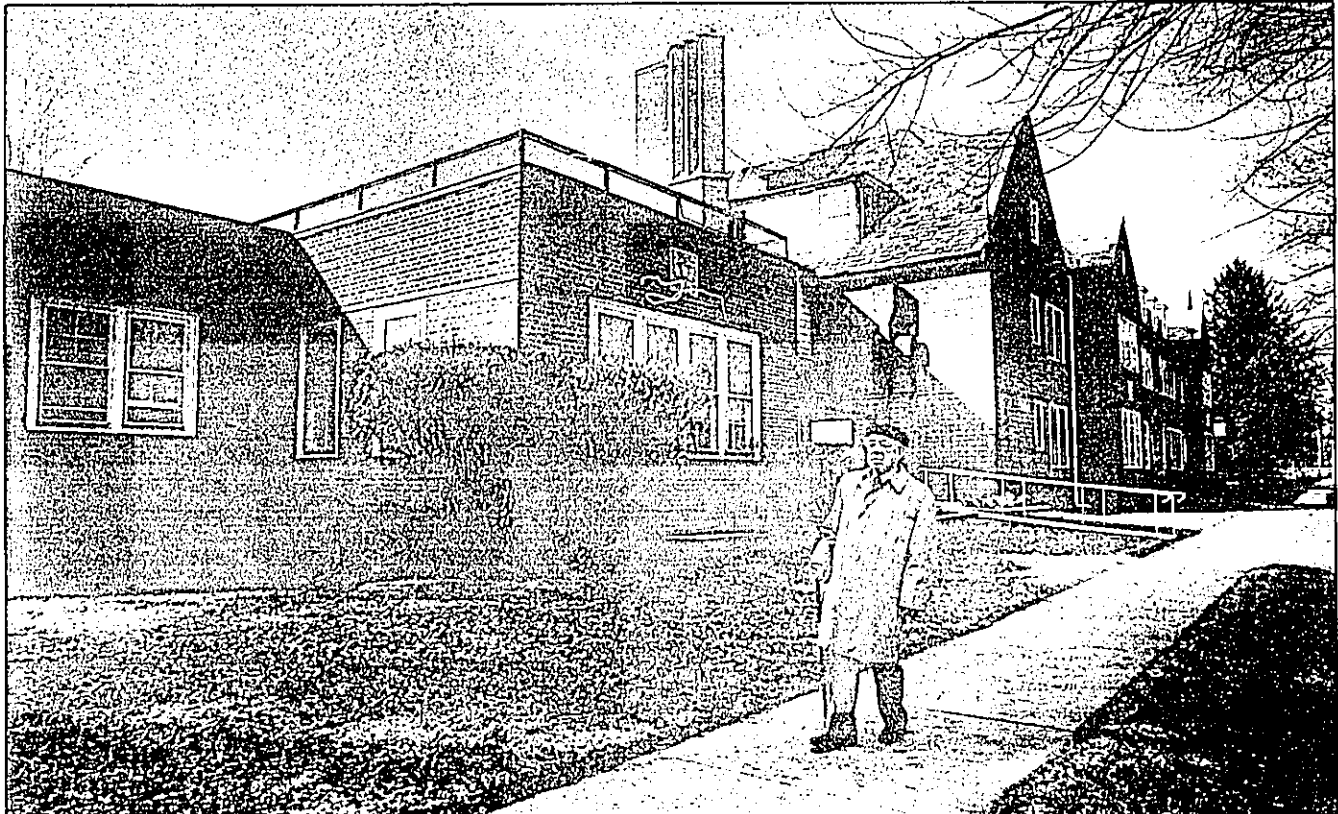




Joseph Fink's quick wit and love for weaving intricate stories make him a favorite among staff and residents.



Connie Pendleton finds time for a full-house crowd of women awaiting her expertise.

Community helps

By Diane Gale
staff writer

TAKE A walk on the grounds of the Farmington Nursing Home. Not only is it picturesque, but it's an example of a home with strong community support.

You're bound to run into Joseph Fink, tapping the sidewalks with his cane.

The staff jokes that Fink is 90, thinks he's 60 and wishes he were 30. The quick-witted veteran of three wars says: "This is my last battle."

He weaves a detailed story about meeting his wife through playwright Arthur Miller's father.

FINK SHUFFLES past a meeting hall, where residents pack in to see social studies and history movies shown by Clarenceville High School.

Down a hall decorated with murals and prints, a full-house crowd of women are primping in the beauty salon/barber shop.

Arts and crafts programs are being planned in another room.

A hallway showcase pays tribute to a resident with a picture and brief biography.

High school graduation ceremonies honor residents for a goal they waited a lifetime to earn. And Mercy High School students liven the building with regular visits.

MONEY IS A concern because "Medicaid doesn't begin to pay for the level of care that the community expects," administrator Ruth Farrell said.

"A nursing home can't survive on 100 percent Medicaid payments.

"Luckily we're in an area that we can attract private pay patients. You have to