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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.

Walter Fick
Escuela Agrícola Panamericana
El Zamorano (Honduras)

December 18, 1957.

Dr. Wilson Pepee,
Antigua (Guatemala).

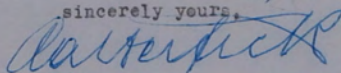
Dear Doctor:

When you were here, I forgot to ask you, to give me a service letter for the time I worked for you (January 1952 until you left).

I may not need one, but one never knows and as I have them all for the past years, I like to keep the chronological order complete. Therefore I am sending you enclosed some stationery from the E.A.P. and ask you to be so kind to extend me a service letter, if possible in triplicate.

Thanking you in advance for your kindness and wishing you and Mrs. Pepee a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, I remain

sincerely yours,



El Zamerano, January 18th., 1956.

Dr. Wilson Peponce,
Antigua (Guatemala).

Dear Dr. Peponce:

I have received the service letter and your note and thank you very, very much for both.

I hope these lines will reach you before you leave for the States. Ella tells me that she has given you the address of her people in Taifingen. My mother lives at Kirchheim/Teck which is 30 km from Stuttgart and if you should have an opportunity to visit her, I should be very glad and I am sure she would like to hear from you about us. Her address is:

Luise Fick
Stuttgarterstrasse 111
Kirchheim/Teck.

Ella and I wish you and Mrs. Peponce a very pleasant trip and good times in Europe and hope to see you here after you have come back from your trip.

Best regards to you both

Walter

Dear Dr. Popescu!

Las Pilas 4.12.66

Little did I have to get a private word in with you on this your special big day. Now I wonder what you really meant when you said: "There is nothing to be talked about." Have you, since you arrived here, made definite arrangements concerning your house in Antigua? Or is it that you imagine things would be patched up between Walter & me?

Well, when I received Dorothy's letter on Monday, you could leave, as the saying goes, "knocked me over with a feather." In a previous letter she suggested I ask you for funding me a job in the States, since the dean seems to hate the thought of leaving this side of the world, because of my boys. (As if you would have had enough worries of your own.) I should never have bothered you because I have no interest to go to the States, but the idea you had kind of tempted me. So to clear up things a little I'll write you this letter.

Things between Walter & me can never be patched up again. I would have left Honduras years ago if it would not have been for Karl-Reiner that he had started in the F.A.P. and that this was a great privilege and especially that we had to be so grateful to you for helping to push him in. Walter came to stay with me and we made the best of it until now. He's all "pelt up front." Now my duty is done and I'm ready to go. I'm not sure what Karl-Reiner's plans are, but he knows first week in April I'm leaving for the States, visit my brother say good-bye to my friends & relatives in New York, and off to the Hotel Blum, post which was mentioned to you several times. My mother in Germany who is taking care of my parents' house for us, is keeping a small apartment free for me. The people who had rented it moved out in October so I had asked them to keep it for me. Now the point is this if you think your idea could work please let me know the details and if possible soon. If we could work out an agreement, I could come back in the fall to Antigua, but I would like to see your place. I've heard so much about it maybe on the way to the States. All this only if you have not made definite plans of course.

But always I'll be so grateful for your interest and help to all of us in all times. Thanks, dear Dr. Popescu.

Ella Fick

Antigua Guatemala, 15 Dec 1966

Dear Ella:

Since getting back here, with the house full of guests, I haven't had time to write you; but I will steal a few moments before flying off to California for a couple of weeks - perhaps a month - to help my daughter Sally, with her family problems.

Things were so hectic that day at Zamorano that I probably did not understand just what you tried to say. I have not made any future plans for this house.

I don't know how much longer old Maria will hold out. The situation is already difficult because of her family - the grandchildren as well as her daughter Concha who probably expects to take over this place but is so much occupied with the education of her children and one nephew that he is not going to prove very satisfactory, I am afraid. What I had in mind when I wrote Dorothy was this: if you wanted to come back after spending a year or so in Germany, and have a place to live comfortably for some years, this might be the place. I could not pay you a large salary, you know that, but you would have a good home, and one servant. You would be expected to do the cooking, and to show the visitors who come almost every day, to see the house. You know this is sort of a museum and many tourists come to see it. We open it to the public every day from 10 to 11 in the morning and four to five in the afternoon.

If you want to stop here on your way to the States, by all means do so; you can come over on the bus from Guatemala City - there is one every hour - but if you come and I am not here, please don't say

anything to old Maria which will get her excited. Just tell her that you used to live at Zamorano and want to see the house.

, Alice Weiss has been here and knows just about what the job would be. You might talk to her - I mentioned the possibility to her (that I thought you might be interested) when I was in Tegucigalpa a week ago.

I feel sure that it will not be possible to make a change for another year or so, unless Maria should break down in the meantime. I think she may live for many years yet but she is already so feeble that she can hardly do the work - just the cooking, in fact. I pay her daughter to wait on the table and take care of the house, but is so occupied with her family, and running a laundry to wash clothes for one of the schools here, that she does not do a good job. We have a boy who is supposed to be only a gardener but he has to do most of the housework such as polishing the furniture, going to the market, and all kinds of things.

I have had the feeling that this might be just the right place for you, but perhaps I am wrong. We do not have to come to any definite decision as yet, and I do not intend to make any definite plans for some months. So we both have time to think it over.

Sincerely yours,

came out second and he got the Dr. Wilson Popenc's lease. We
all were very happy and proud. At one time I wanted to
leave Honduras, but I stuck it out for Karl-Reiner. Now I'm
so glad. [Jan. 1961]

As you can imagine everybody bussed around Dr. Popenc
have had no time for a private word. And then Walter ^{is} always
next to me. So Dr. Popenc only asked me if I had a letter
from you and when I nodded he said: there was nothing to
be talked about. I just wondered if he really had the ^{chips}
that Walter & I had patched up things or that he had other
plans now concerning the lease of the Antigua.

Last night I wrote him a letter and very early this
morning on his way to town (his car had to be fixed) Walter took
it down to school. Maybe Dr. Popenc got it before leaving for
Lancetillo with the other 2 scientists. I don't know if he gets
back to Zamorano or what his plans are. Anyway I'd like
to know what was really on his mind, for his idea about
Antigua kind of impresses me.

I have made plans to leave here first week in April
will visit my brother first in Hrodsberg, Pr. Then say good-
bye to my friends & relatives in New York. End of April to fly
to Germany before the tourist season starts. It's a bit cheaper.
My brother will have a small apartment ready for me. People
moved out in October and I didn't want him to rent it again
since it's only a few months till I arrive. Now if I could
make some arrangement with Dr. Popenc I could come
back in the fall. I would not have to buy any winter clothes
and I would not have to send all my things to Germany.
So I will see if I get an answer from him soon. If nothing
stays as planned.

Walter is going to leave for Mosquito 5th of January
I would not be surprised if he married there. Karl-Reiner
wants to work in the St.ica until it's time for him to go to
the States. He plans in middle of July so as to take an English
course for 6 weeks before going to the university.

Dear Dorothy, I'll let you know how things come
out as soon as I know. Or maybe Dr. Popenc will write
to you. Until then, I hope you soon can feed on ^{the} ^{big} ^{away}
that you pick up more & more. Love but sure.

Thanks for all your kindness.

As ever

[ella.
FICK]

Merry Christmas
to you,
and a happy
New Year.

Dear Dr. Popovoe!

Las Villas 9. 1. 64

If you stayed one month in the States, you ought to be back by now so it is time to answer your kind letter. I did appreciate your taking the time to let me know about your plans concerning your house in Cutigua so promptly. Thank you very much.

I didn't get a chance to talk to Maria Wiers as yet. Some times I talked to her, when we stopped in front of the german Embassy to deliver our stuff and she passed on her way home but now because I want to see her we always miss each other. When we met we often talked about you so I know about the troubles you have with your two daughters' families. I hope you could solve the problems this time.

Dear Dr. Popovoe, I am interested in the job when dear old Maria is ready to lay down the scepter. I understand of course that you don't want to hurt her serving you so faithfully for so many years, and as things stand, Maria is no hurry at all. I will wait until you decide to make a change, if we can come to an agreement. I think I would enjoy living in that house and taking care of it for you, but there is one thing to be considered, which you might not like. I don't know if you have heard that I am a "strictly" "evangelical" keeping the Sabbath, and I would expect to have every Saturday free if you are there or not. I would of course always see that you or maybe any guests would not starve. You say I would have one servant, I expect you mean the gardener. Maybe we could work things out between us if you would'nt mind, he could serve the meals while I'm away. Otherwise I think I could handle the job.

As I want to spend once more a real old fashioned white Christmas at home, and since I have the place to live, I can wait a year or more (maybe better more) and by then you probably will know if you keep old Maria's daughter or not. It could be that she gives up her other job once she knows that her mother is really too weak to do the work, and prefers to stay on with you. I'll give you my adress when I leave here, so you can get in touch with me whenever you want to.

I wonder while you were in the States, maybe in Gainesville, if you have heard if there is a chance for Karl-Reimer to be accepted in the Florida University. He is kind of worried.

He would like to take a course of english which they have for
the time of 9 weeks beginning mid June. He made an application
Today he started to work for the IWA in Cholulteca. He wants
to earn the money for this course, I don't think that his father
could give him the money. Our son Walter has left home on
Friday for Mexico. Both boys would be glad if I would live
near enough for them to be able to see me now & then.

Hoping you had a good start in this new year
1964 and wishing you for the remainder all the blessings

I am gratefully yours

Ella Fick.

Antigua, Guatemala, 15 January 1967

Dear Ella,

Many thanks for your good letter of the 9th. The fact that you are a Seventh Day Adventist is no handicap; in fact I entirely approve of Adventists and their high principles. As to servants, we can easily handle that. A good man like the one I have now could easily take care of the garden and also serve meals. Helen and I had always thought of such a set-up. I don't know just what we will do about Maria's daughter Concha who is now on the payroll, but also runs a laundry which takes far too much of her time and can not be handled in this house (she now has one which is almost across the street and belongs to Hugh, but we are going to be forced to move her out one of these days as we plan to rebuild that house; it is in very bad shape; and we would not let her have it when rebuilt). I don't think Concha will want to give up the laundry business; she is doing very well with it. The situation at present is not at all satisfactory from my standpoint, since Concha is not on the job in our house more than a very few hours a day. I am keeping her primarily to take care of old Maria!

One thing it might be well for you to do before we go any further: If you have any ideas about what salary you would expect, tell me so. Remember that you would have no expense for food or for laundry. If things continue as they are now, there would be quite a little income from the tourists whom you show around the house. I can never get Maria to "come quite clean" as to what she is making in this way, but I feel sure it is not less than \$15 a month, at times when there are plenty of tourists.

I don't think there is any reason for Karl Reiner to be worried about his scholarship at the University of Florida. I will, however,

write to Hugh's office today and inquire how things stand. I am afraid Hugh is not there - I have heard that he is leaving for Viet Nam this week, to be gone six weeks or so - not on military duty but in connection with the U S government program for agr cultural development over there. In the past, we have never had one of our becarios turned down. Good marks at Zamorano are the major factor and Karl certainly has these.

If your idea of salary is not impossible for me to accept, I think it would be well for you to stop off in Guatemala City on your way North and spend a day here with me. I would meet you, or have you met, at the airport and we would just let Maria understand that you another visitor, ~~was~~ old friend of mine, who has come to see the house. We have lots of visitors who spend two or three days here so your vi it would simply ~~be another~~.

I may be over in Zamorano again before you leave for the North, but I am not sure of this. If I do come over, I will of course see you. We wont be swamped with people as we were at Graduation!

With best regards,

Sincerely yours,

Dear Dr. Popenco!

Las Pailas 6.2.68

It was very thoughtful of you to send a wire, concerning Karl-Reiner's acceptance in the Florida University. Thank you very much, also for your very kind letter. They sent out a man out here to deliver it. As it happened a few days after I had sent off my letter to you, Karl-Reiner got notice from the University that he was accepted. It took a load of my body, he was so nervous because of the English test. He is with us now here at Las Pailas he worked only one month with the SNA. They have a turnover right now and all the departments are in a mess. Karl-Reiner and his men 3 tractor drivers and 3 Ayudantes had hardly any work, since planting doesn't start before April or May. To arrange all the work would have given him enough to do that he could not go out to see the farmers for lack of a car. He surely was disgusted. To bad it was such a good salary, but since he has plenty work, he just likes to hang around idly.

I'm looking forward to your visit. It would be fine if we could talk things over. Always Tuesdays I go with Walter to town so often things were stolen right out of the locked cabin, so now we don't leave the car alone any more. Wednesday he goes alone with the ayudantes. Then Thursday goes usually to Gamesstran and comes back Friday night. So on one of these days we would have a better chance to talk.

I'm so glad my Sabbath keeping would not interfere. But I have to confess something else. You said you had the house full of company over Christmas and lots of visitors staying 2 or 3 days. I wonder would my cooking do? It is not exactly my hobby. And who's nobody would be here, I would call it vacation from cooking. I would not leave to feed the garden "them"? The cost of fuel and food for me would be at the lowest in those times.

Dorothy mentioned already the tips from the tourists. I was just thinking being your theme so old Dorothy jokingly calls her near a hundred. The tourists might feel sorry for her, but would they feel the same way about me? I guess you take these tips in consideration with the wages. Dear Dr. Popenco, I have no idea what are reasonable wages? I know just the outline of the job, you know the whole work, now what would you, in the line of wages call fair to both you and me? What have you had in mind to pay a responsible person?

Thanks for the invitation. I do hope I can make it. I would want to see your place. I have postponed my trip to the States for a while. Maybe we can go by car. Walter &

is getting married to a Mexican girl, a former schoolmate.
He still has his tools and clothes here also his car. Maybe Karl
Reiner can drive it there. I don't know as yet how things will
work out, but we just might arrive and then we surely would
drop in your house as tourists.

I'm just wondering how things will work out
for you with this daughter Concha, once you are ready to
start rebuilding, maybe dear old Barbara will visit it and
goes by herself. Well, somehow things have to be settled. I will
always be interested in your plans.

I hope you are well and can rest up now.

With the very best regards

Sincerely

Ella Fick.

Antigua, Guatemala, 23 February 1967

Dear Ella: DF-19

It has become necessary for me to fly up to Gainesville again, where Mr Armour of EAP will meet me and we will work on the publication of the Proceedings of the Plant Introduction Symposium which was held at Zamorano last November. I expect to be back in Guatemala about the 5th of April, but do not believe I shall be coming over to Honduras until much later than that.

There is no change in the situation here. Maria is very feeble and scarcely able to do the work necessary, but I know she will not give up until she absolutely has to do it.

As far as the cooking is concerned, I have no fear, for I have eaten at your table two or three times and I think your food is excellent. You would not have to feed the gardener, nor does he sleep on the property. It has always been customary here for the gardener to do much of the heavy housework, such as polishing furniture, raking carbon to the kitchen (we use only carbon for cooking and might continue this, for it shows visitors how people cooked in the old days, but on the other hand I think we will probably have to change over to kerosene or electricity when Maria goes.

As to salary, I have had in mind something like fifty dollars U.S. per month, plus, as I have written you, your food whether I am here or not. As for the tips, I don't think this is entirely a matter of Maria's age and the fact that people know her because she was given so much publicity in Louis Adamic's book "The House in Antigua". I am sure all high-class visitors expect to tip the person who shows them around; it is customary everywhere. But there are many young people, students and secretaries and the like, and especially the

local people, who never give anything. We do not intend to charge a fee for admission, because then the place becomes a public museum, while now if it is not convenient for us to admit anybody, we just say so and they can't do anything about it. Most tourists come through the travel agencies, and the guides tell each car load (usually 3 to 5 people) that somebody in the group should give Maria 25 cents. Maria will never tell me how much she makes, but during the tourist season I think it is \$15 to \$20 a month, less in the "off season".

I do not think I will ever need to pay more than \$50 a month, for there are plenty of elderly women here who are trustworthy, Guatemalan women who can be recommended by friends of mine, who would love to have the job at \$35 a month, plus food. We only pay Maria \$30, plus an allowance for bread and tortillas of \$7.50 a month; this makes it \$37.50, which she gets every month whether we are here or not, and of course when we are not here she really cannot live on \$7.50 a month. But \$30 is a very good salary for a woman here in Antigua, without food. I am having to pay Concha \$40, however, but she has our laundry done by the women in the house she occupies (it is ours) where she does the laundry for two or three schools in Antigua. Concha really does not put in much time in my house except when I have guests, and she is getting more than she is worth.

I am happy that Karl Reiner is sure of his beca at Florida. He is going to do well up there. Tell him to learn all the English he can before he goes North. It will help him to do well in his studies right from the start.

With best regards,

Sincerely