Table of Contents

Collection Overview ........................................................................................................ 1
Administrative Information .............................................................................................. 1
Historical Note.................................................................................................................. 1
Introduction....................................................................................................................... 1
Descriptive Entry................................................................................................................ 2
Names and Subjects .......................................................................................................... 2
Container Listing .............................................................................................................. 3
Collection Overview

Repository: Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Title: Gilberto Ocana Oral History Interview
Identifier: Record Unit 9576
Date: 1989
Extent: 2 audiotapes (Reference copies).
Creator: Ocana, Gilberto, interviewee
Language: English

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation
Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 9576, Gilberto Ocana Oral History Interview

Use Restriction
Restricted. Contact SIHistory@si.edu to request permission.

Historical Note

Gilberto Ocana (1931-2004), agronomist specializing in tropical flora, received the B.S. from the Ecole Nationale d’Agriculture in Alger, Algeria, in 1955. From 1955 to 1960, he served on the staff of the Servicio Interamericano de Cooperacion Agricola en Panama and taught at the Agricultural School of the University of Panama from 1961 to 1963. In 1967, he received the Ph.D. in plant pathology from the University of California at Riverside. He then returned to the University of Panama, serving as Dean as well as Professor of Agronomy. In 1980, he joined the staff of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI) as manager of the Barro Colorado Nature Monument, a nature preserve consisting of Barro Colorado Island and its surrounding peninsulas. While at STRI, he developed an experimental farm at Las Pavas on the Gigante Peninsula that would restore soils destroyed by cattle grazing and provide a comfortable income for small farmers. He retired from STRI in 1993.

Introduction

The Smithsonian Institution Archives began its Oral History Program in 1973. The purpose of the program is to supplement the written documentation of the Archives’ record and manuscript collections with an Oral History Collection, focusing on the history of the Institution, research by its scholars, and contributions of its staff. Program staff conduct interviews with current and retired Smithsonian staff and others who have made significant contributions to the Institution. There are also interviews conducted by researchers or
students on topics related to the history of the Smithsonian or the holdings of the Smithsonian Institution Archives.

Ocana was interviewed for the Smithsonian Institution Archives Oral History Collection because of his research career in agronomy in Panama, as a professor at the University of Panama and researcher and administrator at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama.

Descriptive Entry

This interview of Ocana by Pamela M. Henson of Smithsonian Institution Archives discusses his family, education, work as an agronomist and professor in Panama, and career at STRI, especially his agriforestry project. The collection consists of 2.5 hours of audiotape recordings and 34 pages of transcript. For a videotaped interview of Ocana at the site of the agriforestry project on Gigante Peninsula, see Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 9553, Conservation of Endangered Species Videohistory Interviews.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:
- Agronomy
- Conservation of natural resources
- Sustainable agriculture
- Tropical biology

Types of Materials:
- Audiotapes
- Transcripts

Names:
- Ecole nationale d'agriculture d'Alger
- Henson, Pamela M., interviewer
- Ocana, Gilberto, 1931-2004
- Servicio Interamericano de Cooperación Agrícola en Panamá
- Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute
- Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute. Barro Colorado Island
- Universidad de Panamá
- University of California, Riverside

Geographic Names:
- Barro Colorado Island (Panama)
- Barro Colorado Nature Monument (Panama)
- Panama
Interviews

Interview 1: April 20, 1989

Interview of Ocana by Henson discusses his youth and family in Panama, education at the Ecole Nationale d'Agriculture in Alger, Algeria, career as an agronomist at the Servicio Interamericano de Cooperacion Agricola in Panama and professor at the Agricultural School of the University of Panama, and years at STRI, especially his agriforestry project at Las Pavas experimental farm on the Gigante Peninsula and his management of the Barro Colorado Nature Monument; c. 1940-1989.

Interviews

Transcript, pp. 1-34, of audiotape recording, 2.0 hours.

Audio Recordings of Interview: Total Recording Time: 2.0 hours

Note:
- Original Masters: 2 cassette audiotapes
- Reference Copies: 2 cassette audiotapes