

Admiring the Christmas tree.

LANCASTER — The first Christmas trees in America were attributed to the celebrations of the Hessian soldiers during the American Revolution, says Greta C. Vario, Extension home economist with the Penn State Extension Service. This was the beginning in America but the tradition is founded in ancient times.

Before the Christian era the ancient Egyptians brought green date boughs into their homes to celebrate the winter solstice — the "rebirth" or "triumph of light over darkness."

Later the Romans observed the

Feast of Saturn, again at the winter solstice, by raising an evergreen bough to signify the "rebirth" of the sun.

Through the ancient history of other cultures, the bough has symbolized this new hope and it is the evolution of customs that forms the Christmas tree tradition.

The actual decorating of the Christmas tree and the bringing of it into our homes is attributed to the Germans with the first records appearing in about 1500. One reference from Germany in 1605 tells us that "At Christmas, fir trees are set up in the rooms and hung with roses cut from paper of

many colors, apples, wafers, spangle-gold, sugar, etc."

These Germans brought their tradition with them to America and diaries and accounts of the early 1800's tell of their use in eastern Pennsylvania. By the 1840's the tradition was fairly common in Pennsylvania. From Pennsylvania the fashion spread through the east and eventually back to England in 1841.

This year marks the celebration of a 125-year old tradition. In 1856 the first Christmas tree was displayed in the White House by President Franklin Pierce for a group of Washington Sunday School children.



Lancaster Co. Society 14

Lancaster County Society 14 met on Wednesday, December 9, at the home of Ada Rohrer.

Members answered roll call by telling their favorite Christmas decoration.

Marian Rowe, Miriam Leaman

and Jean Rowe presented a play entitled "For Whom the Chimes Ring," with recorded music and reading.

The next meeting will be on January 20 and members will be making cancer pads.

Lancaster Co. Society 22

Lancaster Society 22 held their Christmas meeting at the Lampeter Fire Hall.

Members answered roll call by telling their favorite way to spend Christmas day.

Four members from this society are going to attend the convention in Harrisburg, January 11 and 12.

The next meeting will be held at the home of Mrs. Paul Witmer, Millersville on January 19.

Lancaster Co. Society 29

Lancaster Society 29 met on Monday, December 7 at the home of Marty Bixler.

During the evening, the members divided into three groups and filled Thanksgiving food baskets with groceries and \$25 worth of meat. They then were delivered. The evening program also in-

cluded a cookie exchange. Each member brought two dozen cookies. Each member took a sample from each kind to take home.

The next meeting will be a fun night at the home of Sue Bixler, January 18 at 7:30 p.m.

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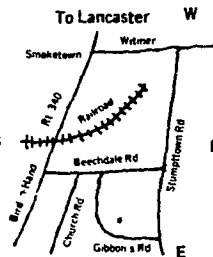
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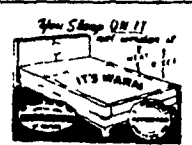
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