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Christmas is one of the most beloved holidays of the year, bringing many exciting traditions along with it. Rainbow lights blinking on the house, presents to unwrap in the morning, snowmen chilling in the yard, and a decorated Christmas tree are just a few of the fun holiday festivities. But has anyone ever stopped to wonder how the Christmas tree became a tradition? The Christmas tree originated in a whole different region, in Germany during the 16th century. German Christians who celebrated the holiday began bringing decorated trees in their homes to place on display. Having a tree in their house also reminded them of the warm air and green plants ahead. When the Christmas tree was first brought to America by German settlers in Pennsylvania during the 1830's, how it was viewed was frowned upon by most Americans. The second governor, William Bradford, and an influential body, Oliver Cromwell, preached against the idea that it was evil and suggested it was a form of celebration and joy. Though the ideas were spread, Americans were

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still offended by the decorations. At one point Christmas decorations were actually banned by the Massachusetts government. In the late 1800s, the royal family of Europe was drawn standing next to a big, beautiful Christmas tree. From this sketch, the idea of the Christmas tree in Europe began to change and become less evil. By the 1890s Christmas trees were becoming more normalized and people even began decorating them with elaborate ornaments and lights. Americans quickly became fond of trees

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that reached from floor to ceiling, the bigger the better. Having a tree in town squares became popular as well, bringing a more festive atmosphere to the town. Many new traditions were brought to America from other countries and regions quickly too, such as the advent calendar, festive games, and tinsel. Danielle Wilke (10) from Palmer Ridge High School, answered a few questions about her tree, and what it means to her. “We usually put it up a little after Thanksgiving and

decorate it with ornaments from our grandparents and stuff when we get together. Usually my little brother will put the star on top as well.” Cidney Moore (10) also has a unique holiday tradition with her tree. “I put my Christmas tree up right after Thanksgiving dinner on the day of thanksgiving, and then I decorate it with whatever decorations we have left from last year. I also like to sleep under my Christmas tree either the night before Christmas Eve or Christmas Eve night.” Christmas celebrations can change from person to person but they all have one thing in common, fun!

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# *Christmas*

By Julia Reish