



Balboa Park's San Jose Hesper Palm Grove

A “Lost” Kate Sessions Garden

*Nancy Carol Carter
November 2021*

Kate Olivia Sessions -- a life in horticulture

1885 -- 1940



Sessions' three specialty gardens in Balboa Park:

Aloe & Agave

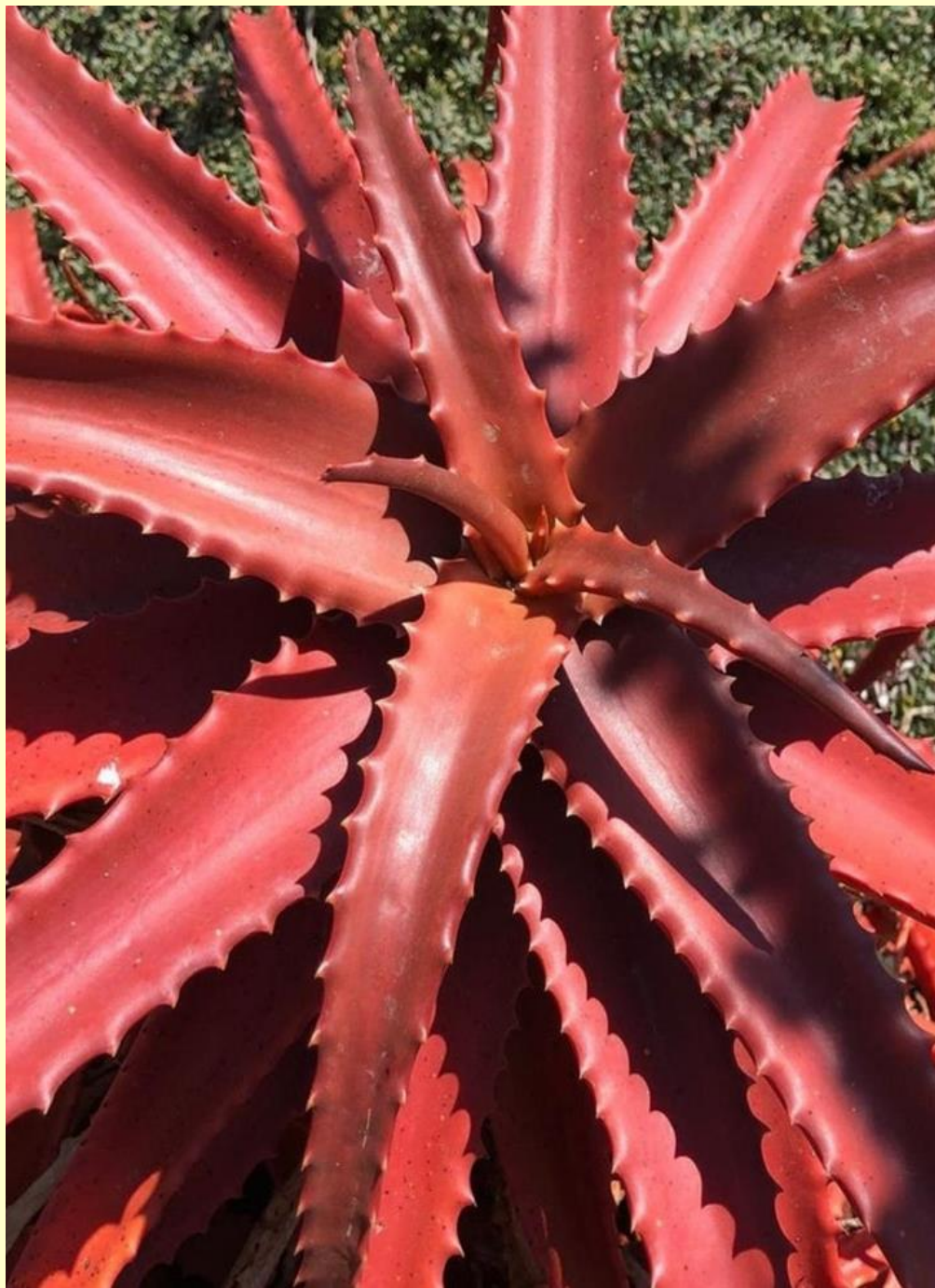


Cactus



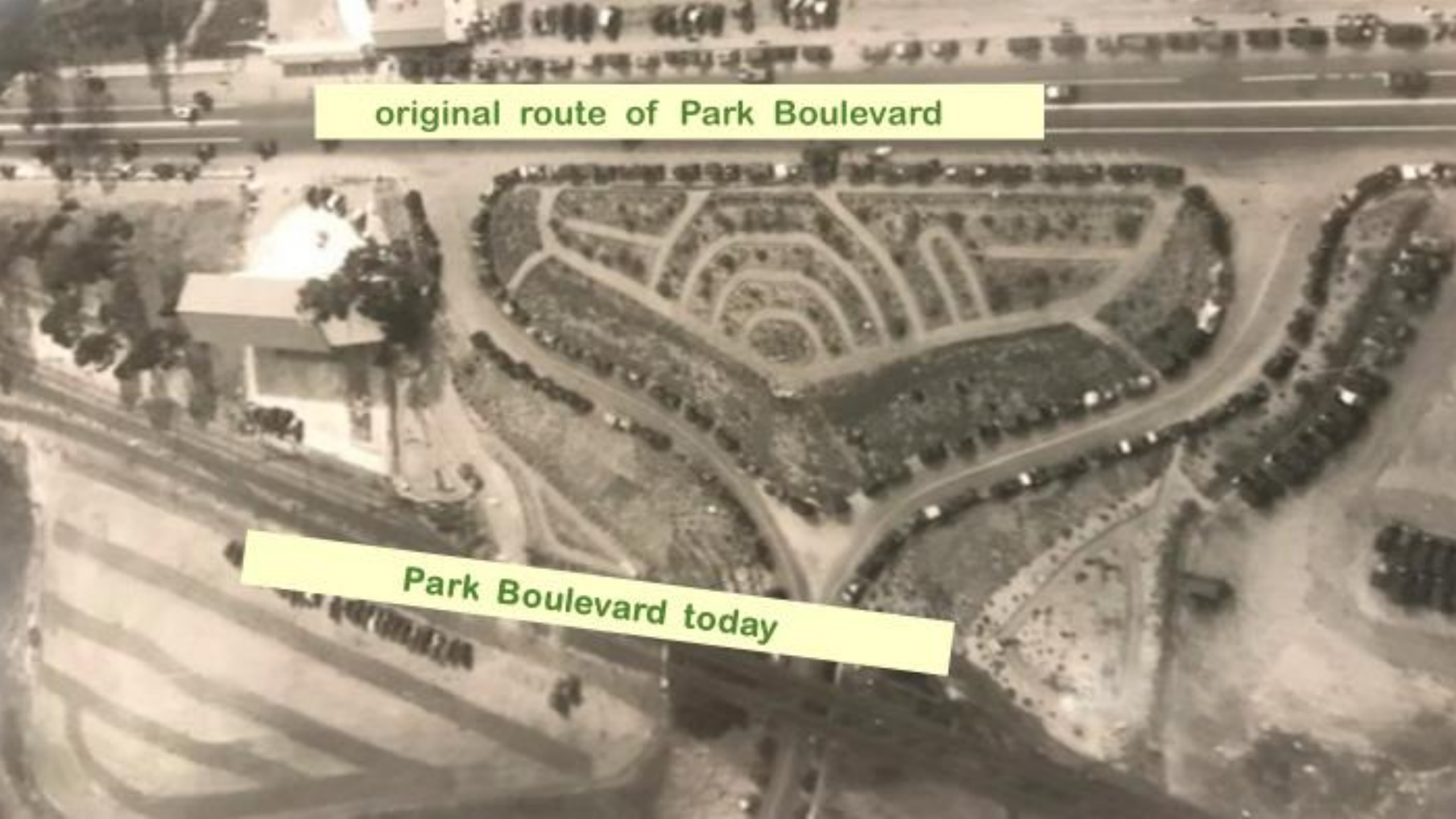
Palm





**Kate O. Sessions Aloe and Agave Garden
Established 1932 -- Dedicated 1935**

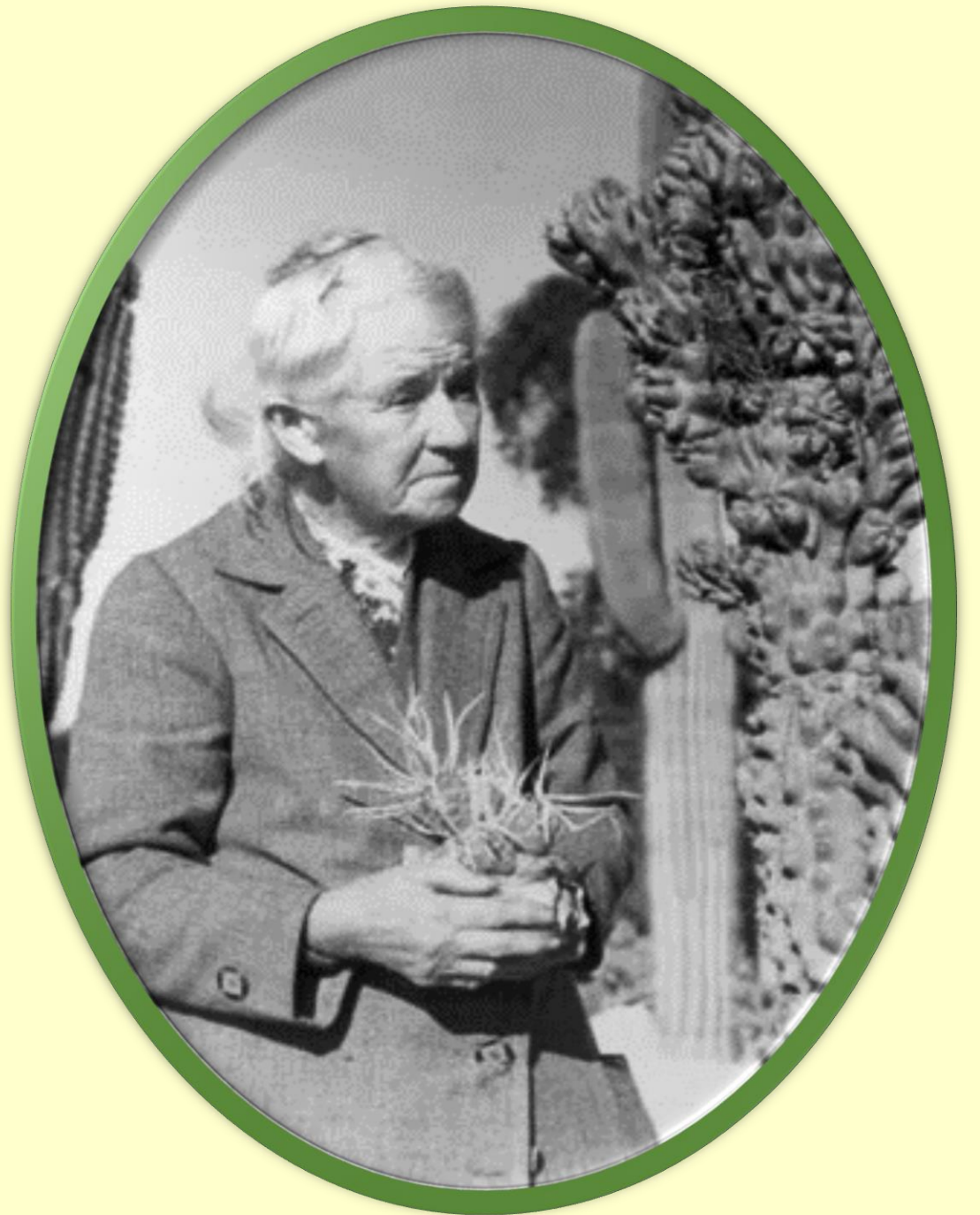
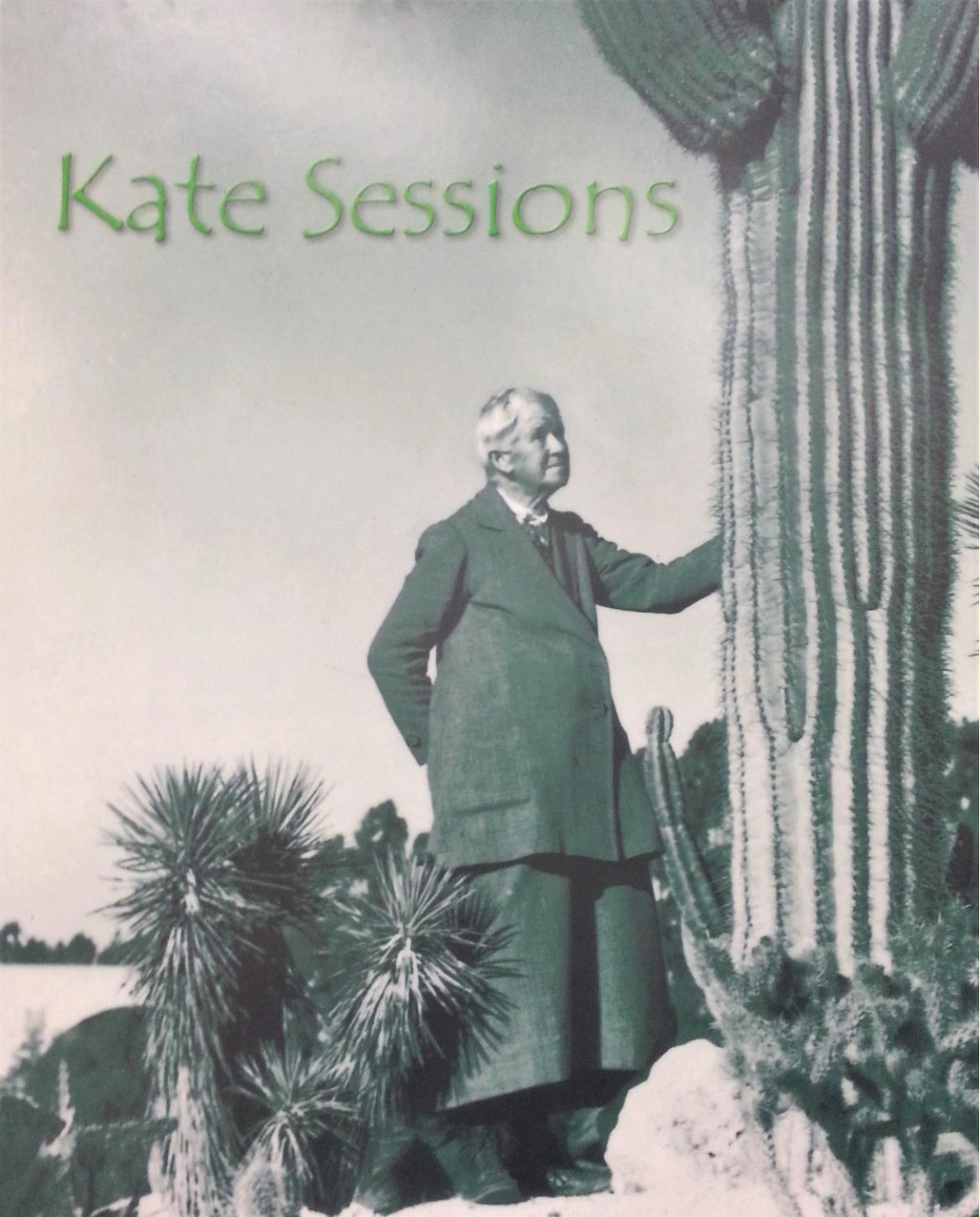


An aerial photograph of a residential development. At the top, a multi-lane road is visible. Below it, a yellow rectangular text box contains the text "original route of Park Boulevard". The main area of the image shows a large, irregularly shaped residential tract with a complex road network, including several cul-de-sacs and a central loop. The roads are light-colored, and the surrounding areas are filled with trees and some buildings. In the bottom left, there are several long, parallel rectangular plots, possibly for parking or storage. A second yellow rectangular text box, tilted to follow the angle of the road below it, contains the text "Park Boulevard today".

original route of Park Boulevard

Park Boulevard today

Kate Sessions





Kate O. Sessions Cactus Garden



San Jose Hesper Palm Grove

1902 Palm introduced by Sessions

1914 Palms planted in Balboa Park



Ensenada



1902

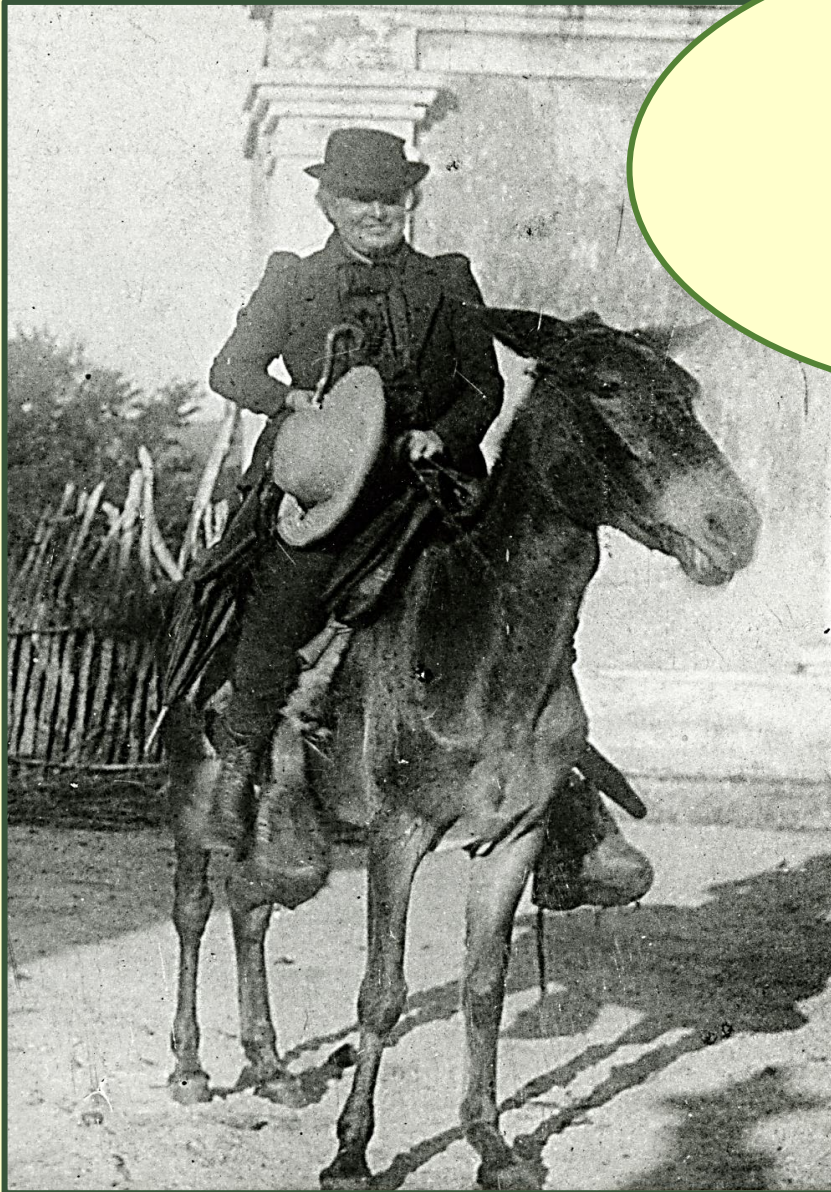
Kate Sessions plant
hunting expedition

Seeking a new
palm species

San Jose
del Cabo



**The
Brandegees
botanizing
in Baja**



Katharine Curran Brandegee (1844 - 1920)



T. S. Brandegee (1843 - 1925)



Katharine and T. S. Brandegee

**Brandegee home & herbarium
Bankers Hill
First Avenue (1890s)**



Katharine Brandegee in her botanical garden.



San Jose Hesper Palm

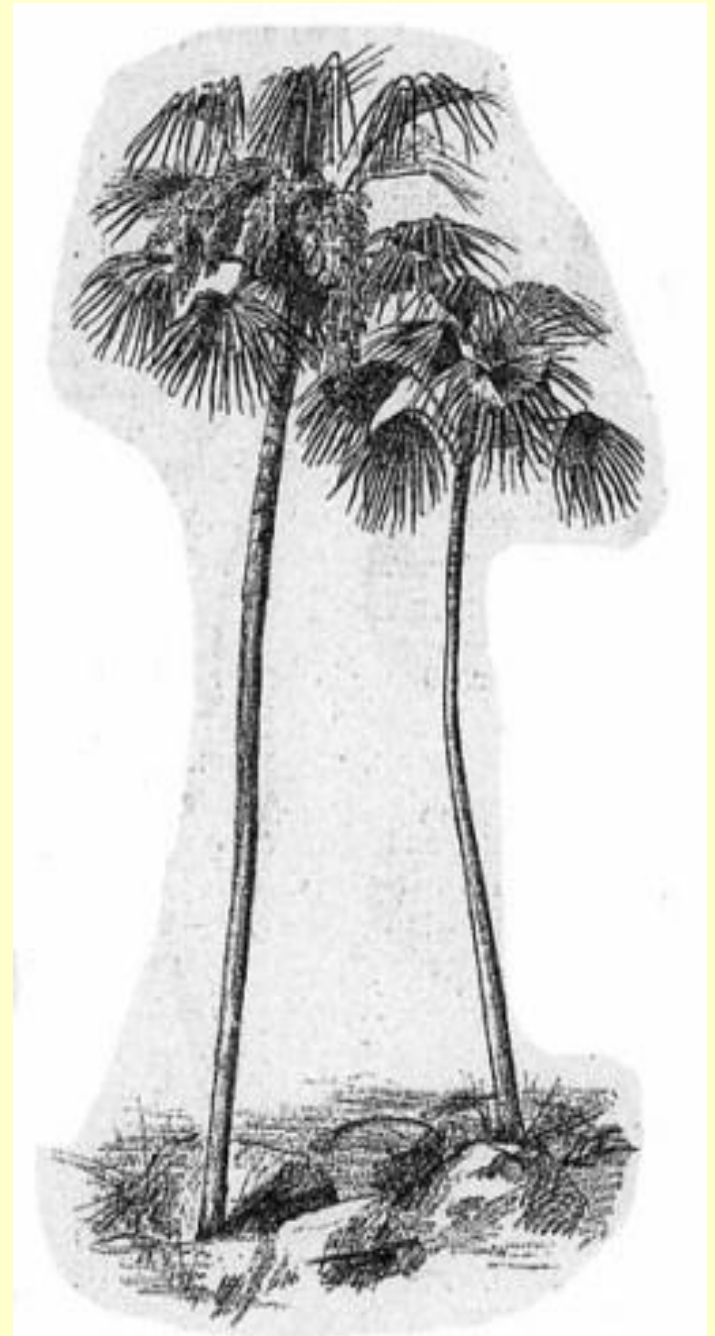
Erythea brandegeei now *Brahea brandegeei*

Kate O. Sessions wrote in *California Garden* :

I dug from the field five small palms . . . and brought them to San Diego Later a few thousand seeds were planted.

In 1914, 325 were planted in Balboa Park . . . just outside of the Rose Garden The Park bought 175, and I donated 150.

This group was planted in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Brandegee



4425 West Entrance and Panama-California Exposition,
from Rose Gardens, Balboa Park, San Diego, Cal. 1915.





PHOTO BY RACHEL COBB

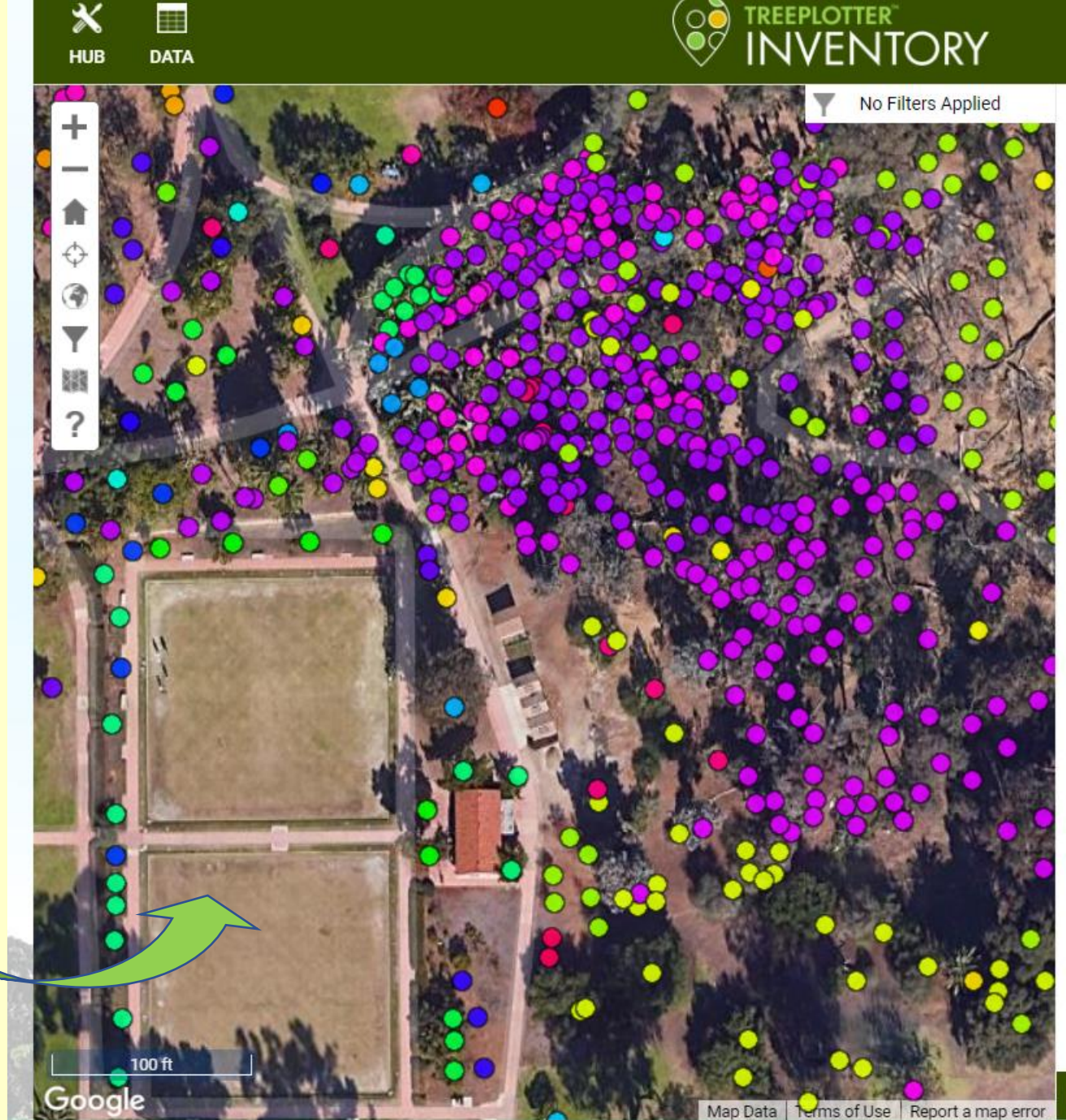
Balboa Park

Tree Inventory Aerial Map

● = San Jose Hesper Palms

188 in this grove
(325 planted 107 yrs. ago)

Bowling greens









**A
missing
connection**



PROPOSAL:

Recognize the

Sessions – Brandegee San Jose Hesper Palm Grove

as an official garden of Balboa Park.

- > **Sign-post and interpret the garden.**
- > **Add the garden to Balboa Park maps & website.**



Recognition of the Sessions – Brandegee Grove will:

- 1. Recapture a lost Balboa Park story;**
- 2. Link an anonymous planting with Kate Sessions;**
- 3. Celebrate Sessions' only plant hunting expedition;**
- 4. Acclaim Sessions' skills as a plant propagator;**
- 5. Honor the Brandegees who created San Diego's first botanical garden and assisted in the early development of Balboa Park;**
- 6. Alert park gardeners to the importance of these palms; and**
- 7. Contribute to the preservation of a rare and endangered plant.**



┆ Sessions – Brandegee
San Jose Hesper Palm Grove

Thank you.

QUESTIONS ?