

Lancaster Farming *Antiques Center*

LINDA WILLIAMS

Bedford Co. Correspondent

BEDFORD (Bedford Co.) —

There are no artificial trees at the home of Gwen and Joan Perce on South Richard Street.

Instead the house is filled with the pungent scent of a nine-foot Christmas tree, freshly cut at the Charles Sellar's tree farm. The tree is so large, Gwen seeks the help of his neighbor Jim Davidson to complete the task.

Once the tree is in place, Gwen and Joan spend two days decorating and the tree graces the family dining room for the next month.

Decorations on the Perce evergreen date back to the late 1800s. Little paper dolls once belonged to Gwen's mother. The tree was a tradition started by Gwen's parents who cherished the holidays just as she still does.

"We lived in Washington, D.C.," Gwen, a semi-retired attorney, explains. "Every year my parents would buy a few more decorations, mostly glass balls. But, at times there were other ornaments such as a Santa on a hoop or a glass Santa."

"Santa Claus always did the decorating and I don't really know how my parents did it. I was always up at 5 a.m. and they didn't start decorating until I went to bed."

There was the year that the



Gwen and Joan at work decorating their nine-foot Christmas tree.

tree fell down which Gwen remembers most clearly although it was not a good Christmas. Unfortunately, many of the decorations were broken and the collection began again.

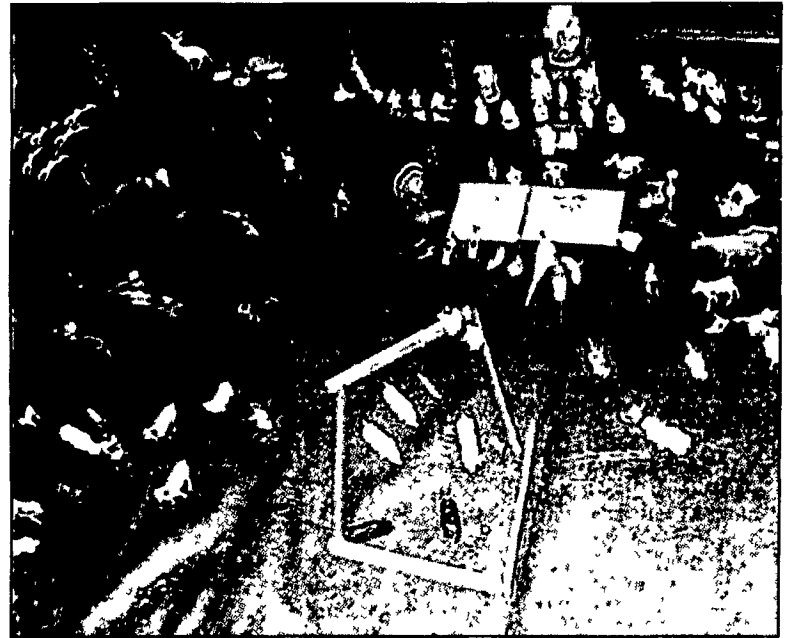
Dates of the majority of orna-

ments range from 1925 to 1936.

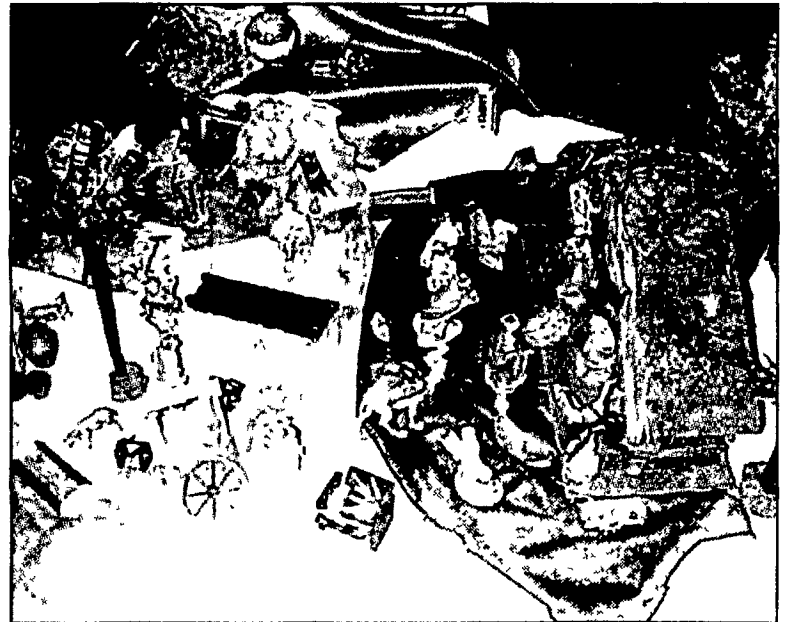
A few of the glass ball lost their luster when they were stored in the kitchen of the Washington Perce apartment and there was a natural gas stove. It caused the shiny glass to dull.



Santa on a hoop, which is at least 70 plus years, and a glass Santa of about the same vintage have a spot on the tree.



The miniature farm set was Gwen's as a small child in the late 1920s.



The new nativity set is a heirloom for tomorrow complete with barns, tents, and palm trees.

Under the tree is a farm set, a childhood present to Gwen, now in his 70's. A nativity set was recently added by his wife, Joan. Joan has also added a miniature winter village to the collection.

Avid travelers, both Gwen and Joan are always on the lookout for more unusual decorations and this year added some hanging nativity pieces.

"I love the reproduction glass ornaments," Gwen says. "But many of those are so expensive, they are out of my price range."

The tree is enjoyed by Joan's grandchildren, family and friends throughout the holidays. "But mostly," Gwen says, "We enjoy it ourselves."



A close up of the beautiful, old glass ornaments adorning the Perce tree.



The Christmas village was added by Joan.