

Our 25th Anniversary

On December 6, 1934 an "Agreement Relating to Arboretum and Botanical Garden in Washington Park" was signed by Mr. Harry Westfall, President of the Board of Park Commissioners of the City of Seattle, and Mr. Edward P. Ryan, President of the Board of Regents of the University of Washington.

Thus was officially set in motion the chain reaction which has brought us to our present condition, admittedly imperfect but we believe steadily improving year by year, and to a status where our place in the national and world-wide network of arboreta and botanical gardens is well established and recognized.

This issue of the "Bulletin" therefore differs considerably from the norm. In it we endeavor to show you, our readers, some of the problems which beset our childhood and youth; then, through several pairs of eyes, what kind of an adult we have become and how we are trying to adequately play a small part in the daily life of the city and its environs.

In the accomplishment of this living, growing, slowly changing assemblage of plants from all the world, cooperation between city and university authorities on the one hand, and private groups and individuals on the other, has been most fruitful. May it ever remain so.

Early Days of the Arboretum

H. G. IHRIG*

The following letter from Mr. Ihrig to the Editor, who requested this contribution, indicates his difficulties in fully carrying out the assignment. While we realize the problems involved we nevertheless feel that he has given a very fair picture of the chain of events which led to the establishment of this arboretum, and warmly appreciate his efforts in gathering and sorting these facts.

"Thanks for the additional names of those whose efforts contributed to the development of the Arboretum but let me add that this emphasizes the most difficult problem I have faced in assembling my data.

"Everyone interviewed cooperated fully and offered names and suggestions. To include all of them was obviously impossible. There was also the matter of different versions of some events. The question was, whom and what to include? Since I have neither the information nor the insight to evaluate all of these services I was in the position of a judge trying to make a decision

without hearing all of the evidence. To mention only those with whom I was closely associated would be unfair to many others. Just where could I draw the line? How detailed should I be?

"I pondered these questions many hours and decided that if I were to hold my presentation to a readable size and yet be fair and factual, I would have to strip it of many personalities and events. This also seems unfair since I can think of so many who labored long and faithfully.

"To properly cover the early days it is my considered opinion that if you use this paper it should be followed by others with different viewpoints on the various phases of the work. Mrs. A. Krauss, Mr. Donald Graham, Mr. Perry Truax are some who could contribute much. And certainly someone should pay a proper tribute to the diligent work and unwavering faith of Dean Winkenwerder."

PERHAPS the main problem involved in the early days of the Arboretum was the creation of a reality from a dream. Those of us who participated in its final consummation were not the first to feel the thrill of this

*Mr. Ihrig has been an ardent promoter and staunch supporter of the Arboretum for more than a quarter of a century, and certainly well qualified to write of its early years.

dream. Mr. Howard Parish, then publisher of the *Seattle Star*, envisioned an Arboretum at Fort Lawton; the Seattle Park Board during the presidency of O. J. C. Dutton in 1924 passed a resolution designating all of Washington Park for arboretum purposes; an Arboretum Society was subsequently incorporated (1930) by a group of prominent civic and cultural leaders. Many others contributed to the development of this idea whose only reward was the consciousness of fostering a great ideal. However, many problems, chiefly financial, nullified their efforts and the vision waned until the midst of the depression.

It is difficult to attribute to any person or group the motivation of the next step that led to eventual success. It was the combined effort of a great number of people who contributed of their time and talent. To name all of these would increase this issue of the *Bulletin* many times its present size, so this summary can mention only a few of those who worked together, but no one appreciates more than the writer the credit due so many who cannot be enumerated.

In 1933 the PWA did some rough clearing in the Washington Park area but it was not until the State of Washington decided to help in the unemployment situation that real progress began.

Perhaps the spark that triggered this development more than any other one thing was a suggestion by Mrs. Loren Grinstead Sr. to Mr. Grinstead, who was advising Governor Martin on the possible use of state funds to ease the unemployment situation. Their big problem was how and where to spend the money. It was at this juncture that Mrs. Grinstead posed a very pertinent question: "Why not the Arboretum?" The answer solved many other problems, as the project was easy of access for the Seattle area and most of the work required no special skill. However, the Park Board which controlled the area, was not prepared to undertake a development that required scientific control and management, yet without such direction an Arboretum would remain a nebu-

lous thing without form or continuity.

A group of horticultural enthusiasts was called to an evening meeting at the Broadmoor Golf Club by Mrs. Grinstead. Mr. Grinstead, Dean Winkenwerder and others outlined the problems confronting us and the necessity of creating a permanent legal organizational structure.

Out of this meeting an informal committee was formed and charged with promoting these ideas and creating a legal entity with the University of Washington as operating head. The legal end was handled by Mr. O. B. Thorgrimson, who after a study of the contract between Harvard University and the City of Boston drew up an agreement between the City of Seattle, represented by the Park Board, and the Regents of the University. An ordinance was passed by the City Council November 30, 1934 authorizing the Park Board to enter upon this agreement, which was dated December 6, 1934 and subsequently signed by both parties. The principal clauses of the contract gave the University a perpetual lease on the area for Arboretum and botanical purposes and provided that the Park Board construct and maintain roads, walks, driveways, water and lighting system, provide police protection, etc. It also called for an advisory committee of seven members: three to be appointed by the Mayor, three by the University and one by the Governor. This committee was subsequently increased to fourteen members, and took over the duties of the unofficial committee that had been operating. Meantime under the WERA (Washington Emergency Relief Administration) \$88,232.95 was spent in wages and salaries during 1934. This was mostly in general clearing and work in the north end lagoon area.

Dean Winkenwerder became first Director of the Arboretum from 1934 to 1938, and was followed by Dr. J. H. Hanley, 1939-January 1947.

During this time efforts were being made to bring the Federal Government into the picture but this called for financial contributions by the sponsors and neither the City

nor the University had funds available for this purpose.

Methods of meeting this financial situation were urgent. One such method was the organization of the Arboretum Foundation. The first Board of Directors was chosen June 27, 1935 and officers elected subsequently were headed by Mr. W. T. Douglas as president, with Mrs. L. C. Henry as first vice-president, Mrs. Grinstead, treasurer. The purpose of this organization was not to assume responsibility for the continued maintenance of the Arboretum, despite the fact that the first Federal application for funds lists the Foundation as the guarantor of maintenance. However, the Foundation did furnish funds for the Director's salary from January 1, 1939 to January 1, 1947 as well as funds for many other purposes both before and after legislative appropriations were made. Without this continued support the development of the Arboretum would have been delayed many years. The basic purpose of the Foundation was to assist in the establishment of the Arboretum; to serve as a repository for special funds, gifts and endowments; to do promotional work; to seek acquisitions of special plant collections, and to widely publicize the ideal climatic conditions for this development.

Another obstacle in securing State and Federal funds was the lack of an overall development plan. This was met by a gift of \$3000 to the Regents in 1935 from the Seattle Garden Club for the employment of Olmsted Bros. of Brookline, Massachusetts for this purpose.

In December 1935 WPA project No. 820 was authorized and \$296,290 was spent up to July 1936. In October of that year five new projects were authorized, known as A, B, C, D and E. They were so divided as at that time there was a limit to the amount that could be expended on an individual project. The sum of \$327,272 was put into this work during 1936 and early 1937. On July 9, 1937 these projects were consolidated and an additional authorization of \$371,115 was made for an eight months' period, subsequently re-

vised to continue until June 30, 1938.

The details of these expenditures reveal a multitude of problems that had to be met but these are matters for the researcher. To the layman the area as it now stands with its water and lighting systems, buildings, nursery, roads, trails, fences and various other improvements is the result of painstaking efforts and cooperation by many in the solution of the involved details.

Meantime the acquisition of plant material began in which the Seattle Garden Club played a valuable part in securing the Tenny rhododendron collection—the first major plant gift. These plants were probably the first Asiatic species to be grown from seed in this area, sent to Dr. Tenny by Mr. F. R. S. Balfour of Scotland.

The Acquisition Committee was also active in enlisting help from other garden clubs and individuals, such as Woodland Garden, sponsored by the West Seattle Garden Club, the Mary E. Williams Memorial Camellia Garden, by the Amateur Gardeners, plants donated of many series of rhododendrons, and other gifts. One of the most notable was the collection of rhododendron species and hybrids received from Mr. C. O. Dexter of Cape Cod, Massachusetts, in the spring of 1938 and summer 1939. The latter included some fifty numbers of his *R. Fortunei* hybrids, many of which have now grown into large plants in Rhododendron Glen. In December 1937 the first plantings of pines, cypresses, spruces, firs, etc., were made in the Pinetum, and of *Cornus florida* and *Azalea Schlippenbachii* on Azalea Way.

It was not until 1943 that the State Legislature made the first appropriation for Arboretum purposes, amounting to \$41,700. Again in 1945 \$75,930 and in 1947 \$50,000 was appropriated.

By this time the educational and scientific value of the undertaking was established but only time and continued effort will bring about the fruition of our dream. The cooperation of the Arboretum Foundation and its many friends with the University staff over

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What Goes On at the Arboretum?

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France and many other countries with comparable climates.

An important facet of the Arboretum's work is the introduction of new or little-known trees and shrubs. These may be wild plants of this or, more often, of other countries, such as the creeping juniper of the Siskiyou Mountains in southern Oregon, or the large collection of Japanese maples imported in 1940 and 1941. Or they may be plants which have appeared in gardens, parks, nurseries or elsewhere, noted as different and worth propagation. Examples are various local forms of red and Norway maples, our own 'Seattle Sentinel' maple and *Magnolia Kobus* 'Wada's Memory.'

Hundreds of new or rare woody plants have thus been introduced here by the Arboretum during the past twenty years, ranging from small groundcovers and rock plants to large trees such as pines, oaks and lindens which will not mature for many years. Some promising shrubs have already been propagated and distributed through the Washington State Nurserymen's Association; trees will take more time.

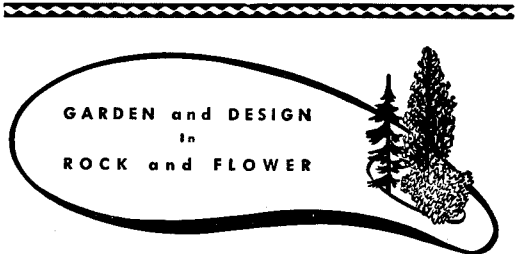
SUMMARY. The University of Washington Arboretum offers, at the present time, an increasing program of services, including horticultural information and botanical education, to anyone who cares to avail himself of them. It is an active participant in the international seed exchange, bringing in new plant material every year for testing and then, if found desirable, propagating it for wider use in this region. Its library of books, slides and photographs is a valuable reference source to the community, while its plant collections are unique in the Pacific Northwest.

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the past years has marked a steady advance evidenced by the increased variety and beauty of area displays.

With the passing years the importance of this institution will bring additional credit and distinction to the University and everyone who has helped should feel a measure of pride in the heritage left to the future.



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