

Mrs. Bryant Again Entertains Lemon Men's Club at Field Day Meeting
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Through an aisle bordered for nearly four miles with beautiful glossy-leafed, brilliantly-flowered pomegranate trees, members of the Lemon Men's club wended their way to Mrs. Susanna Bixby Bryant's famed Rancho Santa Ana in the Santa Ana Canyon on the occasion of their annual field day meeting April 22, 1933. Mrs. Bryant, a most successful citrus fruit grower and who has established a foundation for what is probably the finest botanic gardens and herbarium of California trees, shrubs, herbs and plants in existence, was hostess to the 150 to 175 Lemon growers.

It was the second time that the club has accepted the hospitality of Dr. and Mrs. Bryant. Four years ago a large party of lemon men was entertained at this scenically beautiful spot. All of those who attended the March 1929 field day meeting on the property, and who could possibly tear themselves away from their other duties, accepted the second invitation.

Four years had not erased the memory of the scenic delights of the place, the gracious courtesies of the hostess or of the delicious steaks, which Dr. Bryant prepared personally for the guests. Dr. Bryant has a method all his own of preparing steaks and cooking them over live coals in the open air. And it was no small undertaking to prepare these for a hungry group of ranchers. Those who have tasted this delicacy never forget the flavor.

There has naturally been a very considerable development of the botanic garden and herbarium on this 7000 acre ranch during the four year interim since last the club met on the property. However, it may take a decade for the trees and shrubs to fully develop so that the 250 acres of hillside devoted to the garden plantings will reach even partial maturity.

Mrs. Bryant has proceeded in a slow, systematic way and the end will justify her deliberate efforts. By exercising extreme care in the beginning of the undertaking she will have few, if any, errors to correct after it is in full planting and development.

A scientist who has traveled about the world extensively and whose interests have been centered on botanical matters told the writer that in all his travels and inspection tours he had never found a botanic garden or herbarium which had been so methodically handled, or which had developed under so fine a system as has been adopted under Mrs. Bryant's direction at Rancho Santa Ana.

The origin of every seed, every scion, every plant is known and its complete history is recorded. When seeds are obtained for propagation, specimens of the leaves, flowers, and fruit are also collected and placed in the herbarium for reference purposes. Should the tree die, or the seed fail to germinate under the new soil conditions, there is always an opportunity to go to the reserve vial and obtain new seeds, or information is available so that a collector may relocate the original source and get a new cutting or whatever is required.

It is Mrs. Bryant's aim, just so far as is possible, to have growing in her botanic gardens specimens of every tree and shrub grown in California, and whose natural habitat ranges from the elevation of the high Sierras to the below sea level of Death Valley.

When it is stated that there are at least 800 species of trees and shrubs native to California and 2000 varieties of plants and herbs, the size of the undertaking can be readily understood. It was stated to the lemon men that there are 45 varieties of manzanita alone.

The hillsides are now fairly well planted with young growing trees and there are hundreds of thousands of young seedlings growing in the nursery maintained for the purpose by Mrs. Bryant. There are problems innumerable in the matter of environmental and soil conditions to be overcome, but excellent progress is being made.

The Gardens, generally speaking, quite surround the Bryant residence wherein is housed the herbarium. On all the nearby hillsides are the plantings of botanic specimens and up to an elevation just short of 1,000 feet.

When the first of the 65 to 80 automobiles bearing the lemon growers began to arrive at the Rancho Santa Ana, they were met by B. D. Stark, the nurseryman, at the point where lie the seed beds and general nursery. Mr. Stark has been in charge of the gardens and nursery practically from their inception. He showed them through the nursery. He first exhibited a machine by which they manufacture their own pots of cement and sand. They have found for their nursery uses that these cement pots serve best under the particular soil conditions existing. Thousands and thousands of these pots were exhibited as they lay neatly piled ready for instant use. Then the growers were escorted through the seedbeds of young trees and shrubs which are later to take their places in the botanic gardens.

After inspecting the hundreds of thousands of young trees in seed beds and lath houses and discussing the problems there, the party was taken in charge by R. V. Cavers. Mr. Cavers, who is a nephew of W. B. Cavers of Upland, is in charge of the cost accounting and records of the Rancho Santa Ana. His training was obtained in part as a member of the cost accounting staff of the California Citrus League under F. O. Wallschlaeger, its secretary.

Mr. Cavers led the party through the lower end of the 47 acre lemon grove. The trees, the windbreaks and the crops were inspected by various clusters. Then one of the Valencia orange orchards was inspected. There are 107 acres of these. The trees were heavily laden with fine looking fruit. The skins were smooth, color excellent and the crop was heavy. The crop of lemons was also good. There are 36 acres of navel oranges on the property also, a total of 190 acres in citrus.

After an hour or so had thus been spent, the party was led up to the Bryant home place at an elevation of 680 feet. The view from there is indescribable. As one grower remarked: "My, what a wonderful place to get away from the depression!"

"Yes," commented a bystander, "but there is another side to that too." And no one who heard it failed to get the point.

There is a point back of the house and up where the main reservoir is located from which it is possible to see all the surrounding country—not alone the beautiful Santa Ana canyon and Corona, but the Pomona valley also.

The *Citrograph* men were given an unusual privilege. They were taken up in the tower surmounting the house and from there viewed the countryside. It was not possible to see the ocean that morning on account of a little haze in the air, but the ocean is easily discernible from that point on a clear day.

The lemon growers wandered about the place scanning the view from various points of vantage. Many of them visited the herbarium where Carl B. Wolfe, the botanist in charge, exhibited the specimens and answered the questions of those who knew the subject of botany and the sillier ones of those of use who were not afraid to expose our ignorance.

Then it was luncheon time. Dr. Bryant was actively in charge of the broiling of the steaks. Next under him was Ranch Superintendent E. R. Johnson who has been in general charge of the immense rancho for several years, and who has been an apt pupil of the doctor's. In addition there were several members of the Placentia post of the American Legion wearing their legionnaire caps, assisting the preparation of the beef and frijoles.

The party filed around the broilers and were served most liberally with thick steaks and frijoles. Then they went to the dining room where about 125 were served, while others were served on the outdoor porch. Combination salads, toasted split rolls, huge glasses of orange juice, coffee, ice cream and cigars were served.

Mrs. Bryant had President W. M. Mertz seated at her right and General Manager Paul Armstrong of the Exchange at her left. Dr. Bryant joined the party after everyone had been properly served with the steaks.

On motion of Dr. N. Matzen of Escondido the secretary, C. S. Milliken, was instructed to express in writing the club's appreciation of the hospitality of Mrs. Bryant. This motion was passed by an unanimous standing vote.

Mrs. Bryant made a graceful address expressing her pleasure at being hostess to the Lemon Men's Club. She stated that many of those present had been very helpful to her in aiding in problems and expressed the hope that at a later day she should be able again welcome the club when are gardens are closer to her full realization. To each member of her staff she paid a neat compliment for the parts they are playing in the development of the garden and ranch. Mrs. Bryant stated that prior to 1929 she had laid aside as a foundation for the gardens and herbarium a certain sum of money and expressed the hope and belief that business conditions and citrus conditions would sufficiently improve in order that it might be possible to carry to completion the program she had laid out for the undertaking, and for the establishment of a botanical library. The gardens and herbarium were founded by Mrs. Bryant in memory of her father, John W. Bixby.

A hearty round of applause was accorded to the hostess and host. There was no speech making and everyone was invited to stroll through the delightful Spanish home and the gardens and grounds. Many took advantage of the opportunity to sit quietly in the immense living room and chat things over.

Usually the Lemon Men's Club pays its own expenses on its field day meeting, at least for the luncheon. However, Dr. and Mrs. Bryant would not permit that, either on the occasion of this year's meeting or that four years ago. Practically every lemon district in the state was represented.