

9-18-68



Marking the 21st birthday of a future county Christmas tree yesterday were Supervisors Robert Burton, left, Tom Black, Russ McCallie, and Vincent Locatelli, right. Jacques Aboudara, second from right, helped place a plaque at the tree's base which commemorates Aboudara's planting of the tree in 1947. Aboudara offered to bear the expense of decorating the tree each year for the county, just as he used to decorate it for his family when he lived on Ocean Street.

21-Year-Old Redwood Now County's Official Yule Tree

A "cute" child of nature dressed up each year as a Christmas tree for an old Santa Cruz family on Ocean Street has grown up into a 21-year-old redwood.

Along with the tree's majority comes a new responsibility—as Christmas tree for the County Center at Ocean and Water Streets.

Jacques I. Aboudara promised yesterday to have the tree decorated each year as long as county supervisors want it so.

Aboudara, 72, planted the tree accidentally in 1947 when he dumped a load of redwood com-

post from Groveland in Sonoma County on his lawn at 117 Ocean Street. The sturdy little tree was quickly adopted as the family's Christmas tree as it grew.

The tree survived such youthful dangers as the 1955 flood, and the clearing of the Aboudara home as part of a San Lorenzo river area redevelopment project a few years later. It was one of few trees left when the county built its new central offices there.

The Aboudara home was moved to 1140 North Branciforte Avenue because of rede-

velopment, but Aboudara still kept a fatherly watch over the tree he had nurtured.

Yesterday, the county officially recognized his guardianship with a bronze plaque set at the tree's base. It is the first of many plaques to be set beside trees donated by individuals to the county center.

Aboudara looked up at his once-tiny tree, now about 35 feet high and 24 inches in diameter at its base. "It's a fine, strong tree," he said proudly. "I hope it stays here a long time."