

# LASCA LEAVES

*Quarterly Journal of the*

LOS ANGELES COUNTY ARBORETUM  
STATE and

A CALIFORNIA ARBORETUM FOUNDATION, INC. PUBLICATION

R. J. SEIBERT, *Editor*

VOL. I

APRIL, 1951

No. 3 *D*

## TO MAKE OUR LAND MORE BEAUTIFUL

JOHN ANSON FORD

(SUPERVISOR, LOS ANGELES COUNTY)

The beginnings of an institution, or project, are relatively unimportant except as they may help more clearly to define the nature of the undertaking and measure its progress.

I recall with gratification the remarks made to me three or four years ago by Dr. Samuel Ayres, Jr., regarding the unrealized opportunities possessed by Southern California, and Los Angeles County in particular, having to do with a more diversified horticulture. Particularly do I remember Dr. Ayres' eloquent emphasis on the advantages, both aesthetic and commercial, that our region might realize by the cultivation of more varieties of flowering trees and shrubs. His own charming La Cañada estate of three acres and his beautiful collection of colored slides started my mind searching for some practical implementation of this idea. I knew that Dr. Ayres was not alone in being aware of our unrealized opportunities.

How could the government of our great Los Angeles County properly participate in this intriguing project? I proposed to Dr. Ayres that some government-citizen relationship be set up, similar to that which obtains with respect to the Hollywood Bowl. That wonderful County-owned property is under a long term lease to a non-profit association, composed of citizens of musical taste and interests, who desire to enrich our community life with more and better music by making it available at low cost to the rank and file. I had seen that cultural experiment pioneered from small beginnings to world-wide recognition. I told Dr. Ayres and other horticulturists with whom he consulted that a similar pattern might be employed in establishing an arboretum.

As a result of many conferences and

luncheons with horticulturists at the Mayfair Hotel, a corporation was finally set up known as the California Arboretum Foundation, Inc.

The search for a suitable property where the joint interests of the County and the Foundation could be satisfactorily served took many months. The search drew to a close when the purchase of the "Lucky" Baldwin property was recommended. I employed my best powers of persuasion, direct and indirect, to generate interest on the part of my colleagues. This bore fruit in mounting enthusiasm, in which the former supervisor, William A. Smith shared, he having a background of forestry training and being further interested because the proposed arboretum (a designation agreed on by common consent) was located in the supervisorial district he represented. With interest evident on the part of the Board of Supervisors, the support of the California Division of Beaches and Parks was enlisted. Thus began a joint state and county investment whose total now approximates \$400,000.

There are many things that government cannot do well and economically. As far as the County is concerned the operation of an arboretum is one of them. It is of interest to point out that Los Angeles County is following a plan of joint effort by officials cooperating with private citizens in other fields. The County Museum and the County Art Institute profit richly by voluntary citizen organizations which exert an important influence in their respective fields. At the great Los Angeles County General Hospital basic medical policies are determined, not by the county's paid staff, but by the visiting staff of non-paid physicians who voluntarily give a portion of their time to the institution.



In the fields of community advertising for tourists and the promotion of expanding commerce and industry, several millions of dollars of taxpayers' money has been spent in the past twenty years for the supervisors, not at their own discretion and direction primarily, but in accord with programs advanced by two contract agencies, viz. the All-Year Club and the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, respectively.

The genius of the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum is that public and private resources have been joined for the common good, on a non-profit basis. The objective of a broader and richer horticultural development for Southern California is being so effectively implemented on this beautiful one-hundred-and-twenty acre tract that every house and garden in the county can benefit. Yes, life will become more beautiful, as well as more profitable, in Southern California because of the arboretum's program.

The arboretum is a park, *plus*. Here is set aside an area where persons of all ages can relax, enjoy themselves, and learn a great deal about plants which may be grown in the Los Angeles area. Of special interest is the historically significant Hugo Reid Adobe residence and the casino and stables of the colorful and unconventional "Lucky" Baldwin. Each of these struc-

tures, now being restored by generous private contributions, is vividly illustrative of life in Southern California's earlier history.

The horticultural program occupying the larger proportion of the one-hundred-twenty acres, and drawing on the funds of both the County and the Foundation for its development, promises immeasurable enrichment for Southern California. Here new and wonderful plants will be imported and tested. Highways and gardens alike will reflect the work of the arboretum through the introduction of rare specimens.

The bringing of water to this region by giant aqueducts called for engineering feats of unmatched skill. It made our desert and semi-desert areas blossom as a rose. Our agriculture, following standard patterns of irrigation, began to expand a hundred-fold because of the courage and foresight of Mulholland and the "dreamers" who with him brought us those artificial rivers of water. Industry has followed in the wake of agriculture. All about us has risen evidence of a vast man-made empire.

In this marvelous setting, as the years go by, the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum is destined to bring new beauty of infinite variety. The Arboretum is helping Southern California come into its own.



## EUCALYPTUS GLOBULUS

CHARLES GIBBS ADAMS — LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

The Titan-like specimens of *Eucalyptus globulus* which tower above most of the other trees on Rancho Santa Anita at the present time, arrived in 1863 in the form of seed — the first supply ever to reach southern California. Some of this seed went to ranches owned by the old Verdugo and Sanchez families, on land which is now the city of Glendale. Other portions went to the Bannings of old Wilmington, to the Workmans of San Fernando, and to Señor Carrion in the San Dimas hills.

Seven years before this happened, when the gold rush was still current, a few of the seeds apparently had found their way to upper California, where in 1856 the little pioneer Shellmound Nursery of Oakland came into possession of some of them. According to record, they sold seedlings for five dollars apiece. (Seedlings of similar size today would sell for about thirty-

five cents.) There is no record of the existence of any of these seedlings now. But there is record that some of the seed was planted in Mendocino County — too far north for their comfort.

The significant arrival of this seed, in 1863, and its fairly wide distribution which resulted in more extensive plantings of the "Tasmanian Blue Gum," — as it is known in Australia, — than any other non-fruiting tree at the time, was due to the vision of a Methodist Bishop, William Taylor of San Francisco who had gone to Australia on missionary work. From there he had sent his wife some seed of this giant tree which had so impressed him. Well might he have been impressed with specimens considered by authorities to be the fastest-growing tree on earth, second only to the Sequoia in size! The Bishop's wife planted them in San Francisco and across the Bay in Alameda, where they prospered





Ford, John. 1951. "To make our land more beautiful." *Lasca leaves* 1(Spring 1951), 17–18.

**View This Item Online:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/129410>

**Permalink:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/120469>

**Holding Institution**

Missouri Botanical Garden, Peter H. Raven Library

**Sponsored by**

Los Angeles Arboretum

**Copyright & Reuse**

Copyright Status: In copyright. Digitized with the permission of the rights holder.

Rights Holder: The Arboretum Library at the Los Angeles County Arboretum and Botanic Garden

License: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

Rights: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/permissions>

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.