

**The original documents are located in Box 35, folder “Christmas, 1974 - White House Tree” of the Sheila Weidenfeld Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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THE WASHINGTON POST

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Tuesday, Dec. 10, 1974

VIP

# A Theme of Thrift, Simplicity For The White House Tree

*By Maxine Cheshire*

Patchwork, the rural American art form that emphasized thrift and recycling, will be the "economy" theme of President and Mrs. Ford's Christmas decorations at the White House this year.

Handmade ornaments fashioned from snippets of silks

spaces" was a consultant on both the Rockefeller's apartment in Manhattan and their house in Maine.

The Rockefellers may decide to bring someone like Johnson down from New York to help with the designs. But Mrs. Ford's staff thinks the Rockefellers may be very impressed with the "undiscovered" talent of the Navy's decorator, Ken Murray.

UP-060

ADD 1 BETTY, WASHINGTON (UP-059)

MRS. FORD WILL ACCEPT TWO MICHIGAN-GROWN CHRISTMAS TREES FOR THE WHITE HOUSE YULETIDE SEASON ON FRIDAY.

ONE OF THE TREES IS A CONCOLOR FIR, 19 1/2 FEET TALL AND 12 FEET IN DIAMETER AT THE BASE, WHICH WILL BE PLACED IN THE BLUE ROOM AND WILL BE THE GLITTERING FOCAL POINT OF THE CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS IN THE EXECUTIVE MANSION.

THE TREE WAS CUT FROM THE FRONT YARD OF MRS. QUINA GARDNER OF MAYVILLE, MICH. MRS. GARDNER DONATED THE TREE TO EDWARD COLE OF MAYVILLE WHO IS THE NATIONAL GRAND CHAMPION GROWER FOR 1974.

COLE, HIS WIFE AND TWO DAUGHTERS, LINDA COLE, AND MRS. LAURI BATZER WILL DELIVER THE TREE TO THE NORTH PORTICO FRIDAY MORNING.

ALSO BEING DELIVERED IS A 14-FOOT BLUE SPRUCE FOR PRESIDENT AND MRS. FORD WHICH WILL BE PUT IN THE PRIVATE FAMILY QUARTERS OF THE WHITE HOUSE.

UPI 12-03 12:41 PES

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Residence Christmas Tree

The National Christmas Tree Growers' Association has selected Mr. Edward Cole, Route 1, Mayville, Michigan as the National Grand Champion Grower for 1974.

The tree is a concolor fir, 19 1/2 feet tall and 12 feet in diameter at the base.

Delivery to the White House will be made at 10:30 a.m. on Friday, December 6 by:

Mr. & Mrs. Edward Cole  
Linda Cole (daughter)  
Mrs. Laurie Batzer (daughter)

Mr. Cole is a former Sanilac County Agricultural Agent who now operates a 100 acre tree farm and teaches 8th Grade Science at Mayville, Michigan.

Mrs. Ouina Gardner, Mayville, Michigan -- The tree was actually cut from her front yard and she is donating it to Mr. Cole and the Association.

Mr. & Mrs. Donald Chard, Snover, Michigan.

The Chards, friends of the Coles, are furnishing the vehicle and trailer to transport the tree from Michigan to the White House. Mr. Chard operates a 500 acre agriculture farm and maintains a dairy herd of 60 cattle.

A 14 foot blue spruce for the President and Mrs. Ford is also being delivered. This tree will be placed in the West Hall of the family quarters.



September 10, 1974

Dear Mr. Cole:

Please accept our congratulations on being named winner of The National Christmas Tree Growers Association's annual competition.

Don McNeil has also informed us you have generously offered to provide the tree for the Blue Room of the White House. From past experience, we have determined certain basic requirements must be met due to the unique situation we have here.

If possible, we would like to have one of the following -- Blue Spruce, Engleman Spruce, Douglas Fir, Concolor Fir or a Fraser Fir.

We would hope you could provide us with a specimen tree, completely symmetrical, 20 feet tall.

As we need to cover the base of the tree and to provide for possible damage in transit, please send several large branches from a matching tree.

Press inquiries or questions relating to publicity should be referred to Mrs. Helen McCain Smith (202 - 456-2614).

We look forward to meeting you in December but, of course, we will be in contact several times prior. If you have any question, please call me (Area 202 - 456-2650).

Sincerely,

Rex Scouten  
Chief Usher

Mr. Edward Cole  
Route 1, Mayville, Michigan 48744

cc: Helen Smith ✓  
Don McNeil  
Irvin Williams



For immediate release  
Tuesday, Dec. 3, 1974

THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary to Mrs. Ford

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Mrs. Ford will accept the White House Christmas Tree as it arrives at the North Portico Friday, Dec. 6 at 10:30 a. m.

The tree is a concolor fir, 19 1/2 feet tall and 12 feet in diameter at the base. It will be placed in the center of the Blue Room.

The tree was grown in Michigan and was selected a year ago by the National Christmas Tree Growers' Association. Making the presentation to Mrs. Ford will be Edward Cole of Mayville, Mich., who is the National Grand Champion Grower for 1974.

Accompanying Mr. Cole will be his wife and two daughters, Linda Cole and Mrs. Laurie Batzer. Mr. Cole is a former Sanilac County Agricultural Agent who now operates a 100-acre tree farm and teaches eighth grade science at Mayville.

The tree was cut from the front yard of Mrs. Ouina Gardner, also of Mayville, who donated it to Mr. Cole and the Christmas Tree Growers' Association.

A 14-foot blue spruce for President and Mrs. Ford is also being delivered. The tree will be placed in the West Hall of the Family Quarters of the White House.

# # # #



For immediate release  
Friday, Dec. 6, 1974

THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary to Mrs. Ford

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Mrs. Ford will accept the White House Christmas Tree as it arrives at the South Portico Friday, Dec. 6 at 11:15 a.m.

The tree is a concolor fir, 19 1/2 feet tall and 12 feet in diameter at the base. It will be placed in the center of the Blue Room.

The tree was grown in Michigan and was selected a year ago by the National Christmas Tree Growers' Association. Making the presentation to Mrs. Ford will be Edward Cole of Mayville, Mich., who is the National Grand Champion Grower for 1974.

Accompanying Mr. Cole for the ceremony:

- Mr. Cole's wife and two daughters, Linda Cole and Mrs. Laurie Batzer
- Mrs. Ouina Gardner (The tree was cut from her front yard in Mayville and donated to Mr. Cole and the Christmas Tree Growers' Association).
- Sen. Robert Griffin (R-Michigan)
- Rep. J. Robert Traxler (D-Michigan)
- Mr. and Mrs. Donald Chard of Mayville, Mich., who furnished the vehicle for the trip.

A 14-foot blue spruce for President and Mrs. Ford is also being delivered. The tree will be placed in the West Hall of the Family Quarters of the White House.

# # # #

## **Christmas Tree Is Hit By Car at White House**

WASHINGTON, Dec. 6  
(UPI)—The state of Michigan presented the 1974 White House Christmas tree to Betty Ford today.

Less than an hour later, a congressman's aide ran into the tree with his automobile in the White House driveway. "Oh, the sun blinded me. Oh, yeah, I really like Christmas trees," said Wayne Hose of Arlington, Va., the driver who is an aide to Representative J. Robert Traxler, Democrat of Michigan. The giant fir tree was not damaged.

N.Y. Times 12/7/74  
p. 17





*Mrs. Ford shows White House tree.*



## President's Tree

The White House Christmas tree was delivered from Michigan yesterday and afterward was nearly damaged. First Lady Betty Ford received the 19-foot fir and said she was "thrilled to have a Michigan tree on our first Christmas in the White House." The Fords are from Michigan. After the ceremony a congressional aide hit the tip of the tree with his car. The tree was reinforced for its trip with a steel rod which shattered the right headlight of the car but protected the tree. Mrs. Ford said she and the President plan to hold "quite a few parties," during the pre-Christmas holiday season, but the first family plans to be skiing in Vail, Colo., on Christmas day.

## Truffle Prospects

Truffle lovers take heart. There's a consortium being formed in Northern California to sniff out the European fungus that gastronomes consider "the diamonds of the kitchen." The consortium, headed by Henry Trione, board chairman of the Wells Fargo Mortgage Co., and financier Ralph Stone, has acquired rights to 15,000 acres north of Santa Rosa, Calif., in rolling hills like those in Italy and France where truffles abound. "This could turn out to be a dud or a million-dollar industry," Trione says. Truffle prices vary, between about \$100 and \$200 a pound. Encouraged by reports that an Oregon botanist has discovered a handful of the aromatic delicacies, the consortium has ordered two sharp-snouted truffle hounds from Alba, Italy, at \$300 each.



—Star-News Photographer Joseph Silverman

Mrs. Ford, Edward Cole and Mrs. Oulina Gardner with one of the two White House Christmas trees after it arrived yesterday.

Fort Worth Star-Telegram 12/11/74 p. 1



—Associated Press Wirephoto

**WHITE HOUSE DECORATIONS** — Mrs. Betty Ford gives reporters a preview of the White House Christmas tree Tuesday. This year's decorations reflect Mrs. Ford's interest in American handicrafts.



—Associated Press WIREPHOTO

### Decorations Shown

Mrs. Betty Ford gives reporters a preview of the White House Christmas tree Tuesday. The decorations reflect her interests in American handicrafts and are keyed to an economy theme.

## First Lady to Catch Ford Under Mistletoe

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Betty Ford held her first news conference Tuesday since her operation for breast cancer. She feels fine — better than she had expected — and is watching for a chance to catch her husband under the mistletoe.

"I feel very well and I'm very busy," Mrs. Ford told reporters in the Blue Room, where the 19½ foot White House Christmas tree brushed the ceiling. "Oh, I feel fine! — than expected."

Had she suffered side effects from chemotherapy treatments following up her operation months ago? Mrs. Ford shook her head and remained a little worried

about it, but I have had no side effects."

She threw back her head and laughed when asked if she had caught President Ford under the mistletoe hanging in the doorways between the executive mansion's red, green and blue rooms.

"I have mistletoe upstairs but I haven't caught him there yet," she said, adding with a wink, "I catch him anywhere I can."

## Economy Theme at Tree F

WASHINGTON (AP) — Christmas decorations at the White House are old-fashioned this year and keyed to an economy theme. They feature handicrafts, patchwork quilts and handmade ornaments.

Betty Ford showed them off Tuesday, particularly the White House tree — a 19½-foot fir from Michigan laden with more than 2,000 ornaments.

Standing in the Blue Room, it features colored patchwork balls made by senior citizens from across the country and by women in Appalachia, handmade wooden toys, baskets filled with nuts and gumdrops, and 600 tiny mirrors.

A mile away at the Capitol, Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr., D-N.C., will push a button Monday to light Congress' official Christmas tree, a 41-foot fir from his state.

Ervin, who retires from Congress at the end of the year, will be joined in the lighting ceremony by two other North Carolina members, Republican Sen. Jesse Helms and Rep. Roy Taylor, a Democrat in whose district the tree grew.

The Capitol tree has been decorated with 5,000 plastic ornaments and 2,500 clear amber and twinkling lights. The lighting ceremony, at 4:15 p.m. CST, will be open to the public.

In an energy-saving move, the only Christmas lights in the White House are tiny white lights on the tree. They are estimated to equal the power of ten 100-watt bulbs.

They will be turned on only when the tree is on display, Mrs. Ford said.



AP Wirephoto

**BETTY FORD DISPLAYS THE WHITE HOUSE CHRISTMAS TREE**  
An "old-fashioned theme" and handmade ornaments are featured this year.

## 'Old-Fashioned' Christmas Planned in White House

By FRANCES LEWINE

WASHINGTON — (AP) — First Lady Betty Ford is emphasizing handmade Christmas ornaments, less-elaborate gifts and fewer tree lights as economy measures for this recession-time holiday.

The Fords aren't exactly practicing austerity. But there's far less glitter in their holiday decorations than at the White House during previous years.

When Mrs. Ford was asked what she wanted for Christmas, the President's wife told reporters Tuesday: "A good economy program for the country."

The Fords' Christmas decorations are all in place with an "old-fashioned

theme," featuring patchwork quilts, patchwork tree ornaments and the odor of 50 spice-filled sachets.

Eighty florists from 24 states came to arrange poinsettias in tree shapes, red ribboned wreaths in the windows, garlands of greens and decorations of ivy, holly and sprigs of mistletoe.

The main Christmas tree for the White House — a 13-foot fir from his home state of Michigan — stands in the Blue Room. It's decorated with handmade ornaments including 550 patchwork Christmas balls, 600 tiny mirrors, 50 carved wooden toys and 75 baskets filled with nuts and gumdrops.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Pres.

Rex

Orin Garner - donating  
tree -

Select Nat'l Grower -  
he has honor of  
bringing Xmas tree to  
grower -



Selected prior to  
Pres. Ford's inauguration.  
Had nothing to do with  
Pres. Ford becoming  
Pres.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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# Patching Up the Christmas Tree

By Dorothy McCardle

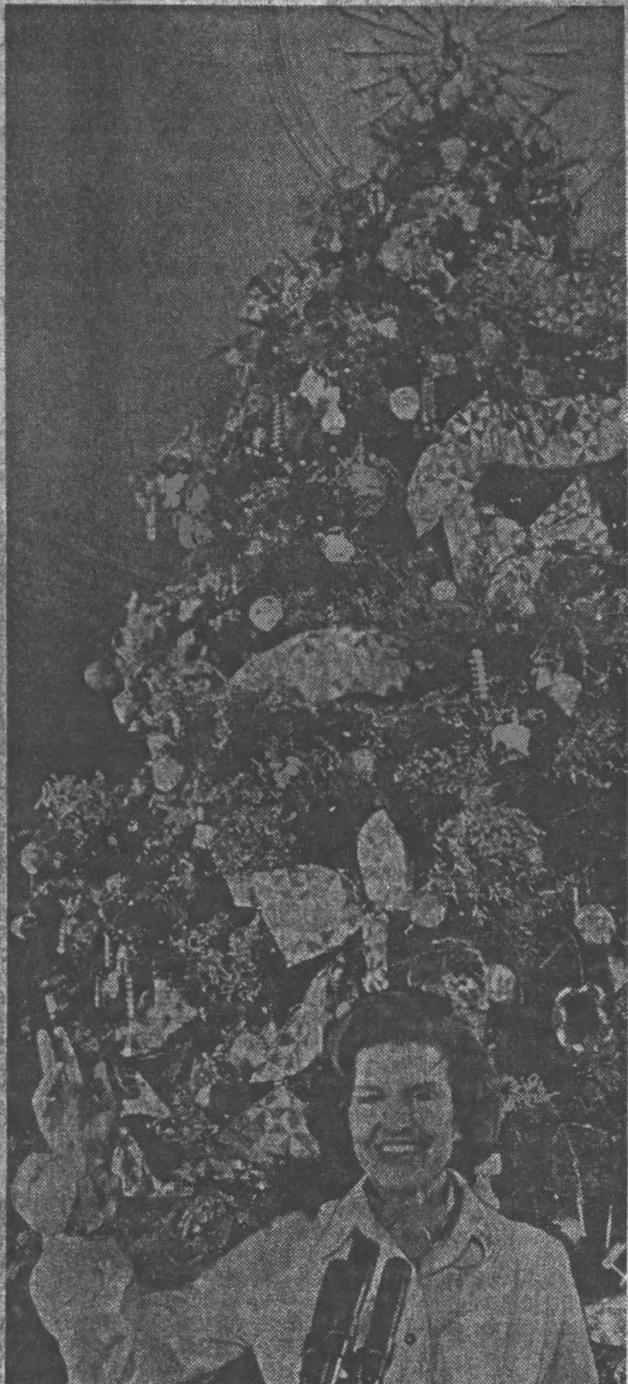
An old-fashioned Christmas at the White House this year has a decor that is as homey as apple pie.

Many of the decorations could be made at home out of scraps of old dresses or table cloths, according to First Lady Betty Ford.

She and her daughter, Susan, set the example by making a tree ornament from odds and ends of silk and lace found in their sewing basket. Mrs. Ford yesterday hung the ornament, with its hand-embroidered legend, "Betty Ford for Seventy-Four," on the tree in the Blue Room.

Mrs. Ford said she was having an old-fashioned Christmas because that is the kind the Ford family has always had. And, Mrs. Ford said, making the new ornaments gave jobs to the unemployed.

The 19-foot concolor fir, stationed in the middle of the Blue Room, was decorated during the weekend by Washington florist William Dove and his associates, New York interior designer Susan Hutchins and Celine Blanchard Mahler, of Bayside, N.Y., founder of the Quilters' Workshop and



# Patching Up the Blue Room Christmas Tree

DECOR, From CI

assembled without nails. After Christmas, Mrs. Ford will give these to deprived children.

There are 75 handmade wooden baskets, filled with nuts and gundrops.

There are 18 large patchwork bows or wreaths on the tree, made by Bea Starling of the Farm Women's

Cooperative Market in Bethesda.

The tree is encircled by a 30-foot garland of printed material, lined with blue moire which matches the shade of blue in the wallpaper and curtains of the Blue Room.

The only lights on the tree are tiny bee lights, which use very little current. The lights will be off when there are no visitors

In the room, according to Mrs. Ford.

Decor in other rooms is the more traditional red and green. In the four corners of the East Room and the State dining-room are evergreen trees laced with poinsettia blossoms of brilliant crimson. Huge green wreaths at the windows are hung with enormous red ribbons and bows.

In the entrance foyer are

figures of 11 angel heralds, fashioned from aluminum foil, sprayed with gold paint and made at the White House. The robes of the angels are all lined with the patchwork material.

One bow to inflation is the sugared fruit arrangement in the Green Room. The fruit is real, but the sugar is not. Salt has been used instead of the high priced sweetener.

**THE NUMBER YOU HAVE DIALED IS FLAT BROKE.** Ear has heard the incredible rumor that the telephone service, save for one line, in Mo Udall's campaign office was cut off for nonpayment. The figures mentioned went from \$800 to \$15,000. Nonsense, said the Udall office. The would-be president's men merely had to "renegotiate the deposit because of heavy usage." And land a heavy check within C & P's hot little hands within 24 hours. Done. And now the line's busy. Whom are they calling?

**THAT MEANS NOBODY LOVES ME AND IT'S WORM-EATING TIME AGAIN.** Some sorry Scrooge at the White House spent the entire time span of the White House Staff Christmas party figuring out who else hadn't been invited and sent the figures to Ear. The Domes-

tic Council was invited, the Council of Economic Advisers was invited, the Council on International Economic Policy was not invited, and only 40 percent of the National Security Council was "allowed to attend." Ear would have ignored all that and just *crashed*.

**AND NOBODY SUSPECTED US, EITHER.** Sonny Jurgensen and Billy Kilmer were having one of their cozy lit-

tle televised chats on Channel 9 the other night on everyone's favorite subject: gay athletes. "Everybody's got to have a private life," said Billy generously. "Of course, you and I never had that problem. And we were roommates!"

**THEATER NOTES FROM THE CONFUSION.** For some reason, *le tout Washington theatre* is having a rough time remembering the name of the

play at Arena. Some insist it's "The Time of Your Life," others think it's "For Once in Your Life," and a source close to one critic calls it "Having A Wonderful Time." Whatever it's called, everyone adores it. Jason Robards made his directorial debut last week with "Long Day's Journey Into Night," but he may have called in some last minute help. Ear hears someone who looks a great deal like Jose Quintero, the quint-essential director of things by Eugene O'Neill, was seen hovering around the Ken Cen during rehearsal time last week. James Kirkwood, who wrote the book for the big smash Big Apple show, "A Chorus Line" (That hasn't hit the sticks yet, wigs) has confessed that yes, it's true—he types standing up. "I'm more productive vertically," he said. With Ear, it's just the chair shortage.

Star  
12/22/75  
The Ear

UP-065

(WHITE HOUSE TREE)

WASHINGTON (UPI) -- THE STATE OF MICHIGAN PRESENTED BETTY FORD WITH THE 1974 WHITE HOUSE CHRISTMAS TREE FRIDAY. LESS THAN AN HOUR LATER A MICHIGAN CONGRESSMAN'S AIDE RAN INTO THE TREE WITH HIS AUTOMOBILE IN THE WHITE HOUSE DRIVEWAY.

"OH, THE SUN BLINDED ME. OH, YEAH, I REALLY LIKE CHRISTMAS TREES," SAID WAYNE HOSE OF ARLINGTON, VA., DRIVER OF THE CAR AND AN AIDE TO REP. J. ROBERT TRAXLER, D-MICH.

A QUICK INSPECTION INDICATED THE GIANT FIR TREE WAS NOT DAMAGED. THE TREE, KNOWN AS A "CONCOLOR FIR," WAS 19-1/2 FEET TALL AND 12 FEET ACROSS AT THE BOTTOM. AFTER THREE DAYS OF DECORATING, IT WILL BE ON DISPLAY IN THE CENTER OF THE WHITE HOUSE BLUE ROOM.

A DELEGATION HEADED BY TRAXLER AND SEN. ROBERT GRIFFIN, R-MICH., HAD JUST JOINED AMERICA'S "NATIONAL GRAND CHAMPION CHRISTMAS TREE GROWER," EDWARD COLE OF MAYVILLE, MICH., IN HANDING OVER THE TREE TO THE FIRST LADY AT THE WHITE HOUSE BACK SOUTH PORTICO.

MRS. FORD HAD STEPPED BACK INSIDE AND THE PRESIDENT WAS IN THE OVAL OFFICE SAYING GOODBY TO WEST GERMAN CHANCELLOR HELMUT SCHMIDT WHEN HOSE DROVE UP THE CURVED REAR DRIVEWAY TO PICK UP TRAXLER.

THE TREE LAY ON ITS SIDE ON A TRUCK, THE TIP JUTTING OUT INTO THE DRIVEWAY. A HALF-INCH THICK STEEL ROD HAD BEEN ATTACHED TO THE TRUNK TO PROTECT THE FIR AND HELP ITS MOVEMENT.

HOSE'S BLUE COUPE STRUCK THE TREE TIP, SMASHING THE VEHICLE'S RIGHT FRONT HEADLIGHT AND BENDING THE STEEL ROD.

HOSE JUMPED FROM THE CAR. NEWSMEN AND WHITE HOUSE OFFICIALS, WHO HAD MUSTERED DOWN THE DRIVEWAY FOR SCHMIDT'S DEPARTURE, CAME RUNNING, SIDESTEPPING THE BROKEN HEADLIGHT GLASS.

"HOSE REALLY LOVES CHRISTMAS TREES," TRAXLER SAID.

"YES, I'VE GOT A DAUGHTER AND WE JUST LOVE TREES," HOSE ADDED.

UPI 12-06 01:11 PES

...SIDES INSIST IT WAS A COINCIDENCE THAT EDWARD COLE OF MAYVILLE, MICH., WAS NAMED THE GRAND CHAMPION CHRISTMAS TREE GROWER BEFORE BERNARD FORD TOOK OFFICE AS INAUGURATED PRESIDENT. THE CONCOLIN FIR, 19 FEET TALL AND 12 FEET IN DIAMETER, WILL BE DELIVERED TO THE WHITE HOUSE FRIDAY MORNING. IT WILL BE PLACED IN THE BLUE ROOM.

UPI 12-13 1974 ALL



Mrs. Ford shows White House tree.

10 THE TIMES Wednesday, December 11, 1974

First Lady Betty Ford and her daughter Susan made an ornament for the White House Christmas tree from "scraps out of the sewing basket" and some bedroom lace. Mrs. Ford autographed the bauble.



**Christmas Tree Is Hit By Car at White House**

WASHINGTON, Dec. 6 (UPI)—The state of Michigan presented the 1974 White House Christmas tree to Betty Ford today.

Less than an hour later, a congressman's aide ran into the tree with his automobile in the White House driveway. "Oh, the sun blinded me. Oh, yeah, I really like Christmas trees," said Wayne Hose of Arlington, Va., the driver who is an aide to Representative J. Robert Traxler, Democrat of Michigan. The giant fir tree was not damaged.

N.Y. Times 12/7/74 p. 17

N.Y. Daily News 11/14/74

**Ford Gets Mich. Tree**

Washington, Dec. 3 (AP)—The White House Christmas tree is due to arrive on Friday and will be decorated over the weekend for the holiday season. It is a 19-foot-tall fir that comes from the Fords' home state of Michigan.

It was a coincidence, though, that the tree was selected more than a year ago—before Ford was even considered for the Presidency—by the National Christmas Tree Growers as their National Grand Champion for 1974. The tree was grown by Edward Cole of Mayville, Mich.

p. 18



READY FOR SANTA—First Lady Betty Ford stands before the White House Christmas tree, a 19 1/2-foot fir featuring homemade ornaments, as she gives newsmen a preview in the Blue Room Tuesday. She donned the old-fashioned Christmas is traditional with her family.

Dallas Times-Herald 12/17/74 p. 1