



Smithsonian Institution Archives

Gilberto Ocana Interview, 1989

by Smithsonian Institution Archives

Smithsonian Institution Archives
Washington, D.C.
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Creator:	Ocana, Gilberto. interviewee
Title:	Gilberto Ocana Interview
Dates:	1989
Quantity:	2 audiotapes (reference copies).

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 9576, Ocana, Gilberto. interviewee, Gilberto Ocana Interview

Use Restriction

Restricted. Contact the Institutional History Division, Smithsonian Institution Archives, at SIHistory@si.edu for information about use of this collection.

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.

The Gilberto Ocana Interview transcript and recording may not be cited or reproduced without the permission of his heirs or assigns.

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
- Tropical biology

Types of Materials:

- Audiotapes
- Interviews
- Oral history

Names:

- Barro Colorado Nature Monument.
- Henson, Pamela M. interviewer.
- Ocana, Gilberto. 1931-2004
- Ocana, Gilberto. 1931-2004
- Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute
- University of Panama.

Container Listing

Box 1

Transcripts of Interview

Interview 1: 20 April 1989

Audio Recordings of Interview

Interview 1: 20 April 1989