

The First Fifty Years

an informal history of
the DETROIT ZOOLOGICAL PARK
and
the DETROIT ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Black rhinos, mother and calf. Breeding of endangered species is a prime function of the Zoo.

and two videotape decks. This resulted in the beginning of the production of in-service video training tapes and the documentation of important events, as well as utilization of the equipment as a cryptic surveillance device.

In addition to these gifts from the Society, the Ford Motor Co. donated a completely equipped Bronco to be utilized as the Chief Keeper's vehicle within the park.

Continually rising costs made it financially impossible to follow the past practice of utilizing Detroit police officers as a park security force, and in May of 1970, the Zoo began hiring outside security guards to patrol the park.

On October 23, 1970, the Zoo suffered from a bomb hoax. Pranksters telephoned the Zoo,

reporting there was a bomb hidden in the park, which necessitated clearing the Zoo at 11:15 in the morning. More than 500 Zoo visitors were forced to leave the grounds while the search was made for a nonexistent explosive.

The Zoo year ended on a rather depressing note when, in mid-November, youngsters tore down the barrier separating the public display area from the polar bear maternity wards and began shouting at the bears, beating on the bars, and creating a general rumpus. As a result, one of the mothers destroyed her newborn twins.

It appears that despite all efforts to control this sort of senseless vandalism, when a facility is visited by literally millions of people every