

contact with the public. It is worth mentioning that a good part of this service is of more than casual significance. Prompt and correct identification of narcotic, poisonous, or allergy-producing plants, for example, can be of critical importance to physicians, hospitals, veterinarians, and law-enforcement agencies.

Information Section

Directly or indirectly involved with every activity of the Department, the Information Section constitutes the initial person-to-person contact with visitors to Descanso Gardens, the Arboretum, and soon, with the expected increase in public visiting hours, with visitors to South Coast Botanic Garden. The Information Section thus serves as the connecting link between the visitor and whatever he may wish to do, or whomever he may wish to see.

This public relations role is extended to some 14,000 tram tours for 650,000 people (1965-67) conducted by Information Section Tour Guides who give an informed lecture on the central aspects of Descanso Gardens and the Arboretum on each tour. Not included in these numbers are tours for special groups—Chambers of Commerce, Veteran's Hospitals, Old Age Homes, garden clubs, and the like—accounting for an additional 2,000 persons each year.

Of the 1,298 school field trips given to 46,997 students and teachers in this biennium (See EDUCATION: Youth Section—Field Trips), approximately 96% were conducted by Information Section Tour Guides.

HISTORICAL SECTION

The Arboretum is unusual among botanic gardens in occupying land so rich in historic interest. American Indians, Spanish missionaries, Mexican rancheros, and a succession of pioneers and adventurers lived innocently and not-so-innocently on these and thousands of surrounding acres, leaving architectural, horticultural, and other records of their times for today's visitors, students, and historians.

Interior maintenance of three principal buildings—Queen Anne Cottage, Coach Barn, Hugo Reid Adobe—continues to be largely the work of volunteers and the California Arboretum Foundation, working under the guidance of a staff curatorial aide. Much credit is due a new volunteer group, Las Voluntarias, formed in the latter half of this biennium. In addition to maintenance work, Las Voluntarias have raised funds

for various improvements, have served and continue to serve as guides for school tours of the area, and have assisted in accessioning. These contributions have helped immeasurably in freeing the curatorial aide for cataloguing, interpreting and, in many cases, restoring gifts and loans of artifacts covering the historic period.



Arboretum -

A velour traveling suit and simple vanity set rest on handmade quilt, three of fifty-nine objects added to the Historical Section collections in this biennium. The traveling suit was worn by a member of the family of Elias J. Baldwin, onetime owner of present Arboretum site and builder, in 1881, of the Queen Anne Cottage. The suit is the gift of Mrs. Betty Baldwin, a distant relative. The vanity set is from the Northrup Collection; the quilt (c. 1850) from Margaret Griffith-Jones, member of Las Voluntarias.



Arboretum -

The horticultural aspect of the historical section resides in a 100-year old eucalyptus tree (pictured here in front of the Queen Anne Cottage), in elm trees, and in an impressive hedge of pricklypear cactus (variously useful, ornamental, or noxious, depending on where it is grown) ringing the Adobe, and a variety of annual and perennial flowers that of course must be periodically replaced in order to retain the character of the land as it was a century and more ago.



Dimond, Donald S. 1961. "Historical section." *Biennial report* 1965-67, 12-13.

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