



Sandy Olson is ready to give help and encouragement to those interested in tracing their ancestors.

(Staff photo by Bob Woodring)

Mormon bookstore finds roots

By SHERRY KAHAN

Oley and Sandy Olson are tree fanatics, but the trees they fancy are not the kind trees that grow tall and give shade.

The Olsons are genealogists who pour for hours over dusty records and ancient books to add roots, branches and leaves to their family trees.

Now as managers of a store called Olson's Family Tree in Garden City, they are in a position to help others research their antecedents.

The store, at 33147 Ford, one block west of Veroy, is privately owned by members of the Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints, and features books, records, tapes and jewelry of interest to those who follow the Mormon faith. In fact, it is the only retail store in Michigan that is Mormon-oriented, according to Mrs. Olson. It also is strong on materials of use to genealogists.

Members of this church feel deeply about their ancestors. Most genealogists are aware of the enormous

repository of international records in Salt Lake City collected by the Mormon Church.

"We are taught that a search for our ancestors is not just a hobby, but a linking up of families," said Mrs. Olson. "We believe in an eternal family."

NINE YEARS AGO, the Olsons gathered up paper and pens and started their own research.

"It gets into your blood, and you get hooked on it," said Mrs. Olson. "It's like looking for lost children. You're not going to stop until you find them. You don't want to quit until you have put a whole family together."

"We thoroughly enjoy it. We'll spend eight to nine hours in a county court house on a vacation searching for records while others are out on the beach. A fellow genealogist will understand that."

In her opinion, many people want to start their own foraging expedition into the past, but don't know how. So they are afraid to start.

"We can help them learn to get going," she said waving toward the shelves of genealogy books and record keeping apparatus around her. "This is a place to find the forms a person might need to begin learning the basic joy of searching out one's roots."

"We don't like to do the work for them. We just show them what is available for a beginner. Most people find the forms we carry useful for correlating family information. It's an organized way to keep research together."

She added that she and her husband often spend time with research enthusiasts, drawing on their own experiences to help others along the way.

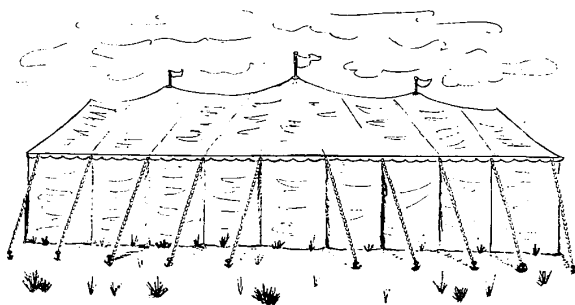
BEFORE THE OLSONS opened their store last May they were both on the staff of the Dearborn branch genealogical library of the Mormon Church, a place open to family researchers.

The library contains an index to the vast religious and civil information stored at the Salt Lake City center.

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