

Decorating For Christmas

by Lynne Belluscio

Last Monday the Board of Trustees of the LeRoy Historical Society met at LeRoy House for their monthly meeting. After they adjourned, they trimmed the Christmas tree in the front window of LeRoy house. It's a real tree. No artificial tree for LeRoy House!

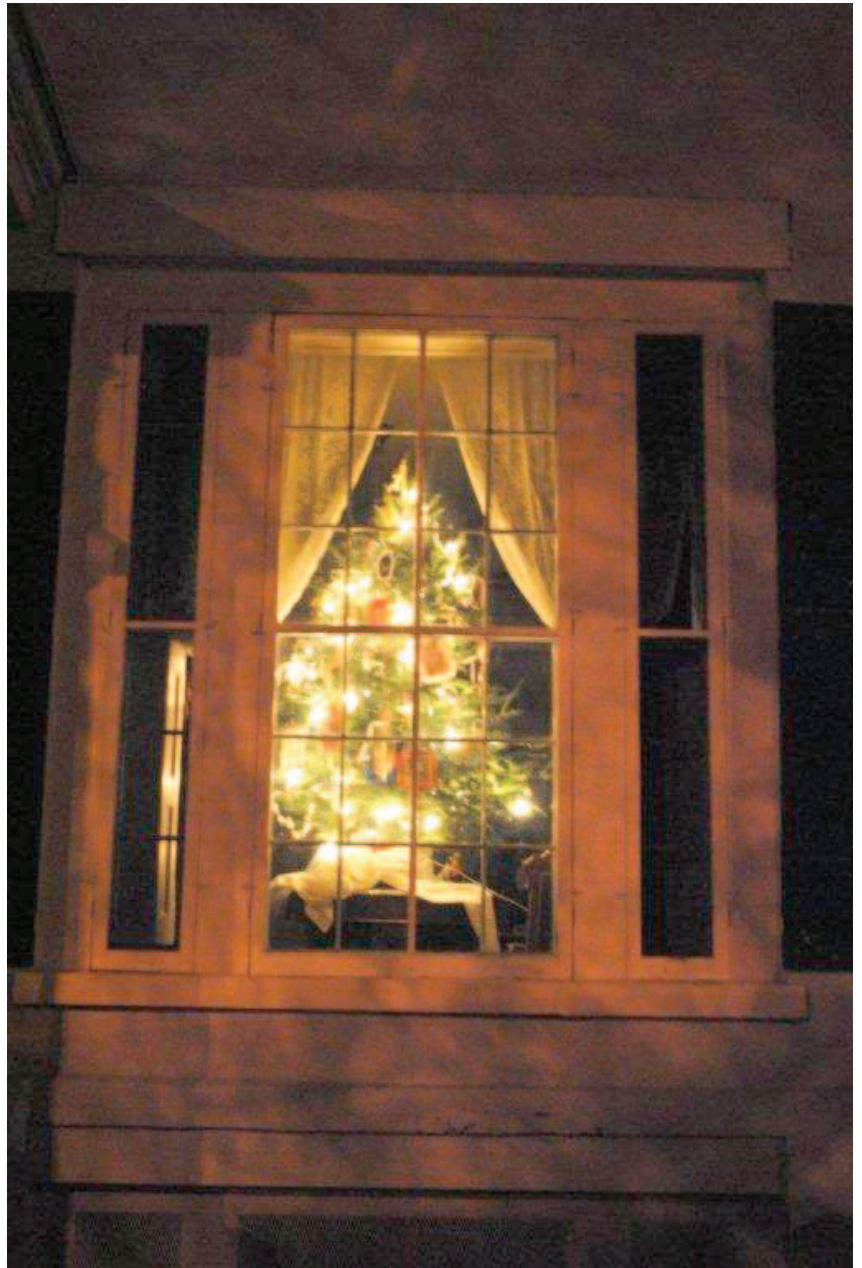
I cut it down a couple of days before, at McPherson's Orchard. I think it took four guys to get the little tree in the stand which conjures up the question, "How many men does it take to put a Christmas tree up?" While I was in California visiting my son and his family over Thanksgiving, I saw "Christmas decorating" trucks parked outside homes. My son told me that in California, you can hire someone to come in and decorate your house -- inside and out -- for Christmas.

After the tree was up, everyone helped decorate the tree with strings of popcorn and cranberries, paper chains, candles, candy canes, gingerbread cookies and all the hand-made ornaments. It was important that the tree be trimmed on Monday because the next morning, bright and early, the second grade classes began their "Toys and Games from an Old Fashioned Christmas" program.

They first gather in the back parlor and we talk a little about

Christmas a long time ago. Then they sing a verse of "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" and I open the huge parlor doors. "Ooooh and Ahhh" (I make them rehearse that before I open the doors.) And they see the tree for the first time. "Pretend the white lights are candles." Of course, it would be more dramatic at night, but it's been so dark and cloudy, that the lights really brighten up the window.

The kids are all alarmed to learn that the LeRoy family -- eight kids, probably didn't have a Christmas tree and probably didn't celebrate Christmas. The LeRoy family lived in the house from 1822 until 1837, but that was long before Christmas was celebrated around here. I don't have any clue as to when the first Christmas tree



**Historical Society Board of Trustees
and Trimmers of the Christmas Tree**

Back row, left to right: Sheila Furr; Joanne Graham, Secretary; Donna Barefoot; Sue Doemling, President; June Dusen, Treasurer; Teresa McMullen; Cheryl Fernaays; Anne Frew; front row left to right: Mike Perry, Vice President; Dan Cote; Bob Collette; Dan Diskin; Bruno DeFazio. (Absent: Helen Headley)

appeared in LeRoy House, but it may have been in the early 1900s.

I thought I had written about early Christmas trees in LeRoy, but I've searched through the last twenty five years of articles and I can't seem to find the article. I also remember coming across the mention of a "Christmas ladder" filled with presents that was put

up at one of the churches and I can't find that story. I'll have to put someone on the microfilm reader to see if they can find the reference in the *LeRoy Gazette* and you'll have to wait until next year for that story.

*Merry Christmas from the
Board of Trustees of the
LeRoy Historical Society*

Merry
Christmas!