



Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation  
5th Floor, Hunt Library  
Carnegie Mellon University  
4909 Frew Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213-3890  
Contact: Archives  
Telephone: 412-268-2434  
Email: [huntinst@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:huntinst@andrew.cmu.edu)  
Web site: [www.huntbotanical.org](http://www.huntbotanical.org)

The Hunt Institute is committed to making its collections accessible for research. We are pleased to offer this digitized version of an item from our Archives.

#### *Usage guidelines*

We have provided this low-resolution, digitized version for research purposes. To inquire about publishing any images from this item, please contact the Institute.

#### *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.

There are some things I do better than typing.  
Harlow.

Banamera, 1958  
December 3 1957

Dear Doc & Helen:

I have been wanting to write this note for some days and the sheet has been in the typewriter since Sunday. Just too many visitors, however, when I feel I am up to my neck with them I think of you in Antigua and your visitor problem and feel a lot better about it because mine could be worse than it is.

Anyway, we want to thank you both for one of the nicest afternoons spent with you good people a few Sundays ago. It was such a change from the usual Banamera routine and I won't forget it for a long while. Helen, you just work too hard for your guests.

This month will be a wonderful month for us. Bee, Harlow and my folks will be down - the latter for the <sup>winter</sup> ~~winter~~. All arrive between the 14th and 16th, the folks by ship and children by air. I<sup>A</sup> will be some re-union and only wish Bob could have gotten his leave this month instead of last month. He is in Germany now - the Berlin area.

When we arrived home the day following our nice get-together we found a letter from Harlow advising that due to cut-backs in the armed forces he was being discharged six months earlier than his full four year enlistment term, or in March 1958. This was wonderful news and I immediately wrote asking him to request discharge for early February in order to get back into College the second semester of 1958. The air force agreed to it providing that he is accepted by a college. In other words, he needs a letter of ACCEPTANCE from the college of his choice and a receipt of having paid the tuition for the semester. The latter is, of course, easy to comply with but his acceptance to a college is another matter and here is where I will appreciate it if you will use your good influence and which you offered providing it was in a college you felt you could exercise this influence with.

I think I told you that Harlow graduated from Culver Military Academy in 1953 at about the middle of his class. He enrolled at Un. of Florida that fall and failed in the second semester and was not eligible to return that fall so enlisted in the air-force for a four year term which was to terminate in Sept. 1958 but now is earlier as outlined above. He virtually was a "play-boy" at Un. of Florida and he is the first to admit it and the mistake he made. He is ready to go back to college and take it seriously now. He has learned his lesson. He has earned about a dozen credits in night school, Rollins College in the past year and a half while stationed in

Orlando, Fla. I point this out simply to show you his present day thinking as regards college training. He will be allright Doc and I have no fear that he will fail again. All I ~~want~~ and he wants is a chance to prove his earnestness. It is not easy for him to be considered for enrollment in good colleges with his Un. of Florida record. In fact the Un. of Texas has turned him down and ~~the~~ Texas A & M is undecided. I think you told me that you might be able to do something for him with Texas A&M. He would prefer Texas University simply because he wants to study for Petroleum Engineer and the course is good there but naturally would be very happy to enroll in Texas A&M where, after making a good record he probably could transfer to the college of his real choice and which offers the most in his chosen work. Does that make any sense?

Harlow arrives in Guatemala City on December 16th. Anita will meet him as I must meet the folks the previous day in Barrios. Would it be convenient for you to see Harlow and discuss this matter personally with him on the 17th or whichever other date you might set and which would be more convenient to you? This is so very important to him and us that we must move quickly on it so that he will not be tied up for so many months waiting for the fall 1958 term.

Could you advise me by telegram or letter sometime around the 12th <sup>if</sup> of the 17th or another date is satisfactory with you for his interview with you?

Doc, I am not one, as you know, to ask favors of my friends unless it is so absolutely necessary and, in this case, I feel it is necessary. Anything you may be able to do will, you know, be so very much appreciated.

You and Helen have a date with us in Bananera before you leave for Europe. Remember that. All our best regards to you both

Sincerely yours,

Harlow



Antigua, 2 January 1958

Mr H A von Wald  
Bananera

Dear Harlow:

Herewith copy of the letter I sent President Reitz. I will let you know when I hear from him. It now appears that Helen and I are going to be in Gainesville about the end of this month and I will undoubtedly be seeing President Reitz. If I do not hear from him in the meantime I will bring the matter to his attention. What I assume he will do is to turn my letter over to the appropriate official of the University inquiring if anything more can be done for Harlow, and probably mentioning that he is personally interested in the matter. I hope so at least.

Were you at Zamorano when Archie Carr was there? I think so. He and his family spent two days with us on their way home from Costa Rica, a week or so ago. He has been down there organizing the Dept of Biology in the Universidad Nacional and was on his way back to Florida to take up again his duties as Associate Head of the Dept of Biology. I talked with him about Harlow. He said if it appears impossible to get him back to Gainesville, he would recommend that he go to Rollins or the University of Miami, with the probability that he could easily transfer after a year or two. You might keep this in mind.

We plan to leave here on the 27th for Miami, then Gainesville, then New York where I have to attend a meeting of the Board of Trustees of EAP, then we plan to spend a couple of weeks in Washington with the kids (Nancy and Marion and their families) then go over to Spain. If things go well we may stay in Europe practically the rest of the year.

Happy New Year to all of you, and best regards always.

Sincerely,

Antigua, 11 January 1958

Dear Harlow:

I enclose two papers from Florida, which you can of course keep for your guidance. The test scores seem to be the thing. I do not understand them at all, and you probably wont either, but they seem to be very discouraging - the Registrar says under their present requirements Harlow would not have been admitted with these scores.

It seems to me the best thing to do now, is just what Archie Carr recommended: get Harlow into a college where they are not so strict as they are in the State universities. Schools where you have to pay and where they want students, as I imagine they do at the Univ of Miami, are not inclined to be so exacting.

Tell me if I can be of any further use in this matter. Helen and I are planning to fly to Miami on the 25th of this month, then to Gainesville about the first of February, for a few days before going to New York and Washington. Then Europe about March 1st. Looks like we wont be able to make it to Bananera - I am snowed under trying to clean up things here. Mail keeps pouring in and I have no stenog. Met Clyde de Lawder at the hotel here the other day, and Charley Parrish at Quzaltenango a couple of days ago; didnt recognize either of them. They have both gotten fat just as I have, still they recognized me!

Affectionate regards to you both, in which Helen joins

Cordially



Bananera , Guatemala  
January 14th 1958

Dear Doc:

Many thanks for your good letter of some days ago and to which you had attached a copy for me of your letter to the president of University of Florida regarding Harlow's situation. This arrived a week ago yesterday ( Sunday ) PM , a few hours after Harlow had returned to his Base. I informed him immediately of your action in his favor and I want you to know that all of us here sincerely thank you for what you did for Harlow and I feel certain that if they do not accept him for the spring semester that they will for the fall term. After receiving your letter and the copy referred to earlier I took the privilege and wrote to your friend , the president of the University , simply to tell him a few more of the facts in the case , his work at Rollins and gave him Harlow's address - his Base. I sincerely hope that I have not overstepped myself in so doing Doc , and if I have I am very sorry and will have to be excused - a father just trying to help his son because he believes in him a terribly lot. I am so anxious to know the final outcome of all this and we should know before too long.

Your trip to Spain surely is something you and Helen must be looking forward to with all your hearts and we hope all your plans go forward without a hitch. Try and get out before , or soon after the elections. I am afraid there will be a lot of trouble. At least we are expecting it here on the coast. Whatever needs to be done to settle the country down to some good honest government will be a good thing I think. I wish you and Helen could have gotten over here for a few days before your departure but this now does not look possible or even practical. Will have to wait until your return but don't make it too long Doc.

My parents are doing pretty well and especially dad. He seems to never tire and always wants to do something. He has found a nice outlet in reading good books - any books for that matter and spends many hours a day in reading them and which is entirely new to him. He loves to hunt and fish - so do I , hence we get together as frequently as it is possible for me to do so. My oldest sister and husband are to leave Wisconsin on the 24th and drive to Bananera and I have not yet made up my mind what to do about it. May have to cancel out the last part of their trip.

Doc , before you get away or , at least when you get to Spain , drop me a line giving me your address. I am sure you would like a word from Guatemala once in a while in that part of the world. Now , best of luck to both of you on this trip. Many thanks again and all our best to you both.

Always , your friend

*Harlo*

Antigua, 17 January 1958

Dear Harlo:

Your letter of the 14th has just come. It probably crossed in the mail with the one I sent, enclosing the reply I got from my letter to the University of Florida. You will have seen that the reply was not encouraging, but at the same time I don't feel too badly about it, for these reasons: (1) He is not entirely disqualified ~~and~~ regards re-entering the University of Florida. They advise against it, because of the low grades may in the tests he took before entrance, and feel that he is doomed to failure if he goes back there. I do not feel this way but if he enters with that cloud over him it is likely to be hard for him to live it down. (2) There is no particularly valid reason why he should be back to the University of Florida. There are plenty of other schools just as good, and if he goes to one of them, all they will receive from Florida (I am assuming this) is the transcript of his grades (not the tests) and anybody is entitled to make up failures.

We expect to be in Gainesville in a little over a week, now, and if President Reitz is there we will probably have a meal with him and that will be a good time to bring up the matter of Harlow, which I shall do, and ask his advice. I think you did the right thing in writing to him; no one could object to that. I suspect that he will stick to the recommendation already made, i.e., that Harlow go to another school where he does not have the unfortunate background he has at Gainesville, and I really believe I agree in this. If Gainesville were the only place he can get what he wants and needs I would put up more of a fight, but I can't see that it is. I believe the best thing for him, under the circumstances, would be to go to some college like Rollins or the Univ of Miami or elsewhere - not necessarily in Florida, and after a couple years of satisfactory grades, transfer to some school which specializes in the branch he wants to follow - if he has found out by that time what branch he likes. And don't be too discouraged if he doesn't make up his mind too early. I always remember my roommate at Pomona, who graduated as Class president; didn't know what he wanted to do, and because his father was pastor of the First Congregational Church in Pasadena (to which I belonged at the time! I have strayed from the fold like a lost sheep) he decided to go to the theological seminary; stayed two years; went to the First World War as an ambulance driver; came home and dropped out of theology and ended up selling Prestolite gas.

We are glad our parents are enjoying their stay with you. I hope and your dad shoot plenty of pigeons and catch a lot of big fish. Which reminds me of the time President Ubico was out fishing near Cape Three Points; he hooked a big one and as he was dragging him out of the water his companions said "Bien pescado, señor Presidente" but when he got him alongside they found a shark had bitten off the whole body and there was nothing but the head left to take home and make soup.

Our address in Spain will be care of Mrs Martha Sussmann, at the American Embassy; she is going to forward our mail. But I will probably write you when we get established in Almuñecar and want to receive mail there. We sure want to hear from you folks every once in a while.

Always yours,



Antigua, 1 April 1959

Mr H A von Wald, Manager  
UFCo, Bananera.

Dear Harlo:

(And please note I still spell it that way, though maybe you are right in spelling it with a W; our little Sally sticks to the Sally but when she gets a passport or signs checks at the bank (which she does very rarely, she is Pauline).

You doubtless heard through the UFCo grapevine that we got back from Spain and Italy and Israel and the Canary Islands at Christmas; then went up to California for a month; then back Home (and how we love this Home) and now it appears we have to hop off in a few days for Venezuela. I dont know whether or not the Fundación Eugenio Mendoza was in existence when you were in Venezuela. Probably not. My old buddy Jim Kempton, who is now retired and living in San Francisco, California, talked me into the idea of going down to Maracay for a couple of weeks to help the Eugenio Mendozas plan a fruit improvement program which will - or should- work. No salary, just expenses, and they will be plenty. They tell us we will have a room at the Hotel Maracay; you probably know it but I dont. I always stayed at La Barraca where they had mighty good arepas. I prefer arepas to caviar on toast.

I have also heard from Florida that the University is going to do a cooperative program in Venezuela, agriculture and horticulture, and I have written to say that there wont be any competition from my side; I will help them if I can. I think my job is to indicate fruit varieties which will or may do well down there; pick out some sites for orchards; try to find and maybe train, up here, a man or two who knows how to propagate fruit trees, and then get the Hell out of there. The real job is to find the man. I think you know, by this time, that you can do almost anything in this world if you have the right man for it.

Hugh hasnt written me about my godson and how he is getting along at Gainesville. I wish you would drop me a line to be here when we get back from Caracas - about the end of April, if we have enough money left to pay for a car to bring us to Antigua from the airport, which is rather doubtful.

And another thing. When we want to build a bathroom which according to Helen will be soon I want you to tell me about the equipment. Looks like we may need an electric pump and a pressure tank and a hot water heater. Sometimes I doubt if there will be any water to heat. But we really can do things here in Antigua, for example, when they carried el Señor Sepultado ythrough the streets last week on a tremendous platform with fluorescent lights and Kohler of Kohler underneath turning out I suppose several kilowatt hours. Maybe you and Anita came drop over here for a day or two when we get back from Caracas. Even if we dont have enough money left to buy beefsteak for you, our credit is still mighty good here. So you are going to come for a visit. I havent seen Bill Taillon since we got back from California but will probably see him before we leave for Caracas and I am going to tell him you have a compromispwith us.

Affectionate regards to you both,



Antigua, 20 Sept 1959

Mr H A von Wald, Manager  
United Fruit Co, Bananera.

Dear Harlo:

Now see here, viejo, I want an answer to this letter not later than the day after you get it. Of course it will be the first time in your puerca vida you have ever answered a letter in less than than 30 days but there is a first time for everything.

We are making some additions, alterations etc and have to do some painting. It seems to me we used to put something in the paint we used on white ceilings at Tela to keep them from developing that black mould which is so unattractive. Is this correct? Was it bichloride of mercury? Or something else? Tell me if we did use something, what it was and how much with a quart or gallon of paint. I believe I am right in feeling that we did use something. I remember also that Norman Volk brought down a swéal idea. He put some bichloride of mercury, I think it was, in a little shellac and painted the books with it and the covers did not get mouldy in the wet season. I must get that idea because when we go away from here in the wet season our books get in very bad shape. Grow whiskers all over them just like our shoes used to dá Tela during the Northers.

Seems to me I have read somewhere very recently that you are putting in 11,000 acres of new plantings in your Division. I hope so. That circular of August 19 in which they ~~explained~~ explained why we are not going to get a dividend next month said there will be no more Gros Michel. If they stick to this policy we may make some money one of these days. Do you remember how we planted that 110 acres at Tiquisate as an experiment; it went fine for seven years, not a single blow-down; and then when we went in and began to plant farms they blew right off the map? I dont think the Lord really loves the United Fruit Co.

Dont forget, whenever you come up to the City, and have a few hours to spare, we want you to drop in on us, any time; and bring Anita if she is with you.

Everyyours,

Cia. Frutera de Sevilla  
Santa Marta, Colombia  
February 4, 1964.

Dr. Wilson Popenoe  
Antigua  
Guatemala.

Dear Doc:

What a pleasant surprise upon returning from a ten-day trip to Boston to find your good letter. The last time I really had first-hand information about you was from Hugh when our paths crossed for a few minutes in the Montego Bay Airport. I got the impression then you were not too well but judging by your letter telling of all the things you have been doing recently that you are again your old self and that makes Anita and me happy.

We are glad you got to see Harlo and family. We think he has a wife that is very good for him. How you ever were able to spend a few hours with those two hellions of theirs around you is simply not understandable. They must have put them to bed. It was good to hear that Harlo is doing well. Not because he is my son, but I do honestly believe that if they give him a chance he will go far in our Company.

I am going to La Lima on Sunday for the Managers-Boston Officials meeting. It had been called for in Almirante for January 25th but due to the Panamanian trouble it was cancelled and then set up in La Lima.

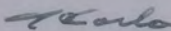
Wish you could see our Turbo operation which you must have heard a lot about. It should be another Honduras; that is, if the Associate Producers follow our advise. Bob is planting 100 hectares there. He has been sick a lot with malaria which seems difficult to shake.

As for the Santa Marta operation - this is being reduced strictly to an Agency as fast as possible. The fruit here is lousy, weighing on the average 48 pounds. Most of the Producers are not farmers and that is the trouble.

I feel very guilty for not having written to you over the past few years. We often think of you. It was good news when I heard Bert Muller was at the EAP but have never really known if he was appointed Director. I hope he did get the appointment. They no longer send me the School News but perhaps it was discontinued. I always enjoyed reading it. Those were good days - gone forever.

Do take care of yourself Doc and best regards to you from both of us

Always,



H. A. von Wald



COMPANIA FRUTERA DE SEVILLA

Santa Marta, Colombia  
June 23, 1964

Dr. Bert Muller  
Director, Escuela Agricola Panamericana  
Zamorano, Honduras

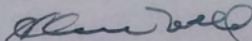
Dear Dr. Muller:

Many thanks for your good letter of several weeks ago in which you ask me to visit the School for the purpose of helping you design several additional new constructions. This action on the part of you, Dr. Popenoe and the Board of Directors flatters me very much and nothing would give me more pleasure than to take you up on this invitation. Unfortunately this is not possible, and I am most sorry to have to advise you that I cannot accept for reasons beyond my control.

Please accept my sincere thanks for the consideration extended me by you and your associates.

Kindest regards.

Sincerely yours,



H. A. von Wald

cc: Mr. R. A. Holcombe  
Mr. R. O. Miller

bc:  Dr. W. Popenoe (Antigua, Guatemala)

*Am truly sorry about this and  
certainly appreciate your thinking  
of me in this matter. Will  
write you later as must  
have news for Boston. Many  
regards. always,  
Paul*

Puerto Armuelles, Panama  
September 12, 1969

Dr. Wilson Popenoe  
Antigua

Dear Doc:

What a pleasant surprise to hear from you. Just a couple of hours earlier we had been talking about you at a luncheon and then your letter arrived.

Yes, we are in Armuelles. I relieved Clyde De Lawder in late May current year. Clyde retired a few years early because his health was not so good. Lives in Fort Myers, Florida. Anita, Alberta and our two peagles didn't get here until the end of July. As usual she is "re-doing" the house and I still can't see the end. In the meantime we eat breakfast and a little something at night at home and have lunch at the Blair House.

We stopped purchasing and exporting fruit in Santa Marta in mid 1966. I stayed liquidating our properties in S/Marta and the banana zone and our credits with the Producers. About 5% of the banana zone properties were sold to individuals over these years and the bulk I finally sold to INCORA - the Colombian Govt. land reform agency for 28 million pesos. The S/Marta properties which are now all sold brought 24 million pesos - the sale to INCORA payable over 12 years except for 2.7 million cash paid when we signed the document. The S/Marta sales were mostly on a cash basis. I purchased the manager's residence in S/Marta and where Bob and family now live. Bob purchased a nice house in the Prado about three years ago and which he now rents out. So, once I had everything sold I had my choice of taking early retirement or a transfer. It wasn't a difficult decision for me to make but I had to convince Anita who wanted to settle somewhere in Florida - probably around the Ocala area. I was all for moving to the States too but still I wanted another shot at operations before bowing out of the Company. So here we are, probably until February 1st, 1972 and maybe earlier if it doesn't suit me to stay until normal retirement age.

I know about as much of the spinoff of this division as you do Doc. Perhaps you may even know more than I. It is supposed to occur on July 17th, 1972 but I've been thinking the last two days due to the Honduras Division disaster last week that the Justice Dept. may give the company a further extension. It seems logical to me to grant it to the company - if they request it. The company will undoubtedly have to expand cultivations quickly in another division because we cannot, in my opinion, provide the necessary Company produced fruit for our jobbers with Honduras out of the picture for a few years. We will have to go on the open market (Ecuador??) for some of our requirements.

About our children. Bob has turned out to be the agriculturist in the family. You'd never known him. Serious, hard worker and a wonderful father. He married Erika, a West Berlin girl while stationed there in the Army for two years. A perfectly wonderful girl. They have a 4 1/2 year old daughter and a one year boy. Bob has two banana farms in Turbo for a total of 133 hectares, 200 hectares of cotton each year and takes care of my two coffee farms. He has his hands full but has taken on a



good man to help him. There is so much time lost traveling to all the different points each month that he needed some help. Then there are two other business Anita and I are in which he watches for us.

Harlo, of course, is still with the Tela Railroad Co. and it appears he has a good future ahead of him. Of course, I always and still maintain, that in general, one's future in Company depends so much on "the color of your eyes". Maybe you won't agree with me but I've seen it over and over again in our company - and to some extent other companies must be similar. He has two boys and a girl. We think Joy, his wife, is just the best.

Bee married in June 1968 in Santa Marta. Her husband is an Englishman from northern England - an engineer. They live in S.W. Miami. Have a baby boy and everything seems to be fine to date. They and Bob and family will spend the Christmas holidays with us in Armuelles.

About Zamorano. I'd like to see it once more before leaving the Company. Yes, I well imagine I would hardly know the place. I frequently find someone who has been there recently. I'm not at all convinced that the many changes in the school's ideals, etc. have been the thing to do. I will "feel" for old man Zemurray should the Honduran government get control of the school's curriculum. That, in my opinion, would be the last straw! They have gone a long way since you and I were on the spot.

Anita and I don't go to Sauk City any more as both mother and dad have passed away. Dad in Colombia in 1965. In fact, I haven't taken a real vacation since 1965, the year we spent three months in Europe. Anita occasionally goes with me to the States where I go on business, mostly for shopping but over the past year to spend time with Bee.

Yes, we heard of your marriage via a friend in Barranquilla who has a friend somewhere in northern Florida who saved the article covering your marriage in a newspaper and sent the clipping to Barranquilla. Small world! No, we did not receive an announcement. Our congratulations to both of you and best wishes for the future. I believe I have more Swiss in me than German. Incidentally Switzerland is the most beautiful country. We loved it.

Anita joins me in thanking you for your good letter and as I, sends best wishes.

Sincerely yours,

Antigua, Guatemala, 8 January 1974

Mr Harlo A. von Wald,  
Santa Marta, Colombia.

Dear Harlo:

As Jaime Villegas would say, "Harlo, is a question." You know I have been interested in avocados all my life, and tried to learn all I could about the origin of our cultivated forms - in other words, wild avocados. And as you also know, we classify the cultivated avocados, for convenience, in three races, the Mexican, which includes the small, thin-skinned fruits which are so abundant in the highlands of Mexico, where they are native; the Guatemalan, which includes the thick skinned (we sometimes used to call them hard-shelled) avocados of which we have so many here in the Guatemalan highlands. (We believe we have found the wild ancestors in the mountains from southern Mexico down to Nicaragua - there are lots of them here in Guatemala, up at elevations of 8000 and 9000 feet. And thirdly the West Indian race, which includes the avocados of the lowlands of tropical America.

For many years I tried to locate the wild ancestors of our cultivated varieties. We had reason to think it might be in Colombia. One time when I was in Santa Marta I went over to the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, close to the coast and only a few miles from Santa Marta, and there were hundreds of trees there which were growing in the open forest, but their fruits were quite variable in size, shape and color. I was forced to conclude that they were "escapes" as we call them, and not truly wild or indigenous. Later on I went up to Mr Fly's coffee finca "Cincinnati" isn't it, and saw more avocados but



here again they look more like cultivated avocados which have "more wild" than truly wild trees.

Then many years later when Paul Allen was working on the little experiment station the Company had established at Esquinas - you know the place - he did a lot of plant collecting in that region and up in the mountains at about 250 feet elevation (that is not really in the mountains of course; he just called it "Esquinas forest" he found what really looks like the true ancestor of our West Indian race of avocados. For one thing, the fruits are round, a couple of inches in diameter, with a large seed. I have the feeling that wild avocados are round or nearly - the Guatemalans are, the Mexicans are egg-shaped, but it looks to me that the long pear shaped fruits are cultivated forms, or have been. Anyway, all of us are convinced that Paul has found after all these years we have been searching, the wild avocado of the West Indian race. We would expect to find this avocado at low elevations, just as we find the Guatemalans and the Mexicans only at high elevations, relatively speaking.

Paul published a picture of his wild avocado, Plate 27 in his excellent book "The Rain Forests of Golfo Dulce", 1956.

It does not seem likely that this wild avocado would only be found in a very limited region, the the Esquinas area, and I have always felt that avocados must have been wild, from the start, over in Colombia also. You know the very first account we have of the avocado was written by the bachiller Fernandez de Enciso who saw cultivated avocados in one of those little valleys which come down from the Sierra Nevada not far from Santa Marta; I went to try to find out just which valley, one time, and thought it might be the one we now call Don Diego; Enciso had called it Yaharo in his book, the first account of the New World ever published; that was 1519.

In my search for wild avocados in Colombia I probably went too high up; I don't know why it never occurred to me that they ought to be fairly low down, probably not higher than 1000 or 2000 feet though the cultivated varieties of this race grow in Colombia and Costa Rica up to 4000 feet or so.

Now here is what I want to ask of you: Having in mind that the true wild form of the West Indian avocado will probably be very much like the one Paul Allen found at Esquinas, round, thick skinned, and yellowish-green in color. With a big seed and not much meat, do you think you have ever seen anything of this sort back of Santa Marta, would be the Valle Dupar, or some other region up near Aracataca where I believe you have, or had, some land? If you have never seen it, I wonder if you could not make a trip of exploration for us, get into a region at the foot of the Sierra Nevada, virgin forest which has never been felled and cultivated, in other words a region like that of Esquinas which I am sure you are familiar with, or at least know how it would look because you have been so long in that part of Costa Rica-Panama. The trees will probably be tall and you may not be able to see the fruits on them; the monkeys will have dropped some on the ground, because they eat the fruits.

Well, I am sure I have given you enough detail so that you will understand what we are after. If you ever think you have found what we are after, make some notes as to location and other things, and if you can, get some seeds for Doctor Zentmyer of Riverside, California who has devoted years to finding an avocado which will do as a root-stock for cultivated avocados and at the same time be resistant to the root disease technically known as Phytophthora cinnamomi. Finally, talk to a lot of the local lads who get out in the forest at times or I see what they know about wild avocados.