EACH CHRISTMAS — Mrs. M. M. Kimbergough carries on a beloved family tradition begun by her father. The Christmas tree which she builds each year has at its center a handbuilt creche with the tree branches parted as though to reveal the real meaning of the Christmas season.

Mrs. Kimbergough Perpetuates Family Christmas Tradition

Editor's Note: For the 10th year Mrs. M. M. Kimbergough, the former Carita Moss, has built the family Christmas tree around a creche built originally by her father for his mother. The creche was taken with him into his own family and he taught his daughter Carita to help him. After his death she took up the annual project for her own children. No part of the creche is changed. The sand is stored each year and great care is used with the lily — leaf roof which can't be replaced. Even the stick in the shepherd's hand is the original. The grass background was woven from grass growing in Mouton Gardens at the time it first opened. The children of Mrs. Mouton are Mrs. Ronnie Landry of Miami, Fla.; a 13-year-old son, Jay and a five-year-old son, Matt. Her mother Mrs. J. J. Mouton also lives with her.

By Mario Mamasakis

Contrary to what the poem says, a man can make a tree — a lovely tree — but, perhaps, because of what this particular tree symbolizes, he receives a special inspiration.

For 20 years James J. Moss Sr. has been making the family Christmas tree, and because of its significance he has always wanted it to be a thing of beauty, which would dominate the scene and set the perfect note for such a Holy day.

First of all, Moss sets about finding not one but two trees. One is obtained for its height. The other is selected to provide the branches. Moss says he started making the trees, because he could never find a Christmas tree with a perfect shape. So he built one to provide the branches. He says just that and that the branches from this tree are mailed to the first one to give the right shape.

A most realistic manger with the nativity scene is set about one third of the way up the tree. The manger is made from the case of an old gramophone speaker. The front of it is faced with dried okra stalks to give it a realistic straw-like appearance.

The roof is covered with dried leaves. The interior floor is covered with sand and the inside walls also have the straw-like appearance. The figure of the Christchild, Joseph, Mary, the sheep, two camels and the three wise men are all there to give a most authentic appearance.

Each icle is hung individually by the tree. Each Christmas tree light is individually wired and put at just the right spot. Moss plans where the ornaments will be located on the tree before he begins actual operation. He begins work on the tree this year at 12 noon on Saturday and was still at it at 2 a.m. Sunday. He always lets the children of the family finish hanging the icles after he has started from the top and some about two-thirds way down on the 15-foot tree.

The gifts, arranged around the base, are the final touches to the trimmings of the Christmas tree in the Moss home. When completed, it is a work of art carrying a special significance for all members of the Moss family, who have come to regard the tree as a highlight of the Christmas season and a special contribution to the family's happiness at Christmas.

Follows is the story written in 1956 by Mario Mamasakis giving the story of the family's unique tradition.