

Put \$250,000 Village in Your Stocking This Year

ITEM AT DAYTON'S

By BEVERLY KEES

Minneapolis Star Staff Writer

Interested in a \$250,000 Dickens Village Christmas gift for the man who has everything?

Dayton's is selling one.

In the meantime, the department store is preparing for the Monday opening of its 1968 Christmas attraction: "Under the Giant Christmas Tree."

Dickens Village was the store's 1966 and 1967 8th floor auditorium production which, on its busiest day, drew 34,000 people.

Part of the \$250,000 cost was a large collection of antiques appropriate to the Dickensian mood.

Dayton's is trying to sell the village to another store or anyone else interested, said Richard Overby, merchandise presentation manager.

"For the person who has everything," suggested John B. Gantert, events director.

Public Sale

If no one buyer can be found, Gantert said, the village will be sold bit by bit at a public sale.

Overby, Gantert and Leonard Shimota, display design manager, were standing around like new fathers at the press preview of "Under the Giant Christmas Tree" Wednesday evening.

They started working on the idea last January and only last night slapped the final parts in place.

"This year we decided to

give it back to the children," Shimota said.

All of the animated units of the attraction are designed to look like massive Christmas packages under an oversized tree.

Tree boughs with 60,000 18-inch needles extend across the 80-foot ceiling.

Ferris Wheel

The "packages" include a ferris wheel; merry-go-round; animated "Raggedy Ann and the Marzipan" rock band; "infinity boxes" with "Through the Looking Glass" figures reflected an endless number of times in mirrors; Mother Goose Theater with 20 scenes based on the famous rhymes, and a black-light presentation of the 12 days of Christmas.

Santa Claus will be install-

ed in a cardboard castle Monday.

The idea of the production is "to get children involved," Shimota said.

"It's not like looking into a store window," Overby added. "The kids are under a big tree and they can walk into things and touch things and ride some things."

Gantert noted that the three men had personally tried the rides "in the interest of science."

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Associated Press

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