

CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

CARLOS A. CUADRA

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

Colin B. Burke

at

Los Angeles, California

on

21 May 2001

(With Subsequent Corrections and Additions)

CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION
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Carlos A. Cuadra
Carlos A. Cuadra

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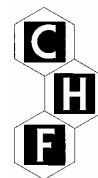
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CARLOS A. CUADRA

1925 Born in San Francisco, California on 21 December

Education

1949 B.A., psychology, University of California, Berkeley

1953 Ph.D., psychology, University of California, Berkeley

Professional Experience

1953-1956 Veterans Administration Hospital
Staff Psychologist

System Development Corporation

1957 Training Specialist

1957-1959 Head, Personnel Planning and Training Group, Air Force Project 466L

1960-1962 Head, Project Team, Intelligence Systems

1963-1964 Staff Member, Special Projects Department

1965-1966 Technical Assistant to the Head of Special Development Division

1966-1967 Head, Information Systems Technical Staff

1968-1970 Manager, Library and Documentation Systems Department

1971-1974 Manager, Education and Library Systems Department

1974-1978 Manager, SDC Search Service

1964-1975 *The Annual Review of Information Science and Technology*
Editor

1968 National Academy of Sciences Committee on Scientific and Technical
Communication
Consultant

1971-1984 National Commission on Libraries and Information Science
Member

1978-present Cuadra Associates, Inc.
Co-Founder and President

1979-1980 University of California, Los Angeles
Adjunct Professor, Graduate School of Library and Information Sciences

1991-1997 American Chemical Society
Member of Governing Board, Chemical Abstracts Service

1997-2000

Member of Governing Board for Publishing

Honors

- 1948 Phi Beta Kappa, University of California, Berkeley
- 1949 Highest Honors, University of California, Berkeley
- 1968 Merit Award, American Society for Information Science and Technology
- 1969 Best Information Science Book Award, American Society for Information Science and Technology
- 1970 Distinguished Lecturer, American Society for Information Science and Technology
- 1975 Information Product of the Year, Information Industry Association
- 1980 Hall of Fame Award, Information Industry Association
- 1980 Miles Conrad Memorial Lecture Award, The National Federation of Abstracting and Information Services
- 1987 Pioneer of Information Science, American Society for Information Science
- 1997 Honorary Fellow, The National Federation of Abstracting and Information Services
- 2001 Roger Summit Award, Association of Independent Information Professionals

ABSTRACT

Carlos A. Cuadra, a pioneer in the field of information sciences, begins the interview by discussing his family and educational background. He describes how he continued his education while serving in the Navy during World War II. He did his undergraduate and graduate work in psychology at the University of California, Berkeley and wrote his dissertation on the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory. Upon graduation, Cuadra worked at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Downey, Illinois. While still in Downey, he was recruited by the RAND Corporation to work on projects related to the United States Air Force.

He began work for RAND in the System Development Division, which split off and became System Development Corporation [SDC]. Dr. Cuadra began to learn about computers and programming while he was working on intelligence project 466L for the Air Force. He was made head of the Intelligence Systems Branch of SDC and worked on various information systems such as MEDLARS II, MEDLINE, ORBIT, and ELHILL. He became interested in the developing field of information science.

After meeting some of the pioneers of information science, he was surprised to learn that an annual review did not exist for that field. With the support of Hans Peter Luhn, IBM; Helen L. Brownson, National Science Foundation; and the American Documentation Institute, he started the *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology*. Cuadra briefly worked as a consultant for the National Academy of Science's Committee on Scientific and Technical Information [COSATI], and was later appointed to the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science [NCLIS], on which he served for thirteen years. By the time he became a member of NCLIS, he was the manager of the Education and Library Systems Department at SDC. During this time, Cuadra began to see a possible market for online information services. Within SDC, Cuadra created SDC Search Service, one of the first online retrieval services. In 1978 he founded his own company, Cuadra Associates [CA]. CA was quite ahead of its time in that it foresaw the need for powerful information retrieval systems for in-house use. CA developed STAR[®], which was one of the first such systems. CA also published a directory of databases called the *Directory of Online Databases*. Cuadra concludes the interview with some thoughts about his work habits.

INTERVIEWER

Colin B. Burke had recently retired from the history department at the University of Maryland at Baltimore County and held a research fellowship at Yale University when he came to CHF. He spent his residency working on his book on the history of computer-based scientific information systems and related government policies, from the 1950s through the early 1990s. He received his Ph.D. from Washington University in St. Louis and currently serves as Associate Professor Emeritus at the University of Maryland. He

also served as a Fulbright Scholar in Poland and as a Scholar-in-Residence at the National Security Agency.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 Family Background and Education
 Growing up in San Francisco. Education while serving in the Navy during WWII. Undergraduate and graduate work in psychology at UC Berkeley. Post-graduate internships in clinical psychology.
- 5 Beginning to Work in Intelligence
 Working for RAND Corporation and the US Air Force. Working at SDC and learning about computers. Air Force intelligence system project 466L. Working on other intelligence system projects at SDC.
- 10 Gaining Interest in Information Science
 Developing information systems, including MEDLARS II, MEDLINE, ORBIT, and ELHILL. Attempting to develop fingerprint analysis techniques. Creating the *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology*. Becoming manager of Library and Documentation Systems Department at SDC.
- 16 Work on Government Committees
 Participating on COSATI. Sitting on NCLIS. Disagreements within NCLIS. Attempts to establish a National Periodicals Center.
- 23 Developing Online Databases
 Beginning to develop ideas for online information services. Managing SDC Search Service. Founding Cuadra Associates. Publishing the *Directory of Online Databases*. Creating STAR. Concluding thoughts.
- 27 Notes
- 28 Index

NOTES

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INDEX

A

Alpha Micro Products Inc., 25
American Documentation, 11-12
American Documentation Institute [ADI], 11-12
American Institutes for Research [AIM], 7
American Library Association, 17
Annual Review of Information Science Technology, The [ARIST], 11-12, 17, 20, 23
Arthur D. Little Company, 20
Association of Independent Information Professionals [AIIP], 20

B

Bears
 See Tupolev Tu-95 strategic bombers
Becker, Joseph [Joe], 13, 17
Berkeley, University of California at, 1-3
Bisons
 See Myasishchev M-4 bombers
Bolt, Beranek, and Newman Company [BBN], 22
British Lending Library Division, 19
Brownson, Helen L., 11
Bush, Vannevar, 10

C

Camden, New Jersey, 7
Carter, Dr. Launor F., 14-15, 17
Centralized Data Management System [CDMS], 21
Chemical Abstracts Condensates, 22
Chemical Abstracts database, 22, 25
Coca-Cola Company, 9
College of the Admiralties, 1
Commerce High School, 1
Committee on Scientific and Technical Information [COSATI], 14-15
Cuadra Associates, 24
Cuadra, Carlos A.
 children [second marriage], 4
 daughter [first marriage], 4
 father, 1
 marriage, 4
 mother, 1
 son [Neil G. Cuadra], 25
Cuadra, Neil G.
 See Carlos A. Cuadra, son.

D

DIALOG, 22-23, 25

Directory of Online Databases, 24

E

Education and Library Systems Department, 16

Education Systems Department, 16

Educational Resources Information Center database [ERIC], 13, 15, 22-23

Electronic Data Systems [EDS], 21

ELHILL, 9

Elias, Arthur [W.], 12

F

Fairthorne, Robert A., 12

Federal Bureau of Investigations [FBI], 10

Fingerprint analysis, 10

Friden table calculators, 2

G

Gaffner, Haines L., 24

Garfield, Eugene [Gene], 11

Giuliano, Vincent E. [Vince], 20

Great Society, 16

H

Hayes, Robert M. [Bob], 13, 19-20

I

Information Industry Association of America, 20

Information science, 11-13, 16

Institute for Scientific Information [ISI], 19

Intelligence system project 466L, 7, 9

International Business Machines Corporation [IBM], 7-8, 11

K

Knight, Douglas M., 17

L

Lancour, Harold, 14
Langley-Porter Psychiatric Hospital, 3
Library and Documentation System Department, 16
Library of Congress, 19-20
Librascope Incorporated, 7-8
Link Resources Incorporated, 24
Los Angeles School District, 13
Lowell High School, 1
Luhn, Hans Peter [Pete], 11

M

Massachusetts Institute of Technology [MIT], 10
 Lincoln Laboratory, 7
Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System [MEDLARS II], 9
MEDLINE, 9, 22
Mexico City, Mexico, 1
Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory [MMPI], 3
Minot, North Dakota, 5
Monroe calculators, 2
Montgomery GI Bill, 4
Myasishchev M-4 bombers [Bisons], 5

N

National Academy of Sciences [NAS], 14
National Commission on Libraries and Information Science [NCLIS], 14-20
National Institutes of Health [NIH], 14, 19
National Library of Medicine [NLM], 9, 20, 22
National Periodicals Center, 19-20
National Science Foundation [NSF], 11-12
National Security Agency [NSA], 8
New Deal, 15, 17
New York Times, 25

O

Online Retrieval of Bibliographic Information Time-Shared [ORBIT], 9-10, 21, 25
Oracle Corporation, 21

P

Perot, [H.] Ross, 21
Psychology
 clinical, 2-5
 quantitatively-oriented, 1

R

Radio Corporation of America [RCA], 7-8
RAND Corporation, 4-6
 System Development Division, 6
Republican Party, 18

S

SAT [Scholastic Aptitude Test], 2
SDC Search Service, 21-22, 25
Selective Dissemination of Information [SDI], 11
Semi-Automatic Ground Environment System [SAGE], 6-7, 21
Stevens, Leroy H., 1
System to Automate Records [STAR], 24-25
Systems Development Corporation [SDC], 6-10, 12-14, 16-17, 20-25
 Special Development Division, 10

T

Teletype Corporation, 21
Texas, University of, 21
Tupolev Tu-95 strategic bombers [Bears], 5
TYMNET, 22
Tymshare Incorporated, 22

U

United States Air Force, 5-9, 23
United States Department of State, 9
United States Navy, 1
United States Office of Education, 13, 16

V

Veterans Hospital in Palo Alto, California, 3
Veterans Hospital in Downey, Illinois, 3-5

W

Wanger, Judith, 21, 24
White House, 15, 18