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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.

Apdo. 379,  
San José, Costa Rica.  
28 December, 1971.

Dr. Wilson Popenoe,  
Zamorano,  
Honduras.

Dear Dr. Popenoe:

La Prensa Libre published an editorial the 27th of December 1971, regarding a letter you sent to Ing. Luis Cruz Bolaños, Director of the "Revista de Agricultura". In it they challenge the Ministry of Agriculture, or anyone else interested, to take you up on your offer to help propagate the cultivation of peaches and pears in the proper regions of Costa Rica. I take up the gauntlet, and enclose the editorial. Actually I felt like the letter was addressed to me anyway.

My family and I were good friends of Mr. Chas. Lankester, who told me much about you and your lovely home in Honduras. I have been working for the past twelve years in the formation of small producers cooperatives, and three years ago we formed an agricultural cooperative in Zarcero, a cool high region (2,000 m.) adequately suited for peaches (melocotones). The inicial savings of the cooperative were based on the production of peas, but our aim was peach production. Besides it's hilly country. I dared to advise them to intensify and improve their production by suitable grafts, on the advice of the agronomist Rodolfo Zamora -a graduate of Zamorano- who had been an associate of another cooperative I had helped form in Santa Ana where he lives. The Ministry of Agriculture has shown definite interest: the former Minister, Iglesias, facilitated an agronomist specialized in tropical fruit cultivation, Juan Leiva, -also a graduate of Zamorano- to direct the planting, grafting and cultivation of the first nursery. A second nursery of 18,000 trees has recently been established in the zone of the cooperative,

attended by the 4S Clubs. We are hoping that the majority of the trees will be bought by members of the cooperative and will stay in the zone. In a survey taken some two years ago there was interest for around ninety manzanas, and we now hope to increase that. The cooperative has nearly three hundred associates. The production of yellow peaches will all be bought by Del Campo, an affiliate of Del Monte, so the problem of market -the worst- is solved.

Now in a sense I am writing you to ask you a question which arises naturally on the basis of what you suggest in your letter to Ing. Luis Cruz Bolaños. There is a chap in Zarcero -a member of the cooperative- whose passion is fruit-tree cultivation. He has right now some eighteen varieties of peaches grafted on his own farm. He would very much like more practical experience, and would like a scholarship to acquire it, but his problem has been that he has only attended primary school. His letter to me is very well written by hand.

The members of the Board of Directors of the Cooperative have recommended him, -and they are a very good group. On it there is an Agent of Rural Credit who is also an agronomist, as well as two more agronomists, one a Mr. Barquero who administers the medicinal tree farm -cinchona and quina- of a Dutchman some fifteen miles to the north of Zarcero. Apparently those trees were taken from the Peruvian Andes to Java and after to here, where they can only be grown in a twelve-mile-wide belt of land which has the right precipitation of rain. The rest of the Board members are good farmers. The Rural Guard, by the way, also recommends this chap William Rojas Rojas on the strength of his fine character, which I think is rather nice. By writing directly to the agronomist Juan Leiva, Ministry of Agriculture, you could ascertain his qualifications in a more satisfactory manner. He is certainly the man to stay the ten years on the

spot experimenting.

I need hardly add that I will be looking very much forward to hearing from you and, in anticipation, I wish to thank you for any bother I may have caused you.

yours sincerely,

*Marjorie de Oduber*

Marjorie Elliott de Oduber

Antigua, Guatemala, 8 February 1972

Doña Marjorie Elliott de Oduber  
Apartado 379  
San José de Costa Rica.

Dear Madam:

Your letter of 28 December last is most interesting. I am late in replying, due to the fact that I have been laid up in the hospital but I am now back on the job and happy to be able to start working with you on this Temperate Zone fruit problem, which really boils down to peaches and pears, though I believe we ought to pay a little attention to the Japanese plums also.

I knew that wonderful man don Carlos Lankester over the years - I believe since 1919 when I first went to Costa Rica horticulturally (I went back in 1899, as a young kid, I lived a year at the Bella Vista mine, near Miramar, where my father lost the family fortune). In the late 1930s I was loaned by United Fruit to Merck and Company, and visited Finca Los Ensayos near Zarcerro, where one of my men, Jorge Benitez, was starting the work on Cinchona. I spent some three years working on this crop in Guatemala particularly.

The reason I wrote that letter to Luis Cruz (whom I have known for some 30 years) was because I was in Costa Rica just about a year ago and was unhappy about the little progress which has been made by my former student Juanito Leiva, who went back to his home country, Costa Rica, from Zamorano, for the purpose of developing the production of Temperate Zone fruits. I was told that he had not made satisfactory progress. He blames it on lack of support; some of his colleagues, among them several

Zamoranos, didn't see it that way. So I blew off a little steam through the medium of Luis Cruz little Revista de Agricultura (I never cease to marvel at the way Luis has kept that fine little journal going through all the years; lack of continuity is one of our principal problems in agricultural work, as you know as well as I do); the result of my perhaps-too-critical little note has been your letter, one from Juanito and one from Jenaro J. Rojas B. who is jefe del Servicio de Frutales de la CAR in Cartago. It is obvious that they have been somewhat more busy than I thought; but my criticism (if it could fairly be called that) was based mainly on the little that has been done in the past ten years. Perhaps inspired in part by what has been done here in Guatemala there have been several efforts to start something worth while, but it seems to me that these have not produced results of much importance, to date, because of three things: It was difficult to get young trees of varieties known to have promise in your climates, no nurseries were started with the right rootstocks, and our old enemy, lack of continuity of effort. Oh, I should mention of the major factors: choice of the most likely locations. This may be a major factor in the success of your present program for peach production on a good commercial basis. Your best protection, in my mind, will be selection of regions in which seedlings of the old Spanish group have successfully been grown for many years. And I urge care in the selection of varieties; use those which have done well here (it will be hard to get propagating material in quantity, in the case of some of them) and varieties which Ralph Sharpe recommends.

Now as to your candidate for a beca of some sort - William Rojas R. This is just the sort of thing which interests me and which gives us all a lot of work - profitable work. I am right now financing an

schooling to enter Zamorano as a regular student but they are taking him as a special student for a year, to train him in the production of field crops and the propagation and care of temperate zone fruit trees. Zamorano is not the best place for the latter work; we do not have a large collection of varieties. The elevation of our little orchard, - in the crevice of an old volcano - is 6000 feet, not high enough for good commercial apples, though Winter Banana will grow there and produce a little fruit. The hybrid pears such as Hood and Baldwin do beautifully but they are not real pears, I say; they are not good dessert pears but, like Kieffer, are used for canning on a considerable scale, not commercial, in the southern US. The newer peaches, those bred for low chilling requirement, do fairly well, but we don't have many of them.

I do not think Zamorano is the place for Rojas. If we could only get him placed for a year with Arturo Falla or the Ministerio de Agricultura, "Proyecto de Frutales Deciduous" here in Guatemala, or best of all, to work with Ralph Sharpe at the University of Florida, I think it would prepare him to do a really good job in Costa Rica - but who would guarantee to back him for ten years? And here is an important point: He must devote himself to the job, and not have any outside interests. No private hog farm or chicken ranch on the side.

Think it over, talk it over, and let's see what we can do.

Cordially yours,

Wilson Popenoe  
Director Emeritus

24th of May, 1972.

Dear Mr. Popenoe:

I am really sorry to have taken so long to inform you about what is happening in the Zarcero zone, and to thank you for your very kind and interesting letter. My delay is due in part to absence from Costa Rica, sickness on the date of the last General Assembly of the Cooperative on the 17th of February, and lack of precise information, although I visited Tapezco and La Brisa on separate occasions in April.

You are no doubt aware of the intricate labyrinthine courses familiar only to bureaucracy. I refer to them because William Rojas of Zarcero phoned me yesterday saying that the scholarship for him had not yet been received although all the contacts had been made and the itinerary established for Guatemala, the only trouble being that there were no funds that could be assigned to him. This in spite of a letter I had received from the Minister long ago saying that he would get it. I discussed the matter this morning with Ing. Juan Leiva who came over and we opted for a course of action which I hope will be successful in a few days.

Agricultural Extension has been active in the zone of Zarcero, visiting farmers one by one and, to date, ten manzanas of grafted trees have been spoken for and will be transplanted in June. The types are Flordared and Flordabelle and also the Sunred Nectarine. They also have grafted pears of the type Pyrus Calleryana. I have the impression that these quantities may increase when the time for planting arrives now but, in any case, enough is being done to set a fine example to those who opt for keeping on with the production of their old trees. The



Clubes 4S, as I believe I told you, have been exceptionally helpful and really are the active agents of change in the agricultural habits of the producers there. Many fathers are giving areas to their sons to plant and going halves with them on the outcome.

Coming back from my last trip to La Brisa I visited a finca of a señor Solís near Zarcero and he had plums but I'm afraid I can't tell you the type, and I didn't remember to promote the Japanese plum you mention in your letter to me. Actually Juan Leiva sent me a copy of your letter to him in which you mention the types of peaches and pears that would be adequate for the zone, and I guess I just presumed that everything advisable had been recommended in it.

I have been working extremely hard on the project of a cooperative law which is now in commission in the Legislative Assembly. As I believe that cooperatives are the ideal type of organization through which agricultural extension can work effectively, I have tried to include in the project articles tending towards the establishment of a fruitful collaboration between the Ministry of Agriculture and agricultural cooperatives, also articles facilitating the formation of cooperatives of small farmers for production, credit and marketing. I have also been interested in the utilization for agriculture ~~also~~ of the credit cooperatives situated in the rural areas, through the formation of agricultural sections. This diverts funds from consumption to reproductive investment in farming. The nucleos of farmers formed within these credit cooperatives can, when they achieve a certain volume of production, join together and form their own cooperative. There is also a clause which stipulates the supervision of these agricultural credits by agricultural extension. You see, an agricultural cooperative, pure and simple, is absolutely the hardest thing in the world to form; because of distances, ignorance, archaic techniques, limited capital etc. etc; a credit cooperative is the easiest, so the idea is that these credit cooperatives should put

forth the shoots that will develop and form agricultural cooperatives of some strength. The supervision by the Ministry of Agriculture through the regional centres is the guarantee that the right thing (almost always?) will be planted in the appropriate area.

This morning I wrote some instructions for Juan to take to the farmers of Acosta. He tells me that they are interested in forming either an association or a cooperative. A cooperative seems preferable to me because it controls them much more thoroughly, although democratically, and also exacts forced savings; and capitalization is important for any future industrial stage. He tells me that in that area they produce one third, 50,000,000 of the oranges of the country, and that the area is only surpassed for oranges by Orosi. We'll see how they feel and what effort they are willing to make. With just enough reaction I'll certainly go. Another place where they have been inviting me during the last two years is Esparta. But they wanted to concentrate only on marañon, drying the fruit for domestic uses, and exporting the "nut" for processing, -or doing it here. The fact is that I was sick with hepatitis the first year, and this last year I have been trying to find out if there is a market for cashew. The export centre finally sent me some material about a month and a half ago, but it seems that Africa is producing enough for the world market. So then, I asked the Ministry of Agriculture for a plan for tropical fruit (on which the Regional Centre is working anyway, I understand): tamarind, marañon, mango, avocado etc. But there doesn't seem to be any certainty of any sort, so I may eventually help them form a credit cooperative which really can't fail, and from there extend slowly to ~~other~~ crops.

Juan Leiva told me he thought you had been ill, which is why I just sat right down to write you. He says he would

like to go to see you. I certainly hope that this is not the case. He mentioned that it might be kidneys: if so, and you should come to Costa Rica, there is an excellent doctor, Hermann Weinstok, who cured my father when he was practically in a coma on one of his later visits. Under his care he became extremely well and, while he kept to a diet and was attended by this doctor periodically, he felt very well.

with very sincere wishes for your good health,

Majorie Elliott de Odulsen

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