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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.

June 10-5-7.

Dr. Wilson Papenoe

Antigua, Guatemala, A. C.

My Dear Friend:

Your interesting letter of 29th ult received promptly. We have plenty of evidence that the Filipino mango does cross with others, though not easily, and it is one of the hardest to graft on wild mango stock. I would not call a colored mango a Filipino, we have them under other names. We have some very interesting new from Sto. de las Vegas, on new mangoes. They sent me two boxes of sample fruits. Just as I announced 25 years ago, that we should expect a new set of mangoes in Cuba, from ^{natural} crosses, they are now coming in with a rush, 5 or 6 ^{kinds} large, 2 to 5 pounds have appeared, highly colored, good flavor and decidedly fiberless, for a head of the Haden, but of that strain, and one of the Sandersha type, much improved, also an improved Totapora type. Super-Haden 2 to 3 1/2 lbs. = Chino x Haden character, from Herradura. San Felipe, Haden x - ? most excellent in every way, but all are more or less subject to fungus spots, which may effect market values. Do you will tell.

2/ There are still about a dozen other variations types, and qualities. The men Oscar Muñoz, and family, who run the little nursery near Sto. de las Vegas (under the name "Vivero de Finca Mulgoba") came to me as small boys, and are my best disciples, They are active in getting the best there is out of the struggle, that is taking place in tropical fruits in Cuba. They are honest and have no secrets about their work. My time is running out and I must depend on them to carry on in a small but interesting way. Nature is at work, it is up to us to keep tabs on the passing show.

The Honorable Mr. Henry Wallace, gave the Graduation address here at the School June the 8th. What he said may long be remembered here, especially with the members of the Company. The American Embassy ordered all the Papers in the Island to print the entire speech.

It is to bad we do not have more men to talk out and do more for the general good. Cuba needs a new ~~Physi~~ Physiologia for future development. Rural schooling is little better than none. Well, I hope you will soon be settled in your new home. Sorry I can't make you a visit there is so much to talk about. Mrs. Van joins me in kindest regards. I remain Sincerely Yours.

21 Avenida Roosevelt, San Salvador,
El Salvador, C A
7 July 1957

Mr H A Van Hermann
Preston, Cuba

Dear old friend:

Your letter of 10 June came just as we were getting settled in our old home in Antigua. After three weeks there I came overhere to Salvador where I have agreed to work for two or three months, helping the government get a good fruit improvement program on feet. Thereis a fine oppertunity here. I shall go back to Antigua when I finish this first assignment here and see what comes next. I intend to devote most of my active life from now on to the introduction and improvement of tropical fruits.

That is why I was so much interested in what you wrote about the new mangos in Cuba. You are going through the same stages Florida has gone through - they have so many new mango varieties there now, mostly Haden and Sandersha seedlings they say. I am telling people here that Cuba is a great source of good tropical fruits and that as part of our program here we are going to bring in a lot of material from Cuba, as soon as we have some men on hand here who can do first-class propagating.

I am glad to hear you had Henry Wallace with you. I knew him well and appreciate hiskeen interest in Latin America. I think I told you that when I was in Habana in April I met Osear Muñoz and family, at their little nursery, and he told me of his work with you many years ago. You and I both go back pretty far. It is 45 years now since I made my first trip to tropical America and since that year my activities have all been concerned with tropical horticulture.

With best regards and all good wishes,

Sincerely,

Aug- 22 - 57.

Dr. Wilson Popejoy
21 Ave. Roosevelt
El Salvador, C.A.

My Dear Friend:—

Was glad to hear from you, and that they are keeping you busy, and may you live 100 years, we do so, need your kind of work.

Since you are in Salvador where ~~the~~ they are growing hand-labor crops, I am interested to know what they are doing with Sesame (white seed)?

I have three times in the last 50 years sown fractions of acres, and gotten good crops, calculated at 7 quintales per acre, or 7 to 10 Tons per Cab.

The crop is easily grown on ground clean of weeds in about 4 months. Both in rows 18 in. apart and Broad cast thick to keep down weeds and grass.

Harvesting when first pods open, shake them on canvas ⁱⁿ or large cans, tie the plants in bundles and stand and tie to stakes, on some level ground, till all the pods are dry, then finish the harvest by turning upside down and touch with stick, dry the seed, and winnow the seed, in the spring, or ~~replant~~ grow 2 crops a year (over)

I am trying 3 crops a year. seeds yield about 40% fat, Oil Cold-
press is superior to olive-oil. I want to know why it cannot be used
as a side crop for the dead season ^{here} to keep the men at work
earning something, even the women can help out during the
harvest. I am writing "Hershey's" for more data.

Weather is very dry here, we expect Rain next month.
Politics are tranquil here. We are all well as usual
and hope this finds you the same.

Mrs. Nan joins me in kindest regards,

Trusting to hear from you soon

I am as ever

Yours Very Truly

H. van Heurne

Jan 20-59.
H. A. VAN HERMANN
AGRONOMO Y HORTICULTOR
ESCUELA AGRICOLA E INDUSTRIAL
PRESTON, CUBA

Dr. Wilson Popenoe
Antigua Guatemala
America Central.

My Dear Friend:—

This is to let you know we have survived the revolution O.K. What might have happened did not come, Gracias a Dios. We were here in comunicado, 2 months. I am now getting mail that was posted Oct 10th, in Habana. We were under rifle fire one half day, the last day of the year. The Padre of Mayari Intervined between the two factions and got them to make peace. 200 rebel forces made the school building their head quarters for over a week. We have just filled up the trenches about the office. The school was choiced, and the teachers with families moved out when the rebels came in, there was some danger of air bombing. Mas. van and I did not go. We are over a block from the office in a strong cement and brick house. Aside from many inconveniences the school did not suffer. One of our Autos is still in the hills and may never return.

All this time I have been going on with my corn experiments, have 15 items in corn, and have made 3 hybrids here 2 on sweet corn and 2 on field, and good results, trying to leaghten the ears of our tropical corn which are short and still conserve the good hard
(over

weavel resisting qualities. Have run off 3 crops of Sesame in one year and five days, fractional area figuring 7 to 8 quintals for each crop, which amount to over a Ton per acre per year, all clean cultivation and one crop was irrigated twice. — American sweet potatoes (Southern) excellent results from slips against wire cutting, high rows against flat culture, and fertilizer etc, gains 70% to 100% against the Criollo way of culture. — Aguacates the fruit have a black rot, which appears about time of ripening, the Soil is not propitious. We are now eating nice fruits of a round hard shelled Guatemalan variety, which I picked up at Boston and grafted here, the size of large grape fruits. I have planted some on the breast of our small artificial pond where they will have deep Soil. Have some fine large Mexican Sapotes, 12 to 25 ounces, excellent qualities, but the Bats are a dam nuisance, make culture almost impossible. Kenaf is creating quite a stir here in Central Cuba as material for a bag industry, we have tried it here a few years ago, it was a failure here on account of Dematodes and excess of weeds in Soil.

Have a white a white Corambala, Sweet with excellent keeping qualities, and good flavor, much better than the Sour, yellow variety. School opens again this week, so, I will close, wishing you and the Madame health and prosperity, yours as ever, Van Dyke.

Mayo 1na. - 59.

Dr. Wilson Popenoe
Antigua, Guatemala America Central.

My Dear Friend: - your splendid letter of April 14,
at hand and am glad to know you are well and being as
usual. Here we are the same, nothing especially new.
Cuba's champion is in the north and has made
quite a hit. We think and hope he is honest. He has
not quite answered the Communist question, among his higher
governmental officials, whom are under suspicion by some
prominent people here and abroad. We wait to see.

Yes we are in the corn selection and crossing business
on ~~my~~ my own hook, to improve Cuban Corn, which is
good, of low yield. Am finding a lot of things I didn't know
before, and making some progress. My work with Dr. Henry A.
Wallace is on sweet corn I number in process.

Had a letter from my oldest and best disciple Sr.
Oscar Muñoz, who took over the remnants of my "Finca
Mulgoba Nurseries" when I quit. He is doing some good tricks
with Tropical fruits, especially Grafting, Mammey's
Colorado, sapotes, Persimmons etc. If you come to Cuba,
go and see him. The Chief of Agriculture of Mexico called on
him and was interested, said, They had better Sapotes on West
Coast of Mexico, than the Amerenda type. Muñoz said he would
love to see them. His report is from him. Most excellent.

2) His small nursery is 1 Kil. from Sto. de las Vegas in Calzada to Rincon
Sr. Carl Penning and his 4 companions in Point of Compassion spent
2 days here, said Sr. Munoz was a good nurseryman.

Speaking of Aguacates, I heard, some years ago of a crude type of a
fruit in the Aguacate genus that grows in the foot hills, or low lands of Mexico
and C. America and is eaten by the poor people and sometimes seen on the
market; I don't remember the name. Would it possibly be a good stock
for Aguacates on, or in our unsuitable conditions of soil? I don't
remember the name. I thought I had found such a fruit in Cuba: a
a young graduate from our School, here told me of a fruit he ate many
times as a boy on the bank of the river near Bayamo of the Aguacate family
which went under another name. I arranged to have him get one seed of
it, if possible, 2 years ago he went to his old stamping ground in search
of the tree and found that the bank of the river had caused in and destroyed
the entire tree. — "Aguacate Catalina" is an excellent fruit (of the West-
Indian type,) oval, green, wt. one to 3 pounds, flesh yellow, green margin,
and one in 6 may come true from seed, have some fine seedlings of
excellent quality, good bearers. — a good market size and quality;

For Mrs. Melnie Keiser, "Casa Mia", Divine, Texas. at least one of her sons was
in the war in the Pacific. — I close, write soon, we have so much in
common. With kindest regards from us both to you and yours, I

Remain yours sincerely
W. W. Hermann

June 3 - 60.

H. A. VAN HERMANN
AGRONOMO Y HORTICULTOR
ESCUELA AGRICOLA E INDUSTRIAL
PRESTON, CUBA

Dr. Wilson Popenoe
Antigua, Guatemala
America Central.

My Dear Old Friend;—

As I ~~last~~ said, ^{it's} been a long time between drinks,
I hope this finds you well and going.

Here we are about as usual, both getting old at 90 years.
Mrs. Van is getting rather feeble, which is to be expected.
Politics has left things somewhat unsettled, we hope for
the best since changes must come sooner or later.

I am going over old papers and letters and have a
bunch of yours. Yes, I have been here since 1904 through
thick and thin, have been too honest to make money, I
had plenty of chance to take in graft, but refused to soil my
conscience and good name. Some times I think I have been
ploughing in the sea. I have a lot of experience, but don't
know what to do with it. Very few are interested. But
at least I hope, I will leave some of my shadow on
Cuban Horticulture. Have made a number of crosses on
Sweet corn for Dr. Henry Wallace; and am selecting on
Cuban (Criolla) or flint type, a good corn, but low yield,
have put 2 inches on the ear in 7 generations and highest
yield on dent 8 1/2 bushels per acre, which is more than 3
times average yield. Let me hear from you, have some notes
on tropical fruits = good and bad. Kindest regards from us

Antigua Guatemala, 20 June 1960

Mr. H. H. Van Hermann,
Escuela Agrícola e Industrial,
Preston, Cuba.

Dear Van:

It was very good to hear from you again. I wish I had a reasonably chance of reaching your age, but I am quite sure I do not, so I am trying hard to put things in shape during the next five years, the principal thing is Manual of Fruit culture in Spanish on which I am working and in which you will be mentioned as perhaps the first man in Cuba to do anything in grafted mangos and avocados.

Yes indeed, you are going to leave your mark in Cuban horticulture. To my mind your real contribution has been the work you did in early days to stimulate the cultivation of good mangos and avocados. Of course, I'm glad to know you have been working on sweet corn, because this is something we need in tropical America. Send me a couple of dozen seeds if you develop something really superior.

I wish I could look forward to visiting you in Cuba, and I had planned to go over that way this year, but I guess I had better a while.

With warmest regards to your señora and yourself,

Sincerely yours,

Wilson Popenoe

H. A. VAN HERMANN
AGRONOMO Y HORTICULTOR
ESCUELA AGRICOLA E INDUSTRIAL
PRESTON, CUBA

July 17, - 60.

Dr. Wilson Poponce
Antigua, Guatemala, Gu., C.

My Dear Friend:-

Your good letter of June 13 received promptly. I am pleased to know that you are at work on a record of your life work to have it printed etc., something I have little hope of doing, or having it done.

Some members of our new Agriculture League offered to have my notes all printed as they said they needed them in their work, and asked for a statement of the case and some particulars, I answered, but got no reply.

Personally I cannot foot the bill of editing and printing, and at present the political atmosphere is not propitious there is too much excitement and confusion in the air.

Yes, I had at Finca Mulgoba the largest collection of tropical fruits ever collected in Cuba, some of which are now scattered all over the Island. Grafted mangoes, aguacates, cainitos, and achras zapotas. The last two, we had here this year fruits that weighed 20 to 28 ounces, and most delicious, both of Yucatan origin. Smaller fruits in many varieties (selected), and a host of ornamental plants and floral plants and bulbs, went through our nurseries, and were the first to be seen in this country, many are still being imported and disseminated here.

20 varieties of Ficus as shade and ornamental trees, which you may find specimens in the various parks of Cuba. Cinnamon, cloves, and nutmeg, pepper, did not prosper for lack of proper care and adverse ambiente. As you say fruits come first on our list, but the ~~contribution~~ greatest contribution to the Cuban flora was the importation of all kinds of trees plants and vines, for gardens Parks and forest work.

In 1904 there were no florist gardens, at 5 or 6 places you could buy 5 to 6 rose bushes Hybrid perpetuals grown from estacas in oil cans. There were no flower stores or gardens. We soon introduced 106 varieties of Hybrid-tea roses, mostly budded and thousands of other ornamental plants and in a few years of hard times, the whole situation was changed.

We made the first lawns in the Island, which still are kept up.

The man who mentioned my name for the medal of merit; told the member of the committee, "I am surprised that nothing has been done to honor Van Hermann for his 50 years work in Cuba, because one cannot travel in the Campesino, visit a park, go to a wedding, or a fiesta, without seeing and remembering the work of Van Hermann." and that about sums up the matter for me. Recently I was introduced to an old Doctor whom I had never seen or heard of, down the Island, who said, Oh, yes, I know of you long since, a man eficiente y de honor. — I want no better recommendation; and that is one reason I am not rich in dollars.

Here we are about as usual, except we have less American neighbors. We