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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.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
ANN ARBOR  
SCHOOL OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
Sept. 28, 1957

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

Dr. Wilson Poponoe, Director  
Escuela Agricola Panamericana  
Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Dear Dr. Poponoe

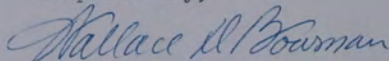
Dr. Cain of the Conservation Department at the University of Michigan has asked me to write a short report on the activities centered around the Escuela Agricola Panamericana. I missed you when I visited the school in October of 1956 but was kindly received by others of your staff. They explained the general set-up at the school and your program so this is fairly clear to me. Also I have talked to Dr. Sears about your school and he had pertinent remarks to make concerning the possible impact which your school has had and will have in agriculture in Central America.

I would greatly appreciate your giving me comments on a few questions I'd like to ask. I know they are quite general and so I can expect general answers.

- a) What is the importance of your school in terms of the over-all situation for agricultural training in Central America. How about other schools? Can you tell me a little of the Olancho school which the government opened recently?
- b) What has happened to your graduates? What types of activities are most of them in now? What new developments have they created?
- c) Can you tell me how your graduates have fitted into technical aid programs?
- d) Can you cite specific examples where your students have been successful in instituting a program of upgrading agricultural practices?
- e) In the light of your experience as director of the school what comments do you have regarding agricultural education set-ups which are needed in Central America and how do you think they should be developed?

If you have extra copies of annual reports concerning the school I would appreciate receiving these.

Respectfully,



Wallace D. Bowman

Dear Doctor Bowman:

It gave me great pleasure to receive your inquiries of 28 September. As a starter, I enclose a copy of our brochure "The Story of the Escuela Agricola Panamericana" which will give you pertinent facts regarding the philosophy and the history of the school. You may have seen this already. I have penned a few corrections in it, bringing the cost figures down to date, or I should say, up to date, because you know costs have not been going down since 1950 but up:

About the middle of the present year I retired as Director of the school, returned to my old home in Antigua, Guatemala, and am devoting myself to ~~improvement~~ <sup>the development</sup> of fruit culture in tropical America and to cooperation with vocational schools of agriculture in various countries, schools which are interested in the practical kind of training we have given at Escuela Agricola Panamericana during 15 years and which has, we think, <sup>proved successful</sup> (and we base our thinking on the records of our 543 graduates and public opinion in this part of the world). The new Director of the school is Dr William C Paddock, who, before assuming his ~~new~~ post, had worked in Guatemala for nearly four years, latterly with technicians of the Point Four Program. Doctor Paddock will, I am sure, be glad to answer any questions you may ask, if I do not cover all the points in which you are interested. Here are my own answers to the specific questions raised in your letter.

a/ <sup>and b.</sup> The importance of our school in terms of the over-all situation for agricultural training in Central America, and what about other schools? We have the profound conviction that the type of training visualised by Samuel Zemurray (former President of the United Fruit Company and father of the school) <sup>is</sup> ~~was~~ right. This

conviction is based upon the fact that at least half a dozen other schools, from Mexico to Ecuador, have taken a leaf out of our book, so to speak; they have sent their own staff members to study our methods and have adopted many of them. The school established by the government of Honduras at Catacamas, in the Department of Olancho, <sup>is following</sup> ~~has adopted~~ our program almost in its entirety, and its teaching staff is composed almost wholly of our graduates. The recently-opened Escuela Nacional de Agricultura in El Salvador <sup>is using</sup> ~~has adopted~~ our <sup>methods to a</sup> ~~program~~ <sup>extent;</sup> ~~in large part;~~ two of its three Department heads are graduates of our school; and ~~at the invitation of the Minister of Agriculture~~ I have just returned from two months in El Salvador, during which time I made a study of their program <sup>with</sup> ~~and~~ recommendations which are being followed. The Escuela Nacional de Agricultura here in Guatemala has put its instruction on a more practical basis; we have had visits from leaders <sup>of</sup> the national schools of agriculture in ~~Guatemala~~ Nicaragua, Panama, and Ecuador.

We have argued from the start (and we have convinced <sup>0</sup> many people) that what tropical America most needs is sound practical training combined with basic scientific knowledge to an extent which enables a man to know why he does things a certain way, - <sup>in</sup> ~~in~~ other words, the basic principles behind tropical agriculture.

b. What has happened to our graduates? What new developments have they created? Since our brochure was written we have, of course, had opportunity to learn more along these lines. It was a source of satisfaction to us to ~~to~~ <sup>find</sup> ~~learn~~, last year, that 98% of our graduates are in agriculture or allied activities. This is, we believe, something of a record. We do not assume too much credit for it. The <sup>explanation</sup> ~~reason~~ is this: the <sup>area</sup> ~~region~~ in which we work is basically agricultural. There is a tremendous demand for agriculturists with sound training, - a training which as above mentioned, combines

practical experience with an understanding of principles. Latin American agriculturists, the leaders in the field of agricultural production, realise this; and our graduates have been and are in ~~great~~ demand. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ To our great satisfaction, the extension services of several countries have absorbed as many of our boys as they could get and they are howling for more. A few years ago the head of ~~the~~ extension in Salvador sent me a photograph of his staff. I noted that there were eleven agents. A few months later this man <sup>a</sup> came to our school. He asked, "Did you get that photograph?" and I said "Yes, and it was a <sup>pleasing</sup> great satisfaction for us to see that ~~out-~~ of your ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ eleven agents, ten of them <sup>are EAP</sup> ~~were~~ our graduates." "Yes", he replied, "and I fired the other one." And just a few days ago I was talking with the head of the extension service here in Guatemala. "How many of our boys do you have?" I asked him. "Not enough. I wish I could get a lot more".

~~Out~~ <sup>o</sup> of our 543 graduates I think there must be 50 to 75 in extension work. This past year several countries sent men to our school ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ in advance of graduation, to line up ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ in advance as many boys as possible, just like they do for football teams in the United States. We could have placed at least 50 more boys than were available this past March - in other words, twice the total number of our graduates.

Those who do not ~~go into~~ <sup>sign up for</sup> extension work ~~lead in~~ <sup>go in for</sup> the following major activities: Ten to 15 percent go on to the United States (principally the College of Agriculture of the University of Florida) to <sup>work toward</sup> ~~take~~ the degree of B.S.A., ~~and~~ with specialization in some branch - such as soils or agronomy or horticulture. Others go into the educational field (and usually these ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ have been to the States and obtained the B.S.A. degree). Some go back to

their own farms, and others obtain employment on large privately owned farms such as the <sup>o</sup> coffee plantations of these countries. All in all, the record is eminently satisfactory - 98% in agriculture or allied pursuits, as I have said. A few are demonstrating the use of farm machinery for selling companies; one is Director General of Agriculture in the Dominican Republic; another is running a large milk cooperative in El Salvador, still another ~~XXXXXXXX~~ making and selling dairy products on his own. Another was sent to Italy by the Honduran government and came back with a doctorate in veterinary medicine from Perugia - the first of our graduates to earn a doctorate. I think this answers in a general way your questions (a) and (b).

c. How have our graduates fitted into technical aid programs? Since the latter, in many regions, are cooperative between the local governments and ICA, I think the answer is covered to a large extent by the above comments; but I may add that several of our <sup>boys</sup> graduates are serving as assistants to the <sup>technicians</sup> technical advisors sent down from the United States under the ~~technical assistance~~ Point Four program. For example, I have just come from Salvador (as mentioned previously) where two of our graduates are running nurseries to produce fruit trees in quantity, a project operated ~~XXXXX~~ ~~XXXX~~ by the local Ministry of Agriculture in cooperation with the technician<sup>s</sup> of the Point Four program. Others are teaching in agricultural schools (for example<sup>s</sup> at Catacamas in Honduras and in Nicaragua and in Ecuador) ~~XXXXXX~~ where United States technical advisors<sup>h</sup> have an active part. Extension services also come into this picture, hence we can truthfully say that many ~~XXXX~~ of our boys are involved <sup>in</sup> in the cooperative programs between the United States and Latin American governments.

d. Can I cite specific examples where our students have been successful in instituting a program of upgrading agricultural practices? I think I have covered this above, in a general way. We could of course come down to a large number of specific ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ instances - case histories as it were. If you think these would be helpful, we will be glad to send you, let us say, ten or twenty individual case histories. I think the extension agents would be the ones to receive most credit for "upgrading agricultural practices".

e. What comments do I have regarding agricultural education set-ups which are needed in Central America and how do I think they should be developed? This is right down my alley, but not everyone will agree completely with my views - which have only this merit; they are based on my fifteen years' experience in developing and directing Escuela Agricola Panamericana. What we most need are more vocational <sup>al</sup> schools which will stick to the philosophy of practice backed by sound knowledge of principles. The tendency has been to go in for too much theory and not enough practice, - at least this is my criticism in general. Many countries have preferred to set up Colleges of Agriculture where the student ~~ended~~ <sup>ends</sup> with a professional degree, (as it is <sup>here</sup> termed; we would hardly call a B.S. a professional degree, would we?) The graduated gets the title of "Ingeniero Agronomo". <sup>B</sup> By no means <sup>would</sup> do I disparage the degree of B.S.A., but my point is this: We need and can use a limited number of soil scientists and plant pathologists and physiologists and geneticists in any given tropical American country. These men should have the best technical training possible, and to get it, they should go to institutions prepared to give it on a high level. A small country such as Honduras, let us say, can not afford to hire top men in ~~the~~ specialised fields, ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx simply~~ because there are not enough men <sup>who want training</sup> to train in any one of those fields.

For every specialist we need a thousand or ten thousand <sup>good</sup> well trained farmers. For this reason I have advocated the vocational schools. Let us train good farmers; let us use some of them to train other farmers (as extension agents) and when we find an occasional young man (as we find every year at Escuela Agrícola Panamericana) who wants to go on and specialise, send him off to a place where he can sit at the feet of a real expert in his chosen field. For example, if I wanted to train a young man in irrigation agriculture I would beg Veihmeyer at Davis to take him under his wing, - and <sup>I am</sup> Veihmeyer would do it. If I wanted to train a man in agricultural engineering I would probably follow the example we set four years ago when we sent a <sup>o</sup> member of our staff, a Colombian (Luis Morcillo) to Michigan, where he took his M.S.A.E. with a splendid record. We have sent 16 of our graduates to Florida; all of them ~~earned~~ ~~with~~ earned the B.S.A., three of them took Masters. ~~xxxxxxx~~

Our vocational schools in tropical (not only Central) America will have to be developed mainly by the governments of these countries. Some years ago Nelson Rockefeller asked me, "About how many <sup>vo-ed</sup> schools do you think we need in tropical America, as a minimum?" I made a hasty calculation, and replied "Fifteen and no less; but dont you try to develop fifteen right off the bat. They cannot be adequately staffed." That is the problem. Salvador is feeling it right now. They have built a magnificent physics plant, better than the one we have at Escuela Agrícola Panamericana. They can get all the students they want, and more (Salvador sends more applications annually to our school than any other three countries combined). But they are having a hard time finding teachers who have the necessary scientific background plus practical training (I have



mentioned that they have two of our graduates, both of whom have our training plus B.S. Abs from the University of Florida). Another handicap is that governments find it difficult to ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ <sup>(perhaps for political reasons)</sup> put enough practical training in the program. The hopeful feature here is the interest which has been shown by half a dozen or more governments in our program. Progress has been made, but we still have a pretty long row to hoe, - and I can hardly say this is a metaphor!

I am advised from Honduras that they have sent you such of our annual reports as are ~~xxxxx~~ available. I think, however, that "The Story of Escuela Agricola Panamericana" will be just about all you need in the way of background. If, however, you have further questions both Dr Paddock and myself will be happy to answer them to the best of our ability.

Sincerely,

Wilson Popencoe  
Director Emeritus

blind copies to: Mr E S Whitman, New York  
Dr W C Paddock, Tecucigalpa.

Antigua, Guatemala, 16 October 1957

Dr Wallace D. Bowman  
Dept of Conservation, School of Natural Resources  
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Dear Doctor Bowman:

It gave me great pleasure to receive your inquiries of 28 September. As a starter, I enclose a copy of our brochure "The Story of the Escuela Agrícola Panamericana", which will give you pertinent facts regarding the philosophy and history of the school. You may have seen this brochure already. I have penned a few corrections in it, bringing the cost figures down to date, or I should say, up to date, because you know costs have not been going down since 1950 but up.

About the middle of the present year I retired as Director of the school, returned to my old home in Antigua, Guatemala, and am devoting myself to the development of fruit culture in tropical America and to cooperation with vocational schools of agriculture in a number of Latin American countries - schools which are interested in the practical kind of training we have given at Escuela Agrícola Panamericana for fifteen years and which has, we think, proved successful. We base our thinking on the records of our 543 graduates and on public opinion in this part of the world. The new Director is Dr William C Paddock who, before assuming the post, had worked in Guatemala for nearly four years, latterly with technicians of the Point Four Program. Doctor Paddock will, I am sure, be glad to answer any questions you may ask, if I do not cover all of the points in which you are interested. Here are my own answers to your specific questions:

(a and b). The importance of our school in terms of the over-all situation for agricultural training in Central America, and what about other schools? We have the profound conviction that the type of training visualised by Samuel Zemurray (former President of the United Fruit Company and founder of the school) is right. This conviction is based upon the fact that at least half a dozen other schools, from Mexico to Ecuador, have taken a leaf out of our book, so to speak. They have sent staff members to study our methods and have adopted many of them. The school established by the government of Honduras at Catacamas, in the Department of Olancho, is following our program almost entirely, and its teaching staff is composed almost wholly of our graduates. The recently-opened Escuela Nacional de Agricultura in El Salvador is using our methods to a large degree, and two of its three department heads are graduates of our school. The Escuela Nacional de Agricultura here in Guatemala has sent its teachers to our school and has put its instruction on a more practical basis. And we have had visits from leaders of the national schools of agriculture in Nicaragua, Panama, and Ecuador.

We have argued from the start (and we seem to have convinced many people) that what tropical America most needs is sound practical training combined with basic scientific knowledge to an extent which enables a man to know why he does things a certain way - in other words the simple basic principles behind tropical agriculture.

(b). What has happened to our graduates? What new developments have they created? Since our brochure was written we have had, of course, time to learn more along these lines. It was a source of satisfaction to us to discover last year that 98% of our graduates are in agriculture or allied activities. This is, we believe, something of a record for an agricultural school. We do not take too much credit to ourselves, however. The explanation is this: the area in

which we work is basically agricultural. There is a tremendous demand for young agriculturists with sound training, hence most of our graduates have better opportunities in the agricultural field than they would have selling stocks and bonds or in the insurance business - for examples. By local standards, they get excellent salaries in the agricultural field

To our great satisfaction, the agricultural extension services of have absorbed as many of our boys as they could get and they are still howling for more. Of our 543 graduates I believe there are close to one hundred in extension and educational work. Last spring, just before Commencement, several countries sent members of their extension services to our school to line up graduates, just like they do for football teams in the United States. We could easily have placed fifty more than were available last March.

Those who do not sign up for extension work go in for the following activities, among others: Ten to 15% go to the United States (principally to the College of Agriculture at the University of Florida) to work toward a B.S.A. degree, with specialization (to a limited extent of course) in some branch such as soils or agronomy or horticulture. When they come back to the tropics a good many of these men enter the field of agricultural education.

Other graduates go back to their own (or rather, family, farms), while still others obtain employment of large privately-owned farms such as the coffee plantations of these countries. A few go into selling and demonstrating agricultural machinery and fertilizers and the like. Their training stands them in good stead.

One of our graduates is Director General of Agriculture in the Dominican Republic. Another is running a large milk cooperative in Salvador, while still another, in that country, has a fine milk, butter and cheese business of his own - and is now adding a "super market". One of our earlier graduates came back to Honduras last year from the

veterinary college at Perugia, Italy--the first of our graduates to earn a doctorate.

(c). How have our graduates fitted into the technical aid programs? Since the latter, in most regions, are cooperative between the local governments and ICA, I think the answer is covered to a large extent by the above comments; but in addition to the extension work and teaching in agricultural schools, several of our graduates are serving as assisting to the North American technicians who have come here under the Point Four program; several are working with technicians of the FAO, and so on. For example, I have just come from El Salvador where two of our graduates are running nurseries to produce fruit trees in quantity - nurseries organized by local technicians in cooperation with Point Four.

(d). Can I cite specific instances where our graduates have been successful in instituting programs for upgrading agricultural practices? The extension agents are the ones who have done, and are doing, most of the work along these lines. We could cite ten or twenty case histories, or even more, but I believe my comments above cover the ground adequately. You know what extension agents do in the United States. They do the same things down here but commonly on a somewhat simpler basis as they usually work among very small farmers - who are precisely the ones who most need help.

(e). What comments do I have regarding agricultural education set-ups which are needed in Central America, and how do I think they should be developed? This question is right down my alley, but not everyone will agree wholly with my views, which are, however, based on my fifteen years' experience at Escuela Agrícola Panamericana.

What we most need are vocational schools which will stick religiously to the philosophy of practice backed by sound knowledge of basic principles. The tendency has been, and still is, to go in for too much theory and

any great extent. Our situation at Escuela Agrícola Panamericana has been ideal: we have been free to<sup>5</sup> hire the teachers we wanted, we have not enough practical training. Far too often the tendency has been to be free to teach the subjects we thought most useful; we have been establish agricultural colleges, where after four or five years the free to select our students; and we have been free to give them all the practical training we think they should have, and it is a lot. equivalent of our B.S.A. These schools are often very small and their financial resources very limited. Their faculties are in many instances composed of part-time teachers - there are not funds to employ full time staffs and house them <sup>Wilson Popenoe</sup> ~~Director Emeritus~~ <sup>Director Emeritus</sup> house them at all.

In each of these countries we need a few specialists; good soils men, plant pathologists, entomologists, and the like. These men can be trained better and more economically if they are sent to the great centers of learning - I do not care whether you think these centers are in the United States or whether they are elsewhere. But no small country down here can afford to hire top men in any specialized field to train the few experts needed in that field.

For every specialist we need a thousand well-trained farmers, or even many more in the larger countries. That is where our money and our effort should go. In all probability, most of the vocational schools will have to be financed and operated by governments. This oftentimes proves to be a handicap, but I don't suppose we can get around it to any great extent. Our situation at Escuela Agrícola Panamericana has been ideal: we have been free to hire the teachers we wanted, we have been free to teach the subjects we thought most useful; we have been free to select our students; and we have been free to give them all the practical training we think they should have, and it is a lot.

Sincerely,

Wilson Popenoe  
Director Emeritus

blind copy to Mr E S Whitman, New York  
Dr W C Paddock, Tegucigalpa