



ANCIENT SYCAMORES — Sycamore Grove, where 250,000 people came last year to take advantage of extensive picnic facilities and enjoy the natural beauty of the Arroyo Seco, has been a popular recreation area since the 1860's. The 15-acre

site is carpeted by green lawns and canopied by approximately 1000 trees, 400 of which are sycamores. Older trees are 350 to 500 years old.

(Tile Insurance & Trust Co. Photo)

Sycamore Grove attracts thousands annually

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Saloon played role in saga of local park

BY FRED ALLEN

Except for a saloon in Sycamore Grove, Highland Park might never have become annexed to Los Angeles, a city that marks its 175th birthday next week.

The Grove, where 250,000 people came last year to break bread against the scenic backdrop of the Arroyo Seco, was under fire in the 1890's from the clergy of Highland Park. Demon rum was sold in the roadhouses!

Only solution to the problem, said the church leaders, was for Highland Park to incorporate as a separate city or become annexed to the growing City of the Angels. Since incorporation seemed impossible, annexation was the answer. Highland Park joined Los Angeles in 1898, and a short time later Sycamore Grove became "dry."

by horse and buggy along the dusty streets of El Pueblo. It was during this time that a small hotel, with adjoining pavilion, saloon, and shooting alley, was opened by Clois F. Hendrickson. On Sundays, an omnibus traveled every two hours from Los Angeles to the area.

Several years later the Grove became a focal point of activity for the German colony of Los Angeles, when Hendrickson sold out to Mr. and Mrs. John Rumph. Frau Rumph became a popular hostess, and it was under her management that the old Los Angeles Turnverein used the Grove for its public performances of gymnastics, singing, sack racing, and target shooting—with a beer party or two thrown in for good measure.

BOUGHT BY CITY

In 1905, seven years after Highland Park's annexation to

the City, a section of the local park was purchased by Los Angeles for \$22,500, and two years later the remainder of the present 15-acre site was donated by E. R. Brainerd.

First concessionaire of the city-owned recreation area was Highland Park resident John Arian, who today lives at 5425 N. Figueroa St. Arian, who handled the concession for 40 years before retiring, still remembers the good old days when he was able to sell 20 to 25 pies at the big picnics.

Today, under the management of the Department of Recreation and Parks, Sycamore Grove draws thousands of "transplanted" residents to State reunions. Last year, 214,000 picnickers reserved the area, which can handle a crowd of 28,000 at one time.

Largest State picnic attend-

ance at the Grove this year was registered by South Dakota with 15,000, followed by Texas, 10,000; Montana, 10,000; Oklahoma, 8000; and North Dakota, 8000. The Rocky Mountain States picnic was the smallest State affair, with 50.

Areas represented by other picnic groups read like the index of a geography book: Pea Ridge, Ark.; Scotland County, Mo.; Pittsburg, Kansas; Durango, Colo.; Needles, Calif.; Constantinopol Society, Grundy County, Mo.; Boone County, Fort Scott, and others.

Largest non-State picnic last year was held by the Sons of Norway, who turned out 10,000 strong, while Plumbers' Union Local 78 accounted for a crowd of 5000. Other clubs on the picnic roster included such names as the Southern California Post

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