



Smithsonian

National Museum of Natural History

*Guide to the Colombia, Land of
Mountain Coffee, circa 1950-1960*

Human Studies Film Archives
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Human Studies Film Archives
Title:	<i>Colombia, Land of Mountain Coffee</i>
Date:	circa 1950-1960
Identifier:	HSFA.2005.03
Creator:	Wood, Richard Carver
Extent:	1 Film reel (26 minutes; color sound; 944 feet; 16mm) Linear feet
Language:	Undetermined .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Received from Patsy Asch in 2005.

Preferred Citation

Colombia, Land of Mountain Coffee, Human Studies Film Archives, Smithsonian Institution

Restrictions

The collection is open for research. Please contact the archives for information on availability of access copies of audiovisual recordings. Original audiovisual material in the Human Studies Film Archives may not be played.

Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

Scope and Contents

Colombia, Land of Mountain Coffee and associated photographic materials, all by Richard Carver Wood, Patsy Asch's father. Film was produced by Richard Carver Wood, written by Frank Beckwith and edited by Lee Burgess.

Please note that the contents of the collection and the language and terminology used reflect the context and culture of the time of its creation. As an historical document, its contents may be at odds with contemporary views and terminology and considered offensive today. The information within this collection does not reflect the views of the Smithsonian Institution or Anthropology Archives, but is available in its original form to facilitate research.

Edited film opens with a map of Colombia showing the mountain range where coffee is grown but moves to scenes of Cartagena (port, narrow streets, architecture, horse drawn buggies, cars) before aerial views of the mountains and valleys where coffee is grown. Two families are featured, the Prieto and Ramon Aviero families. Isolation is emphasized in the narration in that these coffee farms are twenty miles from everything and that they must depend on their own resources and work hard for subsistence living. Images show the family members grinding corn, cooking, scraping gourds to use as pots and pans, hand washing clothes

and children working with adults in sorting coffee beans. These initial shots of the family are to contrast with later images showing the impact of the International Federation of Coffee Growers on the families who own the small coffee farms by improving their coffee crop and, hence, their family's well-being. Shown are scientists working with the farmers to prevent soil erosion and root disease and to treat mature trees that have developed diseases (scraping disease from bark and treating exposed area). Oxen are shown plowing to help prevent soil erosion. Emphasis in narration is placed on research and knowledge for improving Colombia's coffee. Experimental labs for seed selection and growing in the right soil with the optimum shade, and grafting plants are shown. Children are shown going to schools supported by the International Federation that holds afternoon classes for teaching coffee cultivation. Students (boys) are shown in school and working their own plot in the afternoon. Producing a coffee tree is shown from hand picking seeds, germinating seeds in specially prepared beds, transplanting seedlings (with two leaves) into larger beds and, after 8 months, transplanting again by wrapping root balls in banana leaves and carrying them to fields where they are planted among corn plants. School for older students (boys) which is also run by Federation shows older boys continuing to learn coffee cultivation. Shade trees are grown to help provide the right amount of shade for coffee trees. Newly matured coffee trees (at five years) are shown heavy with both blossoms and cherries in which the coffee bean resides. Shown are hand picking the ripe cherries from the coffee trees, pickers bringing the cherries to a central collection point, loading burlap bags of coffee onto mules (the best mode of transportation for the mountainous country) that are taken to a processing plant (paid for by the Federation) where cherries are shown going through a rotator to separate the beans from the cherry, beans being washed in water to remove the remaining cherry residue, raked in troughs by men with paddles and then spread to dry on floors and after drying being shoveled in burlap sacks and carried by mule to truck on a highway or carried by mule train to a town market where the coffee is weighed, tested for quality and then sorted by women in mills who remove defective beans, to trucks, trains and planes carrying the coffee to Cartagena where stevedores load the sacks of coffee on a ship to be carried to the United States and elsewhere. Film was produced by Richard Carver Wood, written by Frank Beckwith and edited by Lee Burgess.

Local Numbers

HSFA 2005.3.1

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Agriculture
Coffee plantations

Places:

Colombia
South America