

Conn.. Boasts Unusual Library

By Cal Cameron

MIDDLETOWN, Conn. — On the northern edge of Middletown, Conn. is a library unlike any other in the entire country. It is visited by comparatively few people although it is in a heavily populated area. In it one finds few, if any of the books listed as the best sellers in the current book reviews.

Its books and pamphlets are devoted exclusively to matters of genealogy. Webster defines this as "an account of history of the descent of a person, family, or group from an ancestor or ancestors."

It is a mine of information for those who are interested in tracing their ancestry. Sometimes what one finds are not those things that one would care to have publicized; but if you want to know who and what your ancestors were, this is perhaps the best place in the country to dig out the information.

It is the brain child of Mr. A. Freemont Rider. For years he was the librarian at Wesleyan University. While there he became interested in this field.

After the death of his wife, Grace Godfrey Rider, he built this unique Godfrey Memorial Library as a memorial to her and her brother, General Stuart Godfrey who was killed with his entire staff

in an airplane accident near the close of World War II.

AT PRESENT there are over 5,000,000 cards in their tremendous card files. These are filed by the name of the individual and refer to sources of information concerning him or her. This vast index is continually being increased by research of two full time employees.

From this a published bound index is compiled four times annually and is available to anyone who cares to subscribe to it.

The library has over 12,000 books and pamphlets dealing exclusively with genealogy. These are of course continually being increased as those become available that are not already in the library.

Of course such books never had a wide circulation. Many of them are family histories, privately printed that never got into the book market in the first place.

As a result, they are extremely difficult to find and, in many cases, of prohibitive cost when one is located.

It is here that the library has devised a unique method of making them available to the average person who may be interested but unable to secure the book he is most desirous of having.

Years ago Mr. Rider conceived the idea of having such books photographed on microfilm, page by page, and then printed, as you would your snapshot film.

THIS IS ALL done in unbelievably small space so that it is possible to print as many as 48 pages on one side of a card only 3 x 5 inches in size. This, when printed, is called a micro-card. When put in a device with a powerful lense, it is projected in a size easily readable.

The cost of producing such cards is roughly about one cent per page, of the book so processed. Thus, a book that, if procurable, would cost well over \$50.00 say, can be bought from the library on micro-cards for a rather trifling sum.

Gift of
William Drury