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About the Institute

The Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, a research division of Carnegie Mellon University, specializes in the history of botany and all aspects of plant science and serves the international scientific community through research and documentation. To this end, the Institute acquires and maintains authoritative collections of books, plant images, manuscripts, portraits and data files, and provides publications and other modes of information service. The Institute meets the reference needs of botanists, biologists, historians, conservationists, librarians, bibliographers and the public at large, especially those concerned with any aspect of the North American flora.

Hunt Institute was dedicated in 1961 as the Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt Botanical Library, an international center for bibliographical research and service in the interests of botany and horticulture, as well as a center for the study of all aspects of the history of the plant sciences. By 1971 the Library's activities had so diversified that the name was changed to Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation. Growth in collections and research projects led to the establishment of four programmatic departments: Archives, Art, Bibliography and the Library.

ADELAIDE BOTANIC GARDEN

by T. N. R. LOTHIAN, Photographs by the Author

Like almost all other Botanic Gardens in Australia, the establishment of that in Adelaide was a direct result of British colonisation. When Colonel Light laid out the plan for Adelaide, prior to the arrival of the first ships in 1836, an area occupying an island in the Torrens River, west of the present City of Adelaide, was set aside for a Botanic Garden.

Much intervened before the present Garden was established in 1855 — the original site was partly washed away by floods in 1837-1838. A second area, immediately to the south of the river Torrens, was used primarily for vegetable production to assist the inhabitants in obtaining food during the difficult years of the late 1830s and early 1840s.

A valiant effort was made to establish a Botanic Garden by John Bailey in the 1840s. This was by public subscription, and a site at present occupied by the Adelaide Zoo, together with a similar area on the north side of the Torrens River, was established as a Botanic Garden. Once again, however, financial problems beset this enterprise and this garden was finally disbanded, following which John Bailey established a nursery which approximately occupied the present area of St. Peter's College.

The present area at the east end of North Terrace was finally established in 1854/55. George Francis was the first Superintendent and he commenced development of the 40 acre Garden on its present site. It was laid out characteristically of the times with parterres, curved and circular pathways, carpet bedding, fountains and lakes. Despite the financial climate, George Francis made valiant efforts to establish a Botanic Garden worthy of Adelaide, and this he succeeded in doing. He died suddenly in 1865, when Dr. Richard Schomburgk was appointed Director.

Richard Schomburgk, a brother of Robert Schomburgk, was already an international figure as a botanist and geographer, prior to his arrival in Adelaide with over 100 others who had been religiously persecuted in Germany.

He set about establishing a Garden of international standard and in this he was aided by his friendships with various Directors of Botanical Gardens in Europe, and also as a contemporary of Baron von Mueller in Melbourne. Quite apart from establishing a Botanical Garden, he quickly realised that one of his functions must be to test crops so that economic stability could be given to the young colony.

His early Annual Reports make interesting reading, covering as they do an extremely wide variety of plants which he specifically introduced for the purpose of establishing various industries, or to improve the range

of pasture plants and arable crops. His attempts at a silk industry ended in failure, as did so many of his introductions which depended on north temperate conditions rather than the arid summer conditions for which Adelaide is noted. Early plantings of *Pinus radiata* were made in the Botanic Garden, and his most notable introduction was the sultana vine in 1867.

The Garden flourished and he amassed a great variety of plants through seed exchange. He established an Herbarium, also a Library, two features which were sadly neglected subsequently. But his main work was undoubtedly his persistent attempts to introduce



Victoria House. This contains tropical foliage plants, orchids and epiphytes on logs.