

Warren County Christmas Tree Farm Earns Presidential Status

By Henry M. Holden

Did you ever wonder where the President and Vice President of the United States get their Christmas trees? Well lately it's from Wyckoff Farms in Belvidere. But it didn't start out that way.

In 1839, Simon Wyckoff purchased 172 acres of property in what is now known as White Township, Warren County. For the next four generations, the farm was entirely self-sufficient, producing milk, livestock and grain. This provided food and clothing for the family. This acreage has remained in the family and is now Wyckoff's Christmas Tree Farm, LLC.

In 1958, John W. Wyckoff Sr. (5th generation) began planting Christmas trees along with his 14 year old son, John W. Jr. "My grandfather, and father planted the first trees," said John Wyckoff, Jr.

"They planted about 1,000 Norway Spruce seedlings. Now the annual plantings include pine and fir and we have about 65,000 trees in production, of which at least 5,000 are ready for harvest."

In 1967, the first eight trees were harvested. Two were used to celebrate Christmas in the two Wyckoff family homes on the farm, and six trees were sold for five dollars each. Display of the trees for sale consisted of leaning them against a cattle pasture fence along the road for those passing by to see.

In 1977, John Jr. started his own landscaping business. Soon, father and son decided to become full time Christmas Tree farmers and expanded the business to a cut your own operation.

Currently, there are sixty-five acres of Christmas trees in production and overseen by



John Jr. who now offers a choice of 'cut your own, or fresh cut trees'.

Quality has always been the standard for a Wyckoff Christmas Tree. The trees have been named 2013 National Grand Champion, and New Jersey Grand Champion eleven times. In 2013, a New Jersey Blue Spruce was selected as a White House Christmas Tree and it stood in the White House Blue Room that holiday season.

This year, a Blue Spruce grown by Wyckoff's Christmas Tree Farm was named Reserve Grand Champion of the National Christmas Tree Association's annual competition. The Reserve Champion farmer traditionally provides a Christmas tree for the Vice President. A Christmas tree grown by Wyckoff's will be displayed at Vice President Mike Pence's residence this year.

"We've only entered this contest twice and won a place each year, so I think we're doing pretty good," said Wyckoff.

The Wyckoff family has provided thousands of families with memories that will last a lifetime. "We welcome everyone to visit our farm," said Wyckoff. "Whether it is your first time, or you have been here ten, twenty or thirty plus years as many have, you will still enjoy your visit."

"At Wyckoff's, we are anticipating a great cut your own Christmas Tree season," said Wyckoff. "The Christmas spirit will be in full swing on the traditional opening day, Black Friday (Nov. 29) with a selection of over 5,000 cut your own trees. Fresh cut trees, beautiful wreaths, grave blankets, white pine roping and more items are also available."

For your convenience, Wyckoff provides hand saws although you may bring your own. Power saws are not permitted. For more information visit www.wyckoffs.com.