

ONE STAR

Words by Ray Romine Music by Trella H. Romine

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These are four original participants in a local annual Advent get-together that has become traditional with Trella Romine and friends. The yearly Christmas parties have been held since 1938 at Mrs. Romine's home. The first as

well as the most recent of the celebrations was attended by (l. to r.) Mary Jordan, recently retired from the accounting department of Arco Steel Corp.; Mrs. Romine, president of Hemmerly's Flowers and Gifts, Inc.;

Mary Rockwell, until retirement of the payroll department of Tecumseh Products Co., Marion Division, and Bernard Brooks, Harding High School printing instructor. (Star Photo by Kathy Devaney)

Annual Get-Together Advent Party Part Of Christmas

By RUTH GREEN
Star Staff Writer

"This, to me, is Christmas," said Trella Romine while discussing an annual get-together she and a close circle of friends have enjoyed during the pre-Christmas season each of the past 39 years.

The Advent parties started "the year I first had my own home," Mrs. Romine said.

That year about five friends met with her and her late husband, Ray Romine, in their Greenwood Street residence.

"We sang Christmas carols to the accompaniment of an old pump organ I just had inherited from my grandmother's estate."

Since the Depression still lingered over the land, only cookies were served as refreshment, "and we always have followed that 'light lunch' tradition," the hostess said.

But, this year when about 32 friends got together for the annual event at Terradise, Mrs. Romine's country home, she started a new tradition and served mulled cider with the lunch.

And there were two sets of fourth generation celebrants on hand this year for the carol singing, lighting of Advent candles and just being together.

Five-month-old Joseph See, as the

youngest guest present, was given the opportunity to light the first candle. His great-grandmother, Mary Jordan, also was on hand, as she has been since the original gathering in 1938.

So was his grandmother, Marilee Augenstein, who was three years old when she first participated in the Advent event.

So was his mother, Robyn See, and his two-year-old sister, Jenni.

Joseph's aunt and Mrs. Augenstein's other daughter, Brenda Conant, is another annual party attendee. With her this year was her two-year-old son Christopher.

"Youngest to eldest, in that order, annually light the candles, as has been the custom for 39 years."

How did the Advent parties originate?

"I read an article in the former 'Woman's Home Companion' magazine describing a tradition of the Old South in which all persons in plantation communities got together the fourth Sunday of Advent for carol sings," Mrs. Romine said.

Harding High School printing teacher Bernard Brooks, another original celebrant, prepared a book of songs, titled it "Christmas at Terradise" and party-goers annually sing the book straight through.

Among the songs, along with traditional Christmas tunes, are several whose lyrics were written by the late Ray Romine, who had over 300 poems published before his death in 1954.

Mrs. Romine last year composed music to "One Star" lyrics written by her husband and it was sung at this year's party. Others of Romine's poems are sung to established tunes.

Originally, the parties were held on all four Advent Sundays.

"Those were the days when our schedules were less hectic," Mrs. Romine said.

Now, the group usually meets on the third Sunday of Advent.

"During World War II years, nearly all those coming were women because the men all were in the Armed Forces," Mrs. Romine said.

The hostess never knows how many to expect, but once someone is invited and attends, he or she has an open invitation to return.

This year, everyone was asked to sign a paper, signifying the first year he or she can remember attending the yearly party.

From 1938 on, there were many 1950s, 60s and 70s represented, Trella Romine said.