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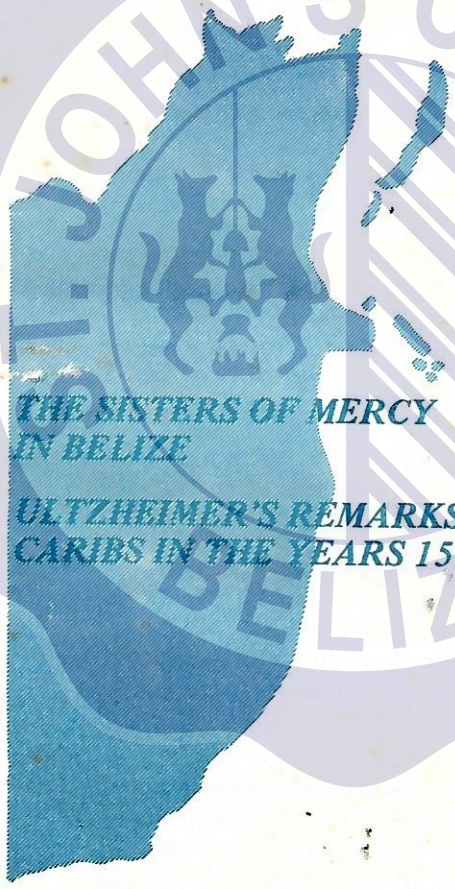

THE SISTERS OF MERCY IN BELIZE

ULTZHEIMER'S REMARKS ON THE CARIBS IN THE YEARS 1599-1601


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# *The Sisters of Mercy in Belize*

*by Sr. Yvonne Hunter, R.S.M.*

As Belizeans gathered on the grounds of St. Catherine Convent on January 20, 1983, to celebrate a solemn Mass of Thanksgiving, they were a very different assembly from that which waited a little further down the harbour on the morning of January 20, 1883 to welcome ashore the first band of Mercy Sisters who initiated a long line of these women of the Church. For one hundred years the Sisters of Mercy, missionaries gradually augmented by Belizeans, have served the Church in Belize.

Belize's first Bishop, Salvatore Di Pietro, at the time Superior of the Jesuit Mission here, was instrumental in bringing the Sisters of Mercy to Belize. Recognizing the need of the Catholic children of the Colony for education, he had for several years stormed the Motherhouse of the Sisters of Mercy in New Orleans for Sisters to teach in Holy Redeemer parish school. Reverend Mother Teresa Austin Carroll was sympathetic, even eager, to respond to this call from the beginning, but there were obstacles which had to be surmounted before she could lead a band of five to Belize.

They arrived on the steamship "City of Dallas" on Saturday, January 20, and were ferried ashore by a new sailing sloop which was subsequently christened "The Nun of Belize". Mother Evangelist Kearney, Sister Mary Raphael Woolfolk, Sister Mary Colette Baker, Sister Paula Sebastian, and Sister Mary Gabriel Lavin received a rousing welcome from the populace of Belize when they stepped ashore. Nuns were a curiosity and the new arrivals were amused at some overheard remarks: "Look, they have faces." "They are dressed like saints in a picture!" Escorted to Holy Redeemer Church, the Sisters had Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament in thanksgiving for their safe voyage, then were led to the temporary home prepared for them by the ladies of the parish. Above the altar in their chapel was hung the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

On Monday morning, January 22, the Sisters took over the girls' classes in Holy Redeemer School, then called the Spanish School, and opened a private school on the ground floor of their Convent. Known at first as the Select School until the name was changed to "Academy" on February 15, 1893, this school was the beginning of St. Catherine Elementary and St. Catherine Academy. At the close of their first school day the Sisters went on "visitations". Before the month was out they had begun regular visits to the hospital and prison, and in September they prepared their first prisoner for the gallows. The Sisters were involved in various parish activities such as teaching Sunday Catechism classes, making vestments, and decorating tabernacles for Corpus Christi processions.

Before Reverend Mother Austin Carroll returned to New Orleans she had purchased a seaside property with a house into which the Sisters had moved on April 3, 1883, but the Select School had grown and boarders from the districts and the nearby Republics had increased, so a new Convent was planned. It was blessed on February 3, 1887 by His Grace Archbishop Leray of New Orleans who was visiting Belize at that time.

This same year brought grief--the death of the first Sister of Mercy. She fell a victim to Yellow Fever. The previous September Governor Goldsworthy

had asked the Sisters to nurse the Yellow Fever patients in the town. Sister Anita McDermot was completing her first year on the Belize mission when Yellow Fever claimed her.

In 1893, the close of their first decade, the Sisters rejoiced when their faithful father and friend Salvatore Di Pietro was consecrated the first Bishop of Belize. Two Belizeans postulants had entered the novitiate in New Orleans: Antonia Pacheco in May 1884, and Virginia Sansores in May 1888. They became Sister Mary Benita and Sister Mary Petronilla, respectively. In 1894 a third postulant, Miss Rosina Stolf was to follow them to the Motherhouse to make her novitiate, taking the name of Sister Mary Fidelis.

The excitement at St. Catherine Convent at the turn of the century was their "new foundation". In 1898 they had welcomed the Sisters of the Holy Family as guests until they travelled to Stann Creek to found Sacred Heart Convent. Now the Sisters of Mercy were contemplating opening their first daughter house. Mail was received from Reverend Mother June 18,1900 with the news that the Sisters of Mercy would accept the house in Corozal. The people in that town contributed generously to the repair and partial furnishing of the new Convent.

On August 27, 1900, Reverend Mother Philomena from New Orleans and Mother Evangelist of St. Catherine Convent accompanied Sister Mary Ambrose and Sister Mary Annunziata to Corozal where they were warmly received by the citizens. When Rev. Mother returned to St. Alphonsus Convent, New Orleans, she sent a member of that Community, Sister Mary of Mercy, to join the branch in Corozal. No replacements were sent, however, for the Sisters who had left St. Catherine's. As a matter of fact, there were no more arrivals in Belize until July 24, 1904, when Sister Mary Louise McCabe, Sister Mary Petronilla Sansores, and Sister Mary Fidelis Stolf landed at St. Catherine's wharf, the first two to visit for two months, Sister Mary Fidelis to stay until 1913. Sister Mary Louise returned to Belize in 1906 to remain until her death in 1935. Sisters were being overworked in both missions, so Superiors deemed the closing of the Corozal house to be necessary. News

of the forthcoming event so dismayed the Corozalanians that they sent a petition affixed with many signatures to the Reverend Mother in New Orleans pleading for the Sisters to remain among them. An entry in St. Catherine's Annals for May 8, 1902, reads: "Sisters quite busy preparing for our dear Sisters from Corozal. About 4 p.m. the "Star" anchored. Sisters and children went to the wharf to meet them and give them a hearty welcome." The Belize mission was beginning to experience the dearth of Sisters which was to culminate in their becoming independent of the Motherhouse in 1913.

Had not their cause been championed by Bishop Frederick Hopkins S.J., this might well have been the closing chapter of Mercy in Belize. The warning of trouble ahead is sounded in the Annals on February 21, 1910. "Sad news received that they are thinking of closing this house, much to our regret." Then hope flared a month later with: "March 15, Bishop Hopkins called this evening. He assembled all the Community Sisters and spoke very seriously of the closing of this Convent which he says cannot be done without the consent of the Propaganda. He will write to Rome this week. The Sisters are not to mention this to seculars." This first scare was quelled on June 17, 1910: "Bishop Hopkins paid us a pleasant visit. He came to tell us of the good news he received from Rome. Our Community is to remain as it is, still a branch of St. Alphonsus Convent, New Orleans. Deo Gratias!" There were twelve Sisters in St. Catherine's at the time, two of them novices. When Sister Dorothy and Sister Mechtilde returned to the Motherhouse to make their vows, they were not replaced, leaving only Sister Zita and nine teaching Sisters for the Academy of over a hundred pupils, and the Catholic Boys' and Girls' Schools. (On August 16, 1923 this name was changed to Holy Redeemer Boys and Girls' Schools.) This paucity of personnel lead eventually to the decision to make St. Catherine Convent autonomous.

The Annals record: "April 18, 1913. About 5 p.m. His Lordship, accompanied by Rev. Father Mitchell, came. Rev. Mother wrote to His Lordship to say that she had no Sisters to send us, so His Lordship is going to make this House a foundation. On Sunday we will have to give in our answer whether

we wish to remain or return to New Orleans." Those who elected to remain were Mother Stanislaus, Sister Mary Mercedes, Sister Mary Ursula, Sister Mary Teresa, Sister Mary Rita, Sister Mary Louise. Sister Mary Mechtilde who had spent 1907-09 in St. Catherine's as a novice, returned in January 1914 and served until her death in 1928. These were the stalwart souls prepared to face the unknown challenenges of the future.

Independent Foundation

This was an amicable separation. Bishop Hopkins ended a letter to Reverend Mother dated April 9, 1913, with, "I am very glad to hear that you agree with me that the Sisters should not return to the Motherhouse till we can replace them. That I shall do as soon as I can. Our relations with New Orleans Convent of Mercy will, I hope, always remain most friendly after all that we owe to your Community." St. Catherine Sisters continued to be welcomed warmly at St. Alphonsus. August 16, 1913 is the official date of the Belize Foundation.

Bishop Hopkins now felt free to appeal for postulants to the Sisters of Mercy Convent, Callan, Kilkenny, Ireland, the source of potential subjects he had first mentioned to Reverend Mother in a letter dated October 4, 1912. He also advertised in the Jesuit magazine The Messenger of the Sacred Heart. Writing to Reverend Mother in New Orleans on November 17, 1913 Bishop Hopkins says, "In answer to an appeal I made for Sisters for the Belize Convent we have had a great number of applications from Postulants but so far only two are here. Some promise to come in the spring, but we have been so often disappointed that I do not reckon on them till they are in the Convent."

These two did not presevere, but a month later Miss Anna Wolfe of Buffalo, New York, who was to take the religious name of Sister Mary Xavier, arrived on December 3, 1913 and became the first of a continuing line of vigorous vocations. January 1914 brought a windfall. Miss Sabina Healy (Sister Mary Dolores) of Boston, Massachusetts arrived on January 4, and on the evening of January 6, Mr. and Mrs. Arturo Burgos of Belize City brought their

daughter Caroline (Sister Mary Aloysius) to St. Catherine's. When the New Orleans steamer arrived on January 11, so did Miss Mary Clements, a music teacher from Washington, D.C. who became Sister Mary Rita. Miss Catherine O'Connell (Sister Mary Joseph), of Albany, New York rounded off the number on January 25.

Bishop Hopkins, Mother Stanislaus, and Father William L. Hornsby, S.J., who had been appointed Spiritual Director now had their "novitiate" and the courageous St. Catherine Community blessed God for His merciful response to their prayers. In late summer one more American lady, a public school teacher from Hickman, Kentucky, Miss Evelyn Stahr (Sister Mary Berchmans), answered the call in The Messenger of the Sacred Heart and arrived on August 2, 1914. Everyone of these Sisters spent the rest of her life serving the Church in Belize.

Mother Stanislaus had a cousin, a Sister of Mercy teaching in the previously mentioned Mercy School in Callan, County Kilkenny, Ireland, and their correspondence resulted in the arrival on February 14, 1915 of the first of many Irish vocations to the Belize novitiate. She was Mary Ita McInerney, later known as Sister Mary Canice.

The Annals proceed normally, recounting Convent life, chronicling Receptions, Vow Days. The apostolates flourished. Every so often an entry reflected the remblings of World War I. "May 7, 1915. We got a terrible fright. Gomez came running in and told us there was a German steamer coming in and the whole town was in an uproar. We phoned to Mr. Melhado. He said they could not distinguish the flag. Later on he phoned that it was a French vessel coming here for coal." "November 3, 1915 Several boys leaving for the front called to say goodbye." "November 22. This morning H.M.S. "Sydney" arrived. We always feel so safe with a warship in the harbor. This evening Father Coady, Brother Hanrahan, and two gentlemen from the 'Sydney' paid us a very pleasant visit. Mr. Joseph Keane is from County Clare and was so pleased to meet S.M. Canice as he knows her people there. He is a real Paddy and had us in roars of laughter. The other gentleman, Mr. Ward, if from Australia." "August 7,

1916. Father Coady visited the schools and asked the children to be present at the Requiem Mass for the repose of the souls of J. Slusher and A. Osorio who left with the first Contingent and died in Egypt." "October 17, 1918. Great excitement prevails. There are a few cases of Spanish influenza in the town. The Board of Health had a meeting and strict Quarantine is put on. The schools will be closed for two weeks, and no Church services are to be held except in the open air."

The year 1919 not only saw the end of the dreadful war, but also brought three more postulants to St. Catherine's, two missionary vocations matched by a native, as the pattern would continue. Miss Anna Cullen (Sister Mary Gertrude) and Miss Hannah Clifford (Sister Mary Patricia) landed from Ireland on May 10, and Miss Anita Perez, (Sister Mary Agnes) arrived on the "Star" from Corozal Town on May 15. They were joined on August 15 by Miss Marian Russell (Sister Mary Catherine), an English lady who had been working in Spain.

In 1921 there was a resurgence of Yellow Fever, and although the Sisters were spared this time, they grieved for their friends at St. John's College. The Jesuits lost a brother, two scholastics, and one of their cooks in this scourge. Mother Theresa offered nursing care, but Bishop Hopkins declined, saying that he needed the Sisters in school. 1923 brought more tragedy. Their beloved Bishop and staunch supporter was drowned on April 10 when the "E.M.L." sank on the way to Corozal. Two Pallottine Sisters were also lost in this accident.

Three encouraging events occurred early in 1924. A new three storey building to cope with the increase of scholars and boarders was blessed by Father Joseph Kammerer, S.J., on February 3. Bishop Joseph A. Murphy, S.J., D.D. who had served in Belize earlier in the century was consecrated in St. Louis for the Vicariate of Belize. Two more Postulants, Lena Clifford (Sister Mary Loyola) and Josephine Morrison (Sister Mary Ita) arrived from Ireland on March 30. Before the year was out, however, the Sisters had to remember to bless the hand of God when He takes as well as when He gives. Sister Mary Patricia Clifford who had come out from Ireland in 1919 succumbed to

the tropical climate. "December 3, 1924. Sister Mary Patricia pronounced her final vows in her cell before Communion. Sisters in her band present. Father Kempheus received her vows. Later His Lordship brought her a crucifix blessed for a happy death. He read the gospel of St. John over her." One week later Sister went home to God. Sister was truly missed by the nuns and the boarders, but God soothed this loss somewhat by sending a new postulant, Miss Zoila Fajardo (Sister Margaret Mary) from Honduras on January 24, 1925. Death struck again at the end of the year. The Sisters of Mercy in Belize seemed to be fulfilling a pattern of Mercy foundations in the early days of the Institute in that the young Sisters were not spared. Sister Mary Ita, who was still a novice, developed double pneumonia and died on December 22, 1925. The Annals observe: "When Father anointed her she pronounced her vows inaudibly, but her lips moved. Thank God she was fortified with all the benefits of Holy Church."

Not until 1927 did the flow of vocations continue into St. Catherine's. Miss Irene Blancaneaux (Sister Mary Bernard) from El Cayo entered on May 16, and two more Irish postulants, Miss Margaret White (Sister Mary Regis) and Miss Josephine Aylward (Sister Mary Philomena) arrived from Ireland on August 17. While new life is always welcomed in a Community, this swelling of the ranks was doubly so, since from as early as January 27, 1927, there is a hopeful entry: "The Fathers are getting a church or chapel in Mesopotamia and substituting the same during the school days for school rooms. It is expected to be in use for the re-opening after the summer vacation. Two Sisters will teach there and come home every evening." These expectations were not fulfilled until a whole year had passed. "Monday, January 9, 1928. Two Sisters were missing from Lecture after Mass. Sisters Mary Aloysius and Gerturde both were going to teach for the first time at St. Ignatius new school. The auto came for them at 8:55, and they expected to walk home. They took a lunch with them. I daresay it will be a memorable day in their religious life. Their first mission!" The independent community which Bishop Hopkins had established in 1913 had not only flourished, but had even extended its apostolate to a new parish. An era was ending and with it went the guiding spirit

of St. Catherine Convent.

Mother Mary Stanislaus who had worked in Belize since August 1883, died on May 19, 1928. Deep was the mourning within the Convent and in the town. "May 19. All through the day crowds of young and old came to pay a last visit of respect to the one who had done so much for them, and telegrams and messages from all parts of the Colony poured in. Many of Reverend Mother's old school boys, now far advanced in manhood, wept while kneeling to kiss her hands." The following month, on June 25, God sent a postulant from New Orleans, Miss Bertha Ozenne, who was to become Sister Mary Fidelis.

1929 brought another trio to the novitiate--Miss Amalia Arjonilla (Sister Mary Teresita) of Belize City on February 11, and the Misses Mary and Bridie Kelly of Co. Galway, Ireland. This pattern was repeated a year later when Miss Leonie Esquivel (Sister Mary Cecilia) of Belize City entered the novitiate on July 2, 1930 and was joined on the last day of July by two Irish collens, Miss Mary Conneely (Sister Mary Anthony) of Galway, and Miss Christina Quirk (Sister Mary Patricia) of Limerick. These were the last novices to be trained in Belize.

The Amalgamation

Beyond St. Catherine's an event of great import had been evolving in the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy. As early as the latter part of the nineteenth century the trend toward general government was evident in various sections of the United States. But it was a letter from Archbishop Falconi, the Apostolic Delegate to the United States, to the American hierarchy on February 9, 1905 that gave great impetus to the movement for Amalgamation. Yet a quarter century was to elapse before the efforts of Sisters working toward this goal were crowned with the following communication from the Apostolic Delegate on June 14, 1929 beginning, "Sisters of Mercy, Beloved Daughters in Christ: It is a very great pleasure for me to announce to you that the Holy See has authorised an Amalgamation of the Sisters of Mercy in the United States of America..."

In August of that summer the Sisters convened

Top: 1982 students of SCA assembling in the school yard.

Bottom: The Cuevas Memorial Chapel at St Catherine's.

their first Chapter in Cincinnati, Ohio, and elected Mother Carmelita Hartman, R.S.M. the first Mother General. The newly-amalgamated body was organized into six provinces which were to increase to nine before sixteen years had passed. South of the border Bishop Murphy, S.J., in Belize, au courant with Developments in the American Church, alerted Mother Teresa and counseled that St. Catherine's seek admission to the Amalgamation.

"June 1, 1928. His Lordship visited and told us of important news. He asked Mother Teresa to have the Sisters give individually their opinion on the proposed Generalate being established in the Order of Mercy. He then said that he thought all would be benefited." Fourteen months later--"August 2, 1929. Bishop Murphy sent air mail. Enclosed a letter he had received from His Excellency Most Reverend Pietro Fumasoni-Biondi, Apostolic Delegate to the Holy See, referring to the Generalate. He feared nothing could be done for Belize; Union was only for U.S." "August 14, 1929. Delegate promised he would do all he could to admit Belize Community to the Union." "September 17, 1929. Bishop Murphy wrote and described his interview with Mother Carmelita; he desired her to visit us as he wished to disabuse some mistaken ideas she has concerning us."

It was not until April of 1931 that Mother Carmelita was able to make the long-proposed visit to St. Catherine's, Belize, which turned out to be mutually gratifying. Although the official date for the acceptance of Belize into the Union is October 9, 1931, it was not until Christmas Day that the good tidings reached the St. Catherine Community, temporarily housed in a structure near the ruins of their Convent which had been demolished in the devastating hurricane of September 10, 1931. "December 25, 1931, Sister Mary Xavier hurried to the Bishop. He was delighted and sent Mother General a radio-gram, 'Bishop and Sisters. Deo Gratias!' Had Te Deum in thanksgiving." Such rejoicing was balm to Sisters recovering from and dauntlessly beginning again after that catastrophic date in Belizean history, September 10, 1931. Surely Divine Providence had hovered closely over St. Catherine's on that day, as not a boarder nor Sister was lost while buildings, then wings collapsed about them, and thousands of

Belizeans lost their lives.

"April 18, 1932. Memorable Day. Received news of assignment to the Province of Providence with Mother Mary Matthew as our Provincial. Te Deum Sung". On May 8, Mother M. Matthew Doyle and Mother M. Hilda Miley, her assistant, arrived in Belize to welcome the twenty-six Sisters into the Province. When Mother Carmelita addressed the Sisters of Mercy of the Union for volunteers to serve on this first foreign mission, she was overwhelmed with a thousand applications. From among these she selected Sister Mary Rosella Cassidy of Providence, and Sister Mary Eleanor McGrail of Scranton. They arrived in Belize on September 8, 1933. Sister Mary Rosella was the first of the forty-five Sisters from the Province of Providence who would serve on the Belize mission for the next fifty years.

By the opening of the new school year in 1934 St. Catherine Academy had been restructured into an elementary and a four-year high school. As far back as June 4, 1918, there is an entry in the Annals: "Reverend Mother quite busy. Pupils for stenography and typing every day." Now the commercial department was enlarged and more academic subjects added in preparation for the Cambridge Exams.

Ireland continued to send postulants to Belize, but since a central novitiate had now been established in each province, they did their novitiate training at Mt. St. Rita in Cumberland, Rhode Island, and arrived in Belize as Junior Professed Sisters. They were Sister Mary Kieran Flynn in 1936, Sister Mary Murenna Donelan and Sister Mary Ethnea Fahy in 1937, Sister Mary Brigid Fahy in 1938, and Sister Mary Malachy McElhinney in 1943.

The first Belizeans to enter the novitiate in Rhode Island were Miss Olivia Blake (Sister Mary Helene) and Miss Carmela Noble (Sister Maria Pablo) in 1939. They were followed in September 1943 by Miss Kathleen Stolf (Sister Mary Josella) and in February 1946 by Miss Maria Louisa Escalante (Sister Mary Christine) and Miss Daphne Lizama (Sister Maria Dorita), in September 1946 by Miss Yvonne Marie Hunter (Sister Mary Alexander), and in Febrauary 1947 by Miss Consuelo Torres (Sister Mary Consuelo) and

Miss Sarita Reyes (Sister Mary Andretta). Miss Sylvia Vasquez (Sister Mary Sarita) entered in February 1948, Miss Helen Vasquez (Sister Mary Francine) in February 1949, and Miss Myrna Ysaguirre (Sister Mary Antonetta) in September 1949.

In the fifties Belizean postulants travelling to Mt. St. Rita were Miss Yvonne Abdo (Sister Mary Ignatius) and Miss Leonor Franco (Sister Mary Felicia) in 1956, Miss Mercedes Cervantes (Sister Mary Guadalupe) and Miss Oneida Lizama (Sister Mary Rebecca) in September 1957, and Miss Gregoria Lizama (Sister Mary Gregoria) in September 1958. Traffic to the Mount became heavier in the sixties, starting with Miss Gloria Lawrence (Sister Maria Caritas), Miss Esther Hulse (Sister Madonna Marie), and Miss Elizabeth Vasquez (Sister Pauline Marie) in September 1960. Two years later Miss Leona Panton (Sister Mary Albertine) entered in September, and in September 1963 Miss Rose Rivero (Sister Rose) and Miss Carolee Chanona (Sister Mary Carolee) followed. The largest group to enter from Belize at any time left for Mt. St. Rita in September 1965: Miss Marilyn Panton (Sister Marilyn), Miss Maria Elena Cervantes (Sister Maria Elena), Miss Clarene Ford (Sister Miriam Claire), Miss Joyce Flowers (Sister Elizabeth Marie), and Miss Marie Estephan (Sister Miriam David). In September 1967 Miss Darlene Castillo and Miss Virginia Menzies entered the Mercy Congregation, and the last vocation from Belize was Miss Diana [illegible] in 1968. Inevitably, Mt. St. Rita Novitiate, like so many other novitiates in the country affected by the major changes in the church after Vatican II, was phased out because so few young women were choosing the religious life.

The year 1958, the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Belize Foundation is a good vantage point from which to assess Mercy life in this country prior to "The Changes" with their repercussions on religious structures. All the Sisters of Mercy in the country were still located in St. Catherine Convent, and formal education remained their main thrust. They taught in the three parish schools in the city, Holy Redeemer Boys', Holy Redeemer Girls', St. Ignatius, and in St. Catherine Elementary and Academy. They continued the visitations of earlier days, and taught catechism in villages on weekends.

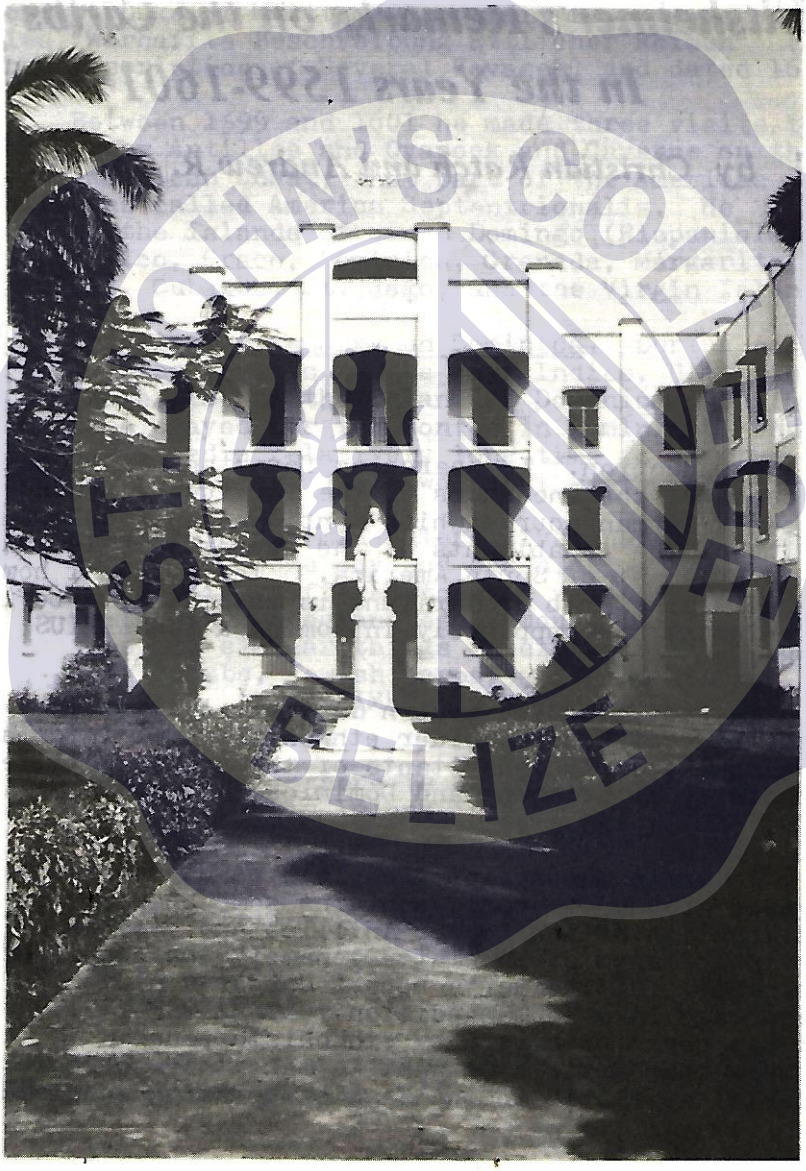
A major event marked this jubilee year. On January 26, 1958 Sister Mary Rosalind Kiernon opened the St. Joseph Mercy Clinic for the Aged Poor in a little frame house beside St. Catherine Convent. A year later on January 16, 1959 Sister Mary Agnes Perez, accompanied by Sister Mary Prudentia Croke left for La Ceiba, Honduras, to found Maria Regina Convent and Institute. They were joined by two Sisters from Rhode Island, Sister Mary Jamesine Reddy and Sister Mary Ellenice Hartigan, who assumed the administration of the D'Antoni Hospital of that city.

During the sixties new avenues of the Mercy Apostolate opened up. Sister Mary Virgilius Manning, Sister Mary Magdalena Illingworth, and Sister Mary John Dailey moved into teacher training. Late in the decade Sister Amelia Charpentier, collaborating with Sister Margaret, S.A.C., initiated the Diocesan Religious Education Program for elementary school teachers. In 1967 the Mercys moved into Orange Walk when they were invited to take over Muffles College. Sister Mary Lois Harten and Sister Mary Francine Vasquez opened Our Lady of Orange Walk Convent in August of that year.

When the new capital was built in Belmopan, Sister Mary Sarita Vasquez was appointed principal of the Comprehensive School. With Sister Dianne Carlson, she moved into the new Mercy Convent on Mayflower Street in August 1970. Toledo, our district down under, was the site of a pioneer project for young Indian women spearheaded by Sister Marian Joseph Baird and Sister Rosemarie O'Brien between 1978 and 1982.

Today thirteen Sisters live in St. Catherine Convent and there are two small communities on Cemetery Road and on Albert Street West. Like the disciples in the gospel they have also dispersed two by two into Corozal, Orange Walk, and Belmopan. The primary commitment to formal education is honored in Holy Redeemer Upper School, St. Catherine Elementary, Belmopan Junior School, Muffles College, St. Catherine Academy, and S.J.C. Sixth Form. The Social Apostolate continues. Health care is dispensed in Belize City Hospital, St. Joseph Mercy Clinic, and very recently from the Clinic in Benque Viejo.

Religious development has been extended to the Spiritual Life Center, parish ministry, and the retreat movement. Ministering Sisters of Mercy, sustained by the interior life of prayer, harken to the needy on many levels, and reach out ever lovingly to soothe the hurt, to teach, to train, to develop vital Christian Belizeans.



# *Ultsheimer's Remarks on the Caribs In the Years 1599-1601*

*by Christian Ratch and Andrew R. Craston*

1. Introduction. In searching for ethnohistorical evidence of the ancestors of the Garifuna we found an early German source which mentioned some cultural traits of the inhabitants of the Lesser Antilles and the N.E. coast of South America. The original home of the Black Carib or Garifuna is estimated to be in St. Vincent and supposedly in Dominica (CONZEMIUS 1928).

In understanding modern Garifuna culture it might be useful to consider ethnohistorical information on the early inhabitants of the Lesser Antilles, expecially St. Vincent and Dominica (cf. GONZALEZ 1979; SOLIEN 1959).

A German manuscript from 1616 on Ultzheimer's voyages around the world contains some chapters on the location of the Lesser Antilles and remarks on the inhabitants of the latter, namely the people of Dominica[1]. Ultzheimer's report appeared eleven years' ago in a German edition (ULTZHEIMER 1971), but has never been used by ethnohistorians[2]. Through this article we want to make this source material available to the English-speaking scholars.

2. Ultzheimer's voyages. Andreas Josua Ultzheimer was born in 1578 in the German Province of Swabia. He was the son of a Lutheran priest and got an education as a so-called Wundarzt, a kind of ship's doctor. Between 1596 and 1610 he travelled around the world employed as a ship's doctor on Dutch sailing ships[3]. When he returned to his country he wrote a report about his voyages and observations for the Duke of Württemberg. This report was entitled "Warhaffte Beschreibung Ettlicher Reisen" (A True Description of Several Voyages) and dated 1616.

Between 1599 and 1601 he made three visits to the Lesser Antilles and Oyapock and Cayenne on the South American Coast; that part of the Americas which was called America Septentrionalis. He reached the islands of Santo Domingo (Hispaniola), Puerto Rico, Craco, Dominica, Grenada, Margarita, Trinidad, Cubagua, St. Jago, and the Virgin Islands.

3. Ultzheimer's remarks on Dominica. During each of his three voyages to the West Indies, Ultzheimer spent some time on the Island of Dominica. In 1600 the Dutch stayed for ten months in Dominica. Thus Ultzheimer had a relatively long time to observe the island, but he gave just two short statements:

> "Savage, naked man-eaters live there. During our stay of one day and one night on this island, they offered to sell us all kinds of fruits and pomegranates, lemons, limes, blandines and similar things in exchange for fishing rods, combs, Jewish harps, and other such things." (ULTZHEIMER 1971: 72)

and

> "Furthermore, there is Dominica, 14° from the Equator[4]. This island is inhabited by wild man-eaters and there is nothing particular on it." (ibid.: 88)

When Ultzheimer speaks of "savage, naked man-eaters" he may be using a stereotyped image of the West Indian people, which is to be found in most historical accounts of this area (cf. TANNAHILL 1975)

4. Ultzheimer's description of the inhabitants of America Septentrionalis. In his report, Ultzheimer

*resumed his observations of the* Lesser Antilles and the coast of Oyapock and Cayenne. He speaks of very similar traits among their inhabitants. He does not distinguish between the Island Caribs and the Coastal Caribs, so they probably did not have a diversified culture in 1600. The following English translation of Andreas Josua Ultzheimer's original text is made up of two excerpts from a chapter entitled "Beschreibung Amerikanischer Landschaften und Inseln, wo Ultzheimer gereist ist. Von Art und Fruchtbarkeit der Septentrionalen Americanischen Lander, auch Religion, Sitten, Gebrauche und Hantierungen der Einwohner" (A Description of American Landscapes and Islands where Ultzheimer travelled. Of the Nature and Fertility of the Septentrional American Lands. Also Religion, Customs, Habits, and Skills of the Inhabitants).

The text (ULTZHEIMER 1971: 78-79, 82-83, 85-86):

The inhabitants of these lands are a rude, savage, sinister and barbarian people. They worship, in particular, the moon. In its honor they build an idol of brass, sheet metal or copper in the form of a half-moon and place it on top of a calabassa. Then they place a feather on top. In front of this idol they perform their so-called divine service accompanied by singing, ringing bells, jumping about and picking stringed instruments.[5]

They wear no clothes at all, but the men cover their virile member with a pointed tegument[6], which they call a calabassa.[7] This receptical is almost like a squash which they fasten to their bodies by means of a little string. However the women do not wear any clothes at all, their only ornament is their long hair. If the men want to adorn themselves, they make hats of parrot feathers of the beautiful flaming feathers of other birds--feathers from birds which are called flamingos--because beautiful feathers are considered to be the most valuable treasure in this land. They wear these hats on their heads. They also have little pieces of wood which are hollow into which they put parrot feathers. Then they push these pieces of wood with the feathers through their ears and noses. They also have a hole in their lower lip and they put a blue stone or a little piece of wood into this hole. This is their

jewelry but they also have glasslike corals and other child-like and foolish things. They are also in the habit of hanging as ornaments small halfmoons made of brass, copper or sheet metal and dedicate them to their deity, the moon, on their ears, nose or mouth. In this way they honor the moon at the same time as adorning themselves.

They have a king, indeed they have one in nearly every village. However they do not give him anything, nor do they pay him any feudal dues or services because their prisoners or bondsmen have to carry out all the work and duties. They only serve--or rather obey--the king when they are waging war and the only benefit which such a king has from his subjects is that he can give orders and has just about the same position as a village mayor has in our country.

As far as food is concerned, they share everything. Their houses are like the stands at a fair in our country: one side is open, the other side is completely closed up[8]. They build these houses next to each other, facing each other on four sides, so that there is always a four-sided yard or square between some of the houses. On the one side they leave an entrance between two houses. In their houses they have nothing except for a bow and arrow and three or four pots which they make themselves. They also have in their houses their hamaca[9] or bed hung up on two poles, but apart from this one finds hardly anything in their houses because they do not cover themselves at night--just like the Capuchin monks.

These houses are made of reeds, the beds or hamacas of bast or cotton, just like a net. They secure them to two poles and hang or lie in them, and it is really very nice to sleep in them. At night they make a fire under them, for which they use wood which glows under the askes like coal and stays in the whole night. They call this bed, as has already been mentioned, a hamaca[10].

The only thing they cultivate is cassava which is a root from which they make their bread. If you eat this root raw, uncooked, you will die. When they prepare this root they do it in the following

way: First they peel the root because it is thick and rather long. Then they grate the root on a stone until it is small enough and then place it in a rather long instrument which they weave out of bast and in this way they can press the juice out of the grated root. Then they take a broad stone which they place on a fire with the grated root on top until it has dried out. Then they make cakes from it, which are nice and white and a very fine bread which I much preferred to our bread. They also eat it raw with other kinds of food, and it tastes very good. In sundry places they make a drink of sugar cane or honey. Otherwise they mainly eat seasnails, oysters and also the shell of mother-or-pearls, because the pearls are in a shell which is a living organism and can almost be compared with oysters. It is a wonderful, fine meal. The common men and mob amongst them also eat hairy, green, horrible caterpillars, of which there are very many, but the large majority of these people are man-eaters.

As well as cassava they cultivate tobacco and plant it in large quantities because they use such a lot of it themselves; and in nearly the same way as they cultivate young plants in our country, they also transplant these plants and spray them with old urine. When the leaves are just big enough they remove them, dry them outside, and then roll them, and sell what they do not need to traders who arrive. Of all the things which they produce, this is virtually the most important commodity.

They handle, in the first place, in that they exchange the said tobacco and also edible fruits such as blandines, batates[11], pomegranates, limes, lemons, and other such fruits as well as parakeets[12], long-tailed monkeys and such things with our people, who arrive, for fishing rods, Jewish harps, hand bells, whistles, mirrors and linen cloth etc. And it doesn't matter to them whether these things are old or new--they want to have them very much. Apart from these things they have nothing to trade in, apart from the fact that they are very good shots and shoot game with bows and arrows and fish, for there are very many fishes of all different kinds in these places.

(There follows a detailed description of the fishes

of the Caribbean)

The inhabitants of these lands take several wives, but only the first wife is the real one and the others are all concubines[13]. In Oyapock and Cayenne, however, each man has only one wife, and they are chaste people who would rather be killed than sleep with a stranger[14]. And since they are a barbarian, idolatrious and heathen people, they are very given over to sorcery and magical, devilish works in that they talk and dance with devils--which come to them in person and which they call Aygnan. Indeed, they even smoke with that devilish tobacco and when they crave after it, then one of them is, so to speak, their priest who calls up the devil with specially appointed ceremonies.

These people do not allow themselves to become slaves, but they pretend to be extremely simple-minded and stupid. If you give one of them a piece of clothing, even if it is only made of linen, it still serves him for a whole year. However one should not treat them harshly but rather one should only speak to them in a friendly manner. If one tries to force them to do something then they will eat earth or poison so that they die[15].

If one of them dies they all howl and weep for him, but not for long, because they throw him out quite soon into some morast or other. Then they continue to meet together each day for a period of time to tell of his deeds and to lament his departing[16].

Notes

1. Ultzheimer's report is probably the oldest source which refers to the Island Carib culture of Dominica. The oldest French and English documentary evidence is from the early 17th century; cf. TAYLOR 1949.

   Ultzheimer's remarks on the natives of Trinidad are also one of the earliest accounts of the culture of aboriginal Trinidad. NEWSON 1976 was not able to work with Ultzheimer's information. Although Ultzheimer makes a special reference to the cultural contacts on Trinidad:

"That is a small island where there is only one village in which not many savages or Americans live, but only bandits--these are Spaniards who have been sent to the island as a result of their crimes. It is not particularly fertile, but there is a lot of the wood they call Pau de Santa." (ULTZHEIMER 1971: 87)

2. Thus CORTES' paper (1958) on the Caribs of the 16th century does not draw on Ultzheimer's information.

3. For the history of the Dutch in the Caribbean see GOSLINGA 1971.

4. Actually Dominica is 15.5° North of the Equator.

5. Ultzheimer usually entitles every religious trait he observed devils worship. This passage is the only exception. The Dominican Caribs still consider the moon's son Híali to be the founder of the Carib nation (TAYLOR 1946: 215f).

6. From Latin tegumentum, "receptical".

7. The origin of the word calabassa is uncertain. This here is probably the first use of the word documented in German sources; cf. FRIEDERICI 1947: 117.

8. The houses described by Ultzheimer are very probably of the muinan- or koubouya-type, which are nearly extinct today among the Dominican Caribs; cf. TAYLOR 1938: 126.

9. "Die Spanier begannen früh das Wort hamaca mit verschiedenen Abweichungen in der Schreibweise über den größten Teil des spanischen Amerikas zu verbreiten, Franzosen und Engländer nahmen es drüben und hüben in etwas veränderten Formen an, und über das Holländische gelangte es nach einem langen Entwicklungsvorgang in der entgiltigen Form Hängematte als fester Besitz in den Deutschen Wortschatz." (FRIEDERICI 1947: 290)

10. Ultzheimer's description of the hamaca (hammock)

is not entirely identical with that of Columbus. His description here is probably of that type of a hammock which is a forerunner of the Yucatecan type; cf. IRIGOYEN 1974.

11. Batate (sweet potato) is an Arawak or Taino word and Ultzheimer's use of it is the first in German literature; cf. FRIEDERICI 1929: 469.

12. Parakeet, in German Perikit is a Portuguese loan word: "Der Franzose Champlain hat es aus dem spanischen Westindien mitgebracht (1599)" (FRIEDERICI 1947: 491). The parakeet is a kind of tiny parrot.

13. Exactly the same custom is described by SAPPER 1897: 54 for the Black Caribs of Belize.

14. This is the only distinction made by Ultzheimer between the Islanders and Mainlanders.

15. Ultzheimer describes the typical reaction of the American Indians to slavery; cf. WIMMER 1979.

16. The wailing pattern of the Black Carib as described by SOLIEN 1959: 303 is very similar. Ultzheimer's observation points to an Indian origin--not as SOLIEN states of Caribbean Negro origin. cf. also TAYLOR 1951: 97-101.

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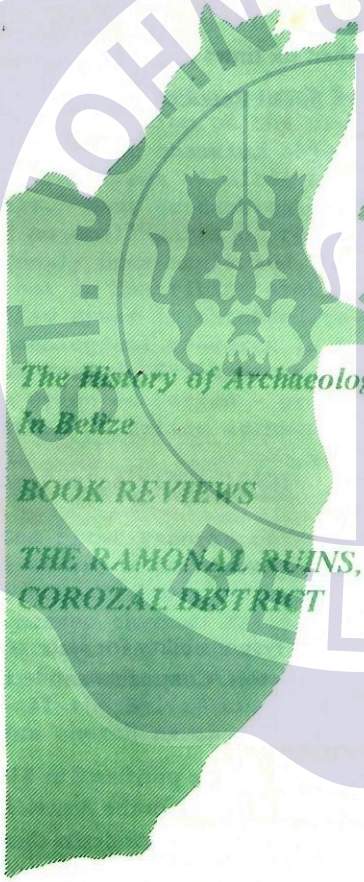

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# *The History of Archaeological Research In Belize*

by Heather McKillop and Jaime Awe

The history of research by archaeologists in Belize provides critical information on the present understanding of Belizean prehistory. The changing objectives of archaeologists have influenced the types of sites studied and the kind of information available. Most archaeological research in Belize has been focused on small parts of the country while less known areas have continuously been neglected. This uneven geographical coverage means that in describing prehistoric settlement in Belize evidence from a few areas is extended to uninvestigated areas. Division of archaeological research in Belize into four time periods - the European Period, Exploratory Period, Institutional Period, and Problem Oriented Period - provides a useful framework to examine the history of Belize archaeology.

## European Period (1524-1840)

The first reports of Maya in Belize date to the early Spanish attempts to convert the Maya to Catholocism and to the British establishment of outposts for lumber operations. Cortez likely passed through Belize at the Gracios a Dios Rapids on the Sarstoon River on his march from Mexico to Honduras during 1524-25. In 1533 the explorer Alfonso Davila encountered Maya in trading canoes off the Belize coast. By 1582 the Spanish Franciscans had erected a church at Lamanai (Indian Church), as noted in a Spanish

church list. In 1618 the Franciscan priests Fray Bartolome de Fuensalidas and Juan Orbita journeyed from Merida via Bacalar to Tayasal (Flores). En route they passed Spanish churches at Lamanai and Tipu (Negroman). On their return in 1641 the Lamanai church had been burnt as a result of Maya revolt.

Brief reports by the early British settlers in Belize include reference to skirmishes with the Maya living in logging areas along the Belize and Sibun Rivers. These clashes increased as the logwood, and later mahogany, operations expanded. There was little interest by the British at that time in the ruins, the people who once lived there, or their modern Maya descendants.

Exploratory Period (1840-1925)

Discovery of ruins and interest in the prehistoric Maya, including those of Belize, intensified by the mid-1800's. This was largely due to the 1843 publication of Steven and Catherwoods' illustrated volumes Incidents of Travel in Yucatan, which were widely read in both Europe and America. From that time until the early 1900's many prehistoric Maya sites in Belize were first encountered by explorers and European and American settlers. The most notorious of these was the Colonial Medical Officer, Thomas Gann, who between 1896 and 1936 explored extensively in Belize, notably at Santa Rita, Xunantunich, Lubaantun, Kendal, Moho Cay, and Indian Church. Unfortunately, Gann was more concerned with recovering aesthetically pleasing artifacts than with careful excavation and reporting, as attested by his dynamite holes in some mounds.

The American explorer and photographer Teobert Maler (Harvard University) visited Xunantunich in 1904 and later published photographs. Alfred Tozzer, R.E. Merwin, and George Valliant also reconnoiterd at Xunantunich, as did other archeologists en route to large Maya sites in the Peten.

Wild Cane Cay, once a landing point on the Belize City to Punta Gorda ferry route, witnessed work by Gann in 1911 and 1917, and H.J. Spinden in 1914. In 1924 Gann was joined by two British adventurers, F.A. Mitchel-Hedges and Lady Richmond Brown at Wild Cane Cay and Lubaantun, the latter where they allegedly found the "crystal skull," not likely of Maya origin.

Most reports on the prehistoric Maya of Belize written at that time were meticulously descriptive. There were no techniques for determining the age of sites and so there was no clear idea how old the ruins were. Furthermore, interpretations about the prehistoric Maya were largely speculative.

## Institutional Period (1925-1960)

As in neighboring Mexico and Guatemala, Belize attracted the attention of trained archaeologists affiliated with large foreign institutions willing to fund major archaeological expeditions. During this time the first careful mapping and excavations were conducted and detailed reports were often ensuing. Archaeologists researching in Belize, as those elsewhere, were concerned with defining the time periods of occupation of sites. To this end, careful stratigraphic excavation and description and comparison of artifacts from different excavation strata were done. Changing artifact styles, especially decorated pottery, were used to date successive site occupations. Some chronological ordering by translation of dates on monuments had already provided a time dimension for Maya archaeology.

The interest of foreign museums and universities in acquiring antiquities meant a concentration of excavations in site centers in search of carved monuments and other ceremonial objects related to the Maya elite. Legislation was then lacking in Belize to restrict the permanent export of archaeological material.

The 1926-1930 British Museum Expedition to southern Belize included the first trained archeologists to work in Belize, namely T.A. Joyce, J. Cooper Clark, and J. Eric S. Thompson. Their excavations in the central areas of Lubaantun (1926-27), Pusilha (1927-30), and Minanha (1927) were partially aimed at recovering material for display in the British Museum. R.E. Merwin had already removed the inscribed ball court markers from Lubaantun to the Peabody Museum in 1915.

In 1928 to 1929 Gregory Mason (New York Museum of the American Indian) carried out some of the earliest archaeological research in Belize caves, notably at Rio Frio E. In 1929 Oliver Ricketson, Jr. (Carnegie Institute of Washington) excavated at the minor center of Baking Pot. In 1931 Junius Bird mapped and excavated at Wild Cane Cay, as part of the Boekelman Shell-Heap Expedition to Central America.

Thompson returned to Belize (Field Museum of Chicago) excavating in 1929 at Mountain Cow, Hatzcap Ceel, Cahil Pichik, Cahil Cunil, and Camp 6, and later at Xunantunich and San Jose. Thompson's focus was minor centers and residential structures, reflecting his interests in studying the life of the average Maya.

Excavations, largely unpublished, in the Salt Creek Lagoon area by Clement Meighan and J.A. Bennyhoff in 1950 suggest a significant role in coastal trade, as borne out by David Pendergast's

later excavations at the nearby inland minor center of Altun Ha.

Since the turn of the century brief excavation by numerous researchers at Xunantunich has resulted in limited information about this large site's prehistory. In 1950 Linton Satterthwaite (University of Pennsylvania) partially excavated the frieze on Xunantunich's Temple A-6, in conjunction with A. Hamilton Anderson, then District Officer for Cayo. In 1952 and 1953 Michael Stewart, an amateur British archaeologist, cleared and excavated several structures at Xunantunich, but unfortunately left no published report. Euan Mackie of the 1959-60 Cambridge University Expedition to British Honduras also excavated mounds in Xunantunich's central zone.

Satterthwaite and others worked at Caracol and Cahal Pech in 1955 at Anderson's request. Today with the exception of two stelae and an altar at the Bliss Institute in Belize City and one stela in Belmopan, all known carved monuments from Caracol reside at the University of Pennsylvania, with a report on the research only now being prepared by Carl Beetz (Pennsylvania).

Elsewhere, Michael and William Coe (University of Pennsylvania) excavated at the minor center of Nohock Ek. A.H. Anderson excavated at Rio Freo E cave, Caracol, and Xunantunich. Adrian Digby worked at Las Cuevas and Pomona.

A landmark in Maya archaeological research was established with Gordon Willey's (Harvard University) Belize Valley Survey from 1953-55. This first explicitly aimed study of Maya settlement patterns incorporated information from extensive excavations of residential structures at Barton Ramie community with previously investigated sites elsewhere along the Belize River between present day Roaring Creek and Benque Viejo.

The concern with stratigraphic excavation and artifact description during the Institutional Period was aimed at dating sites. After the second world war interests shifted to include description of the use of different artifacts and functions of different kinds and sizes of settlements.

Problem Oriented Period (1960-)

As elsewhere, archaeological research interests in Belize turned to explanatory issues following the introduction of Carbon-14 and other absolute dating techniques for determining the dates of occupations of sites. Archaeologists turned their research attention to such world wide problems as the origin of agriculture, population growth and agricultural needs, production and foreign

trade. Basic chronological information remained a necessary aspect of research in Belize since such data was scanty.

As economic restrictions and political turmoil increased elsewhere in Central America, Belize became a very hospitable enclave for archaeological research in the 1970's. With the increase in archaeological research in Belize, it became clear that Belize was important to the development of Maya civilization, an opinion that contrasted to the earlier view of Belize as peripheral to developments in the Peten.

Most recent archaeological research in Belize has been concentrated in northern Belize. This has resulted in detailed information on the lifeways of the prehistoric Maya in this area, in addition to contributing significantly to the present understanding of the origins, development, and aftermath of the Maya. The geographic concentration on nothern Belize has left the rest of the country little investigated.

During the 1960's there was little archaeological research in Belize. The Royal Ontario Museum figured prominently in research first with William Bullard, who was succeeded by David M. Pendergast. In contrast to monumental excavation projects in Guatemala and Mexico, both Bullard and later Pendergast undertook research projects at more modest, minor centers in Belize. Bullard excavated at Baking Pot and San Estevan, in addition to work at cairns near Bald Hills. On the invitation of A. Hamilton Anderson, Pendergast began a series of cave excavations in 1962 at Actun Polbilche, Eduardo Quiroz, and Actun Balam, as well as excavating at Maria Camp and later Yakalche. Pendergast's investigation of Altun Ha between 1964 and 1970 has provided unparalleled information on a minor center of the prehistoric Maya.

The 1970's witnessed a proliferation of foreign archaeological projects in Belize. Projects were generally smaller than previously due to cut backs in funding for archaeology in foreign countries.

Norman Hammond's 1969-70 (Cambridge University) excavations at Lubaantun and survey and test excavations elsewhere in southern Belize remain a most valuable source of information for that area. Unfortunately, little archaeological attention has been focused on southern Belize since then. Joseph Palacio (Belize Dept. of Archaeology) investigated Hokeb Ha cave in 1976. In 1976 the minor center of Nim li punit was discovered by oil explorers, who reported it to the Department of Archaeology in Belmopan. While working at Nim li punit, Jaime Awe encountered the nearby site of Xnaheb Ahse Ahel. Richard Leventhal (Harvard) excavated and sur-

veyed at Pusilha and environs between 1979 and 1981. Jaime Awe has initiated reconnaissance work in southern Belize, notably at Rio Grande cave.

Northern Belize is now one of the best suited areas in the entire Maya area. Much of this research is thematic. Regional archaeological surveys concentrated on relating the location, size, and dating of sites to the physical and cultural setting. Ernestine Green surveyed and excavated in northern Belize, relating site size to the availability of water and arable land. Raymond Sidrys (UCLA) surveyed and excavated at several sites in northern Belize from 1974 to 75. Hammond's Corozal Project (Rutger's University) from 1973-76 focused on the location and dating of sites in northern Belize, notably Colha, Cuello, and Nohmul. Regional surveys affiliated with single site investigations have also provided valuable inter-site information.

Belize is the focus of research on intensive agricultural practices of the prehistoric Maya. The Rio Hondo Project directed by Dennis Puleston (University of Minnesota) and Alfred Siemens (University of British Columbia) in 1973 included survey and excavation of ridged agricultural fields near San Antonio, as well as the construction of experimental ridged fields. This research has been continued by Mary Pohl and Paul Bloom (University of Minnesota). Drained agricultural fields have been investigated in Pulltroser Swamp by B.L. Turner and Peter Harrison (University of New Mexico) in 1979 and 1980. Paul F. Healy (Trent University) surveyed and excavated extensive agricultural terraces and associated residential mounds in the Maya Mountains between 1979 and 1980. Evidence of alternative forms of agriculture than the slash and burn farming practiced by today's Maya has also been found at Cerros by David Freidel and Vernon Scarborough (Southern Methodist University) where a canal encircling the site was discovered.

Archaeological research at coastal sites in Belize has focused on the potential for coastal settlement both for trade and fishing subsistence. The only systematic archaeological research in the Stann Creek District was carried out by Elizabeth Graham Pendergast (Cambridge University) who surveyed and excavated at coastal and inland sites between 1975 and 76. Graham's research revealed coastal settlement at Watson's Island and Kakalche with strong ties to inland settlements. Research at Moho Cay in 1979 by Paul Healy and Heather McKillop (Trent University) indicated marine resource exploitation and long distance trade were major activities. Planned 1980 excavations at Moho Cay were effectively halted by dredging of the island for a marina. Investigations at Wild Cane Cay in 1982 by Heather McKillop (UC-Santa Barbara)

and L.J. Jackson focused on survey and test excavation of this long distance trade center.

A monumental search for evidence of the earliest settlement in Belize was initiated in 1980 by Richard MacNeish (Peabody Foundation, Andover). MacNeish has conducted survey and test excavation throughout much of Belize, recovering evidence that people, perhaps Maya, lived in temporary campsites as early as 8000 B.C., in what is called the Palaeo-Indian and later the Archaic Period.

Hammond followed his regional survey with excavations at Cuello between 1978 and 1980. As well as yielding evidence of the earliest known permanent settlement in the Maya area, Cuello shows the earliest evidence for pottery and agriculture, all during what is called the Swasey Phase of the Early Preclassic Period, beginning about 2500 B.C. Swasey settlement has now been revealed at numerous sites in northern Belize.

The location and excavation of a sixteenth century Spanish church built to convert the Maya living at Tipu to Catholicism was the focus of research from 1980 to 82 at Negroman by Grant Jones and Robert Kautz (Hamilton College).

Excavations were undertaken at the chert tool manufacturing settlement of Colha between 1978 and 1981 by Thomas Hester, Harry Shafer, R.E.W. Adams and associates (University of Texas, San Antonio). The research has revealed important information on chert tool production by the prehistoric Maya.

Single site investigations, sometimes chosen from regional survey, have been carried out by a number of archaeologists. Diane and Arlen Chase (University of Pennsylvania) are investigating the nature of Postclassic Period settlement in Belize through excavation at Santa Rita, a site well-known for its painted murals destroyed soon after Gann recorded them in the 1920's and also did similar work at Nohmul in 1978-79. Between 1973 and 1981 David Freidel (Southern Methodist University) conducted research at Cerros, an important Late Preclassic Period precursor of Classic Period civilization. The use of caves by the Maya has recently been investigated by Barbara MacLeod and others (University of Texas, Austin) at Petroglyph, Elizabeth Graham, Logan McNatt, and Mark Gutcheon at Footprint Cave, and the Department of Archaeology at various caves. In 1974-76 Mary Neivens (New York) mapped and excavated at the minor center of El Pozito. Excavations were initiated in 1971 by David Pendergast (Royal Ontario Museum) at Lamanai, a settlement occupied from the Preclassic through the Spanish and British Colonial Periods.

## The Belize Government Department of Archaeology (1955-)

Although the Antiquities Law was passed in Belize in 1928 there was no government department specifically responsible for overseeing and regulating archaeological research and protecting prehistoric sites until 1955. In 1955 the Department of Archaeology was established in the Ministry of Natural Resources (now transferred to the Ministry of Trade and Industry) with A. Hamilton Anderson as Commissioner and sole member of the Department. As District Officer for Cayo, Anderson had developed a deep interest and involvement in the protection of archaeological sites. In 1958 Anderson drafted an amendment to the Antiquities Legislation which was enacted.

David Pendergast became Acting Archaeological Commissioner in 1967 when Anderson resigned due to illness. The German archaeologist Peter Schmidt assumed the permanent position in 1968. Schmidt visited and located many sites, excavated and restored at Xunantunich, and investigated Uchentzub Cave.

Joseph Palacio became the first Belizean Archaeological Commissioner in 1971. In that year the Antiquities Legislation of 1958 was revised as the Ancient Monuments and Antiquities Ordinance, still in force today. Palacio continued the Department's interest in excavation and restoration at Xunantunich, and in cave archaeology, notably at Hokeb Ha.

With the increase in foreign archaeological research in Belize an assistant, Harriot Topsey, was hired in 1973. When Topsey left for university studies in England, Jaime Awe was hired as the assistant. Awe became Acting Commissioner and sole member of the Department when Palacio resigned to pursue doctoral studies (Berkeley).

In 1977 Elizabeth Graham Pendergast was appointed Commissioner of Archaeology. Mark Gutcheon was employed through the Peace Corps as Departmental Assistant. In 1978 Winnel Branche became an assistant. Both Awe and Branche left for university studies (Trent) in 1978 and Alan Moore was hired as an assistant.

In 1979 Topsey assumed the Commissioner position. As of 1982 the Department of Archaeology includes Topsey as Commissioner, Awe and Branche as Archaeologists, Moore and John Morris as Assistants, as well as a corps of archaeological site caretakers and archaeological workers. The role of the Department of Archaeology now includes the assistance and regulation of foreign archaeologica projects in Belize (including requests to the Minister of Trade for temporary export permits of archaeological material for museum

or university study), site protection and restoration, salvage of endangered sites, control of looting, and organization of Maya artifacts and literature on Belize archaeology. A reference collection is housed at the Department of Archaeology in Belmopan.

## Conclusions

The early interests of the Spanish in converting the Maya of Belize to Catholicism contrasted to the British logworkers who saw the agricultural Maya as a barrier to logging operations. Early interest in the prehistoric Maya was associated with European and American explorers who visited Maya ruins and occasionally dug into mounds during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Speculative interpretations about the prehistoric Maya of Belize abounded. Early in this century the first trained archaeologists working in Belize made careful reports of their excavation, attempting to date the sites by study of artifacts from stratigraphic excavations. During the 1960's archaeological interests turned towards interpretations of Maya lifeways, including study of different food production methods such as intensive agriculture and fishing, that may offer alternatives to contemporary Belize.

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This article is a chapter of a forthcoming book An Introduction to Belize Archaeology.

# *BOOK REVIEWS* Archaeology at Colha

Over the last half decade so much archaeological research has been done in Belize that among archaeologists themselves it has been joked that there is standing room only. Their research and scholarship has firmly established the central place occupied by the Maya of this area in the development of that great civilization. Most of the archaeological research is reported to the scholarly world in reports which seldom seem to find their way to Belize and its institutions of learning much less to its reading public.

The recent scholarly publication of ARCHAEOLOGY AT COLHA, BELIZE, is outstanding on several accounts. It is one of the most readable reports that this reviewer has ever seen and one that can be used to help Belizeans know more about their country's history. The whole book is well done covering a wide spectrum of modern Maya studies. The archaeological articles by Drs. Hester, Adams and Hammond are worthy of particular mention for their contribution to Belize's history.

The article by Dr. L.H. Feldman on "Belize and Its Neighbours: A preliminary Report on the Spanish Colonial Records of the Audiencia of Guatemala" that were concerned with the British settlement of Belize is an important contribution to Belize's history and BELIZEAN STUDIES is seeking permission to reprint it so that this information can be made more available to the people of Belize.

whole text under a shadow. Many people in Belize are suspicious of Cuba and to have a Cuban publication change a text without permission of the author is entirely against the principles of free speech that have long been established in Belize. Various opinions have always been able to be printed in Belize and it is inexcusable and incompatable with our principles of free speech to change the meaning to fit a particular interpretation of history that is not held by the original author. It is simply unethical. It is hoped that this type of error will be corrected and suitable apologies made.

The book is good and deserves a wide circulation after it has been corrected. It could be a valuable tool for teaching Belize's history both in Belize and abroad.

Richard O. Buhler, S.J.

ARCHAEOLOGY AT COLHA is edited by Thomas R. Hester, Harry J. Shafer and Jack D. Eaton. It is published by the Center for Archaeological Research, The University of Texas at San Antonio and Centro Studi e Ricerche Ligabue, Venezia, 1982.

VISION DE BELICE is a part of the Serie Resumen, Coleccion Nuestros Paises published by the Casa de las Americas, Havana, Cuba, 1982.

# *THE RAMONAL RUINS, COROZAL DISTRICT*

by Suzanne Lewenstein

Arizona State University

Introduction. During the course of the 1981 archaeological field season at Cerros, workmen from Chunox village invited the Cerros crew to investigate another area of extensive Mayan ruins called Ramonal. This archaeological zone is located approximately 6 miles east of Chunox village and 1 mile to the east of a large canal which is said to have been excavated within the last 100 years in connection with logging activities in the area (see figure 1).

When it was brought to our attention, Ramonal had just been cleared of vegetation and plans were underway to convert the site into an agricultural cooperative. The Chunoxeños have considerable experience with archaeological work; thus they recognized the importance of the site and the unique opportunity for mapping afforded by their clearing of the area. After some preliminary discussion, Vernon Scarborough, the Cerros surveyor, organized a two-day expedition to Ramonal in March 1981, in order to map the site and to make systematic surface collections of artifacts at as many mounds as possible. Scarborough and four additional archaeologists from the Cerros staff cooperated in this preliminary work at Ramonal--Sue Lewenstein, Beverly Mitchum, Eleanor King, and Deni Seymour.

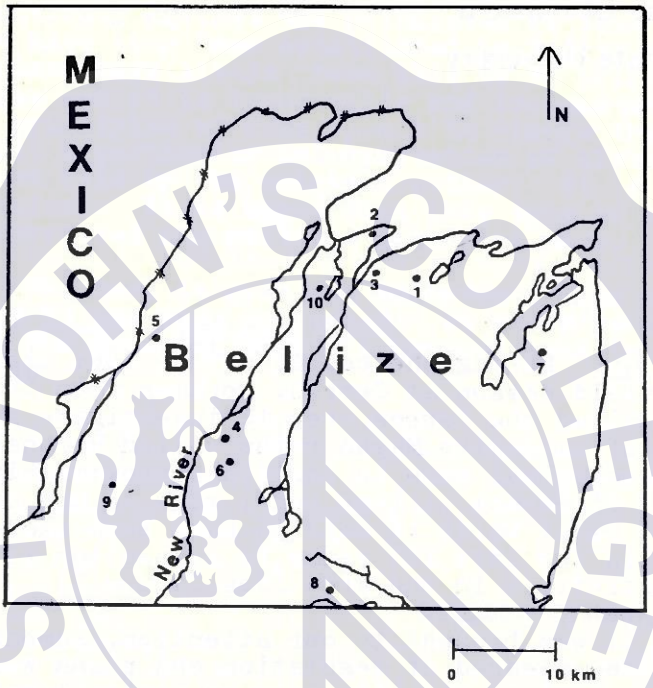



Figure 1. Ramonal, northern Belize, and other selected s

1 Ramonal
2 Cerros
3 Chunox
4 San Estevan
5 Nohmul
6 Chowacol
7 Shipstern
8 Colha
9 Cuello
10 Saltillo

A surveyor's transit and stadia rod were utilized for mapping the mounded features in the clearing at Ramonal. We established a survey datum point atop the highest mound, which we call Feature 1 (see figure 2). From this vantage point (and later from atop one of the mounds in the Feature 19 group) we proceeded to record the locations, orientations, and elevations of 27 features. In this paper an archaeological feature refers to (1) an isolated mound such as Feature 9 or Feature 16, or to (2) a group of two or more closely related mounds which may or may not share a common platform. For example, the plazuela group Feature 2 consists of a common substructure and six small superstructures. Feature 12, on the other hand, has no apparent platform supporting the two structures whose parallel orientation may indicate the remains of a Mayan ballcourt. In addition to these 27 transit-mapped features, we subsequently plotted five more architectural groups which were spotted to the north of our original study area, and which were measured by pace and compass technique.

A sample of artifacts was collected from the surface at 25 of the mapped features. This was accomplished by having one person collect as much cultural material as possible within a 20-minute period, for each mound or interior raised plaza area. That is to say, the collection unit was the mound or individual structure, not the entire feature. For example, at Feature12, two 20-minute surface collections were made, one for each of the two mounds that make up the group. At Feature 20 we collected four 20-minute samples, one for each of the three mounds atop the raised platform, and a fourth from the central plaza area between the small superstructures. In this way we attempted to obtain data from which we can formulate preliminary hypotheses concerning (a) the chronological placement of each mound, (b) the function of individual structures, and also (c) the extent of intrasite diversity at Ramonal. Another possibility is that after the ceramic analysis is complete, we will have an idea as to which mounds, if excavated, would yield more information for reconstructing the entire occupational sequence at the site.

Results of the Mapping and Collection. As a result

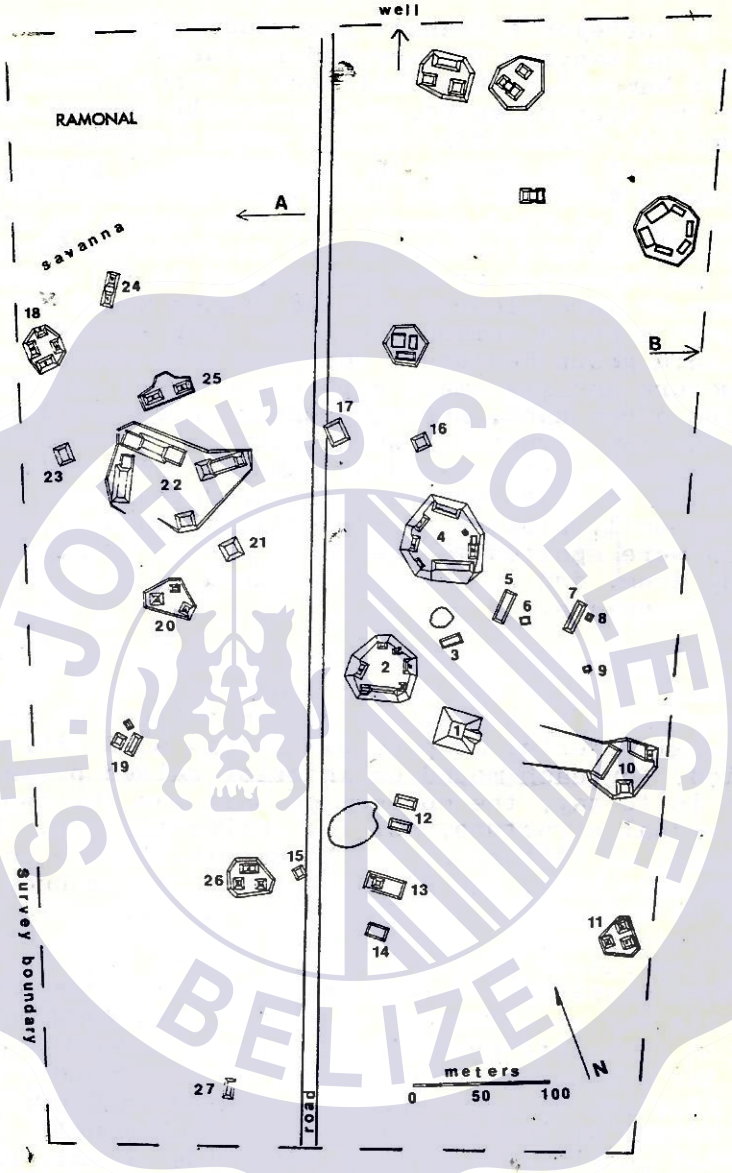



Figure 2. Site map of Ramonal, northern Belize. Prepared from a 1:1000 base map by V. Scarborough, S. Lewenstein, B. Mitchum, E. King, and D. Seymour. Structures without numbers were mapped by reconnaissance methods. A: approximately 6 miles to Chunox village. 0.9 miles to main canal. B: 0.5 miles to savanna.

of the fortuitous clearing around the site's center, we were able to identify and map all mounded structures within an area approximately 500 m. east-west by 800 m. north-south. This amounts to 40 hectares, or .4 km.$^2$. Forty hectares is a minimal estimate for the size of Ramonal: until further reconnaissance is carried out in the second growth and savannas which surround the mapped zone, the full areal extent of the site will remain unknown. Within the 40 hectare study area we recorded the remains of 72 structures and 14 raised platforms. These substructures range in height from 20 cm. to 2.7 m. in height. The Ramonal mound count corresponds to an average density of 1.8 structures/hectare. At present a tentative Early Classic date is assigned for the architectural manifestations. Hopefully, analysis of the artifacts recovered will permit a more confident and accurate chronological assessment.

The most imposing mound at Ramonal is Feature 1, a truncated pyramid that today rises to a height of 6.7 meters above the surrounding terrain. The outset staircase of mound 1 is oriented to approximately 126° east of north. The staircase faces Feature 10, which is distinguished by an apparent ramp leading to this low plazuela group, located 90 m. southeast of the principal mound. Just to the south-west of the main pyramid is Feature 12, a possible ballcourt, made up of two low rectangular structures aligned parallel to each other. In their present state of preservation these two mounds are each 1.5 m. high and 15-20 m. long.

Cultural materials collected from the surface at Ramonal include slipped and unslipped pottery sherds, artifacts of chipped stone, ground stone, shell, bone, broken censer fragments, coral, net weights and other worked sherds, a spindle whorl, and a barkbeater fragment. Most of the artifacts recovered were sherds (more than 1700 specimens, followed by chipped stone artifacts (n = 99). Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of the major classes of surface artifacts at the site. The four features with the highest sherd density appear to be non-residential: Feature 1 - the main pyramid, Feature 12 - the "ballcourt", and two smaller truncated pyramids, Features 23 and 21. With the exception of the main pyramid, there is very little

spatial correlation between the frequencies of ceramic and lithic artifacts. The features with the highest sherd density did not necessarily yield high frequencies of chipped stone, and vice versa. The histogram in figure 4 represents the variability in ceramic and chipped stone density found on the surface of the 26 collected features. Correlation coefficients calculated to measure the strength of the relationship between the sherd and lithic distributions indicate an "r" value of .11 to .16: this suggests that the density distribution for these two artifact classes are unrelated.[1]

Ramonal in the Context of Archaeology in Northern Belize. Recently, archaeologists with in interest in regional analysis have begun compiling maps which show the distribution of all known sites in northern Belize (Hammond 1973, 1975, 1981; Green 1973). Ramonal does not appear on these maps. Nor have I been able to find reference to this site (or any ruins in the general vicinity) among the writings of Thomas Gann, who visited and reported on numerous northern Belizean sites during the early 20th century (Gann 1900, 1918, Gann and Gann 1939). I attributed this to the relatively low archaeological visibility of small and medium-sized sites, such as Ramonal. Until thorough and systematic on-the-ground surveys capable of detecting smaller sites are carried out, our regional settlement pattern maps will continue to be skewed in favor of major ceremonial centers, and to underrepresent the distribution of the lower tiers of the regional site hierarchy.

Ramonal appears to represent the remains of a minor Mayan center, judging from surface architectural manifestations. Clearly, this site is less imposing than several nearby major centers which also have a ballcourt and Early Classic architecture. For example, San Estavan, Nohmul, and Colha each have at least one acropolis, larger pyramids, and more extensive residential settlement than Ramonal (Hammond 1975, 1981). The size and layout of Ramonal are most similar to minor centers in northern Belize, such as Cuello, Saltillo, Chowacol, and possibly Shipstern (Hammond 1975, Gann 1918: 115-6).

Two conclusions result from recent reconnaissance at Ramonal. First, in spite of the fact that much high quality archaeological work has been accomplished in northern Belize over the last two decades, there is still an urgent need for a comprehensive survey of the region, in order to fill lacunae in our knowledge of the variability and distribution of sites of all sizes. Only when these data become available will it be possible to explore any meaningful fashion the utility of central place theory and other spatial modles for understanding the Mayan prehistory of this area.

Second, the site of Ramonal itself merits further attention. Hopefully, future work will be undertaken to establish site boundaries and to firmly date the occupational sequence. In light of the recent discovery of two Late Preclassic or Early Classic times.

Questions of intrasite functional variability may also be investigated at Ramonal. The site is in close proximity to Barracouta Pond and an adjacent area of wet savanna. Today this spot is rich in fauna; here the men of Chunox village fish and hunt large game, such as deer and tapir. It may be possible to study the importance of past faunal exploitation at Ramonal, judging from the state of preservation of bone on the surface of the site. Bone was not distributed in random fashion on the surface of the structures collected. Three loci, Feature 18, Feature 22, and Feature 2, yielded two-thirds of all bone recovered. The distribution of shell on the surface was concentrated also: it occurred only at three small plazuela groups, Feature 11, Feature 18, and Feature 26. If the surface distributions of artifacts are indicators of the nature of the underlying subsurface materials, then it may be possible to identify specific households or other loci which specialized in hunting, shell collection, or in the processing of the non-perishable biproducts of these activities.

In sum, Ramonal is a promising area for future archaeological research. It deserves further investigation.

[1]The Pearson product moment correlation coefficient,

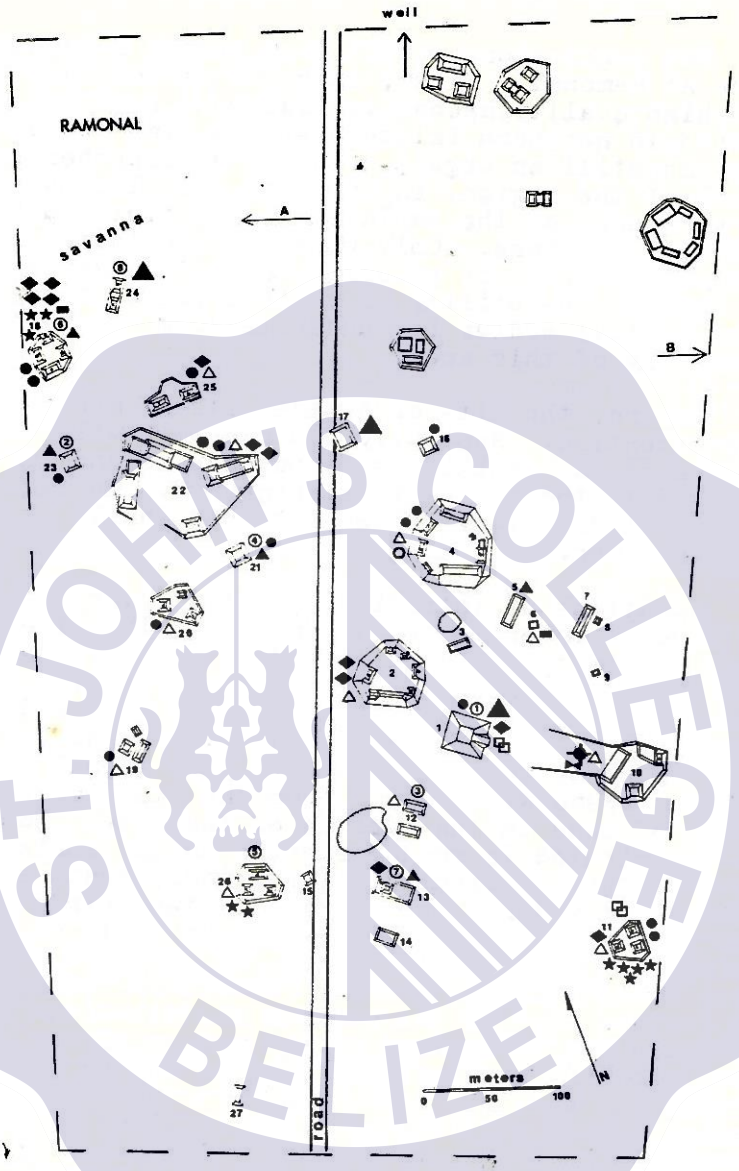
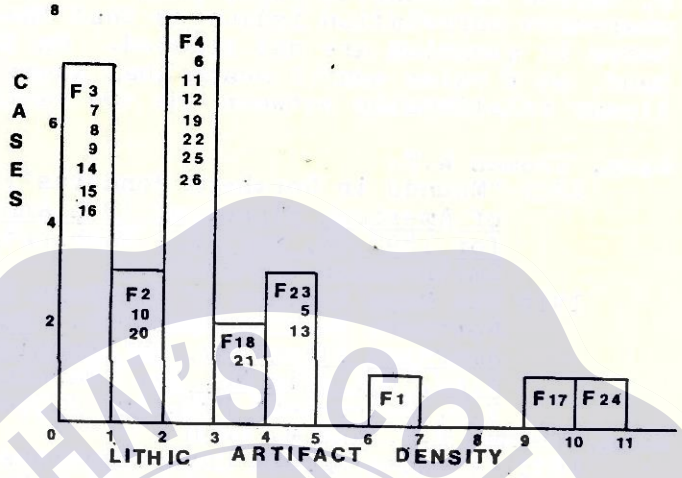



Figure 3. Distribution of artifact classes on the surface at Ramonal.

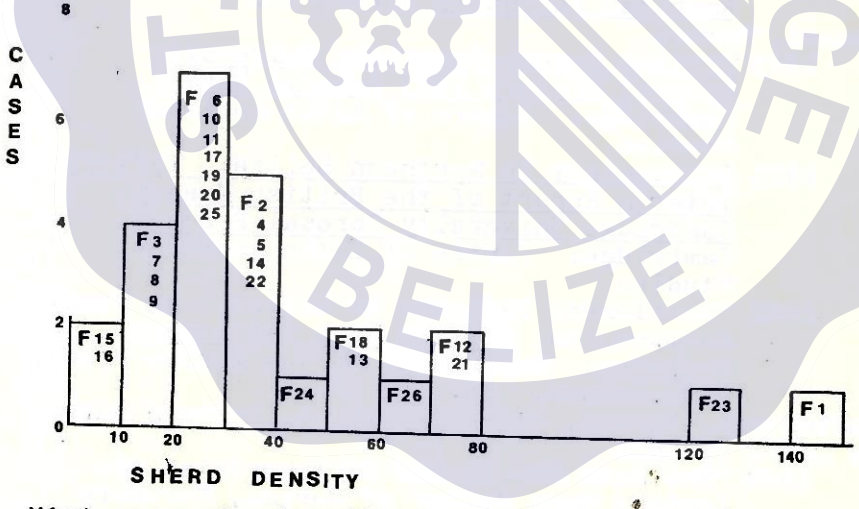
① through ⑧ indicate features with the highest density of potsherds

△ Less then two lithic artifacts/collection unit
▲ 2-4 lithic artifacts/collection unit
▲ 5 or more lithic artifacts/collection unit
★ = shell artifact
▬ = coral artifact
◆ = bone artifact
○ = spindle whorl
● = groundstone
✦ = barkbeater
⧉ = censer fragment
⋈ = mariposa

Figure 4.




A. Histogram showing the density of lithic artifacts/collection unit.




B. Histogram showing the density of sherds/collection unit.

r, varies in absolute value from 0 to 1. A zero or near-zero correlation indicates that the two attributes in question are not related. On the other hand, an r value near 1 means that there is a strong linear relationship between the two variables.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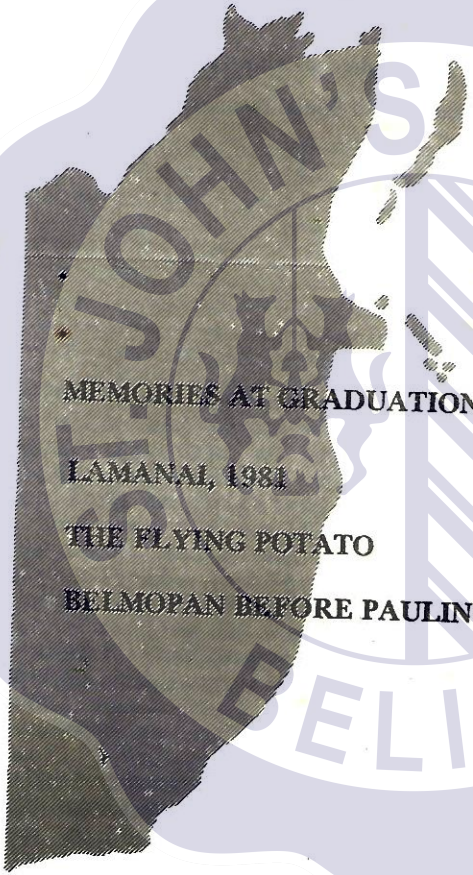

MEMORIES AT GRADUATION TIME

LAMANAI, 1981

THE FLYING POTATO

BELMOPAN BEFORE PAULING


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# MEMORIES AT GRADUATION TIME

*by ABEL RUDON*

The final days are approaching. Graduation exercises will take place within the next day or two. Exams are over; pictures of graduates have been taken, a total of eight, and somehow or the other the day for which I had so long anticipated, wished for and dreamed about seem too near for exultation. I tidy my desk, thoroughly for once, and alone I sit in my classroom of Fourth Form at Old St. John's College at Loyola Park, silently gazing at the four surrounding walls, and for some unknown reason a feeling of sadness encompasses me. There are two pennants handing on the wall, one if I remember correctly for Basketball and the other for Indoor, as Softball was termed in those days. The huge blackboards and desks gaze back fondly at me as if tendering a last farewell. Melancholy, I shoulder my school bag filled with my belongings, placed it at thefoot of the building's middle staircase leading to the campus, and decide to pay a last visit to the daily haunts of my schooldays. Slowly I wend my way to our Study Hall, enter its sanctum sanctorum stealthily and gaze at the 200 or more desks empty, all seemingly, in silencio devotione, wishing me a tender farewell. Turning to depart, my eyes rest on the motto above the entrance door, SOLITUDE IS THE HOME OF GREAT MEN AND SILENCE THEIR LANGUAGE.

My next visit is to The Reflectory. O how many happy hours I spent in Choir rehearsals of The College Glee Coub. I can still visualize Rev. R.C. Harder, S.J. as Director and Rev. J.B. Kammerer, S.J. (deceased) as as accompanist, with aides Rev. Charles Hunter, S.J. and Selvyn (Sunt) Trumbach, also deceased. I can still feel the reverberation of the halls as the Glee Club would lustily rehearse our College Song, "Dear St. John's, 'tis ever round thee," and then calming down to the plaintive strains of "Alma Mater round thee ever." Slowly, my eyes are raised to the stage causing memories to flow through my mind of the many rehearsals for Elocution and Oratorical Contests, Xmas plays, and the DA WHO YU masquerade and Raffles. Then there was our breakfast feast at the termination of our Retreat Mass at 6:00 a.m.

The scene changes and I find myself leaning on a football goal post on the campus. I scan same, recollecting the hectic times I had at the annual field days, and The Marathon from St. John's College by way of Caesar Road, ending in front of The Holy Redeemer Cathedral. Longingly my eyes travel to the bathing kraal where I spent so many lunch hours swimming when funds were low. Slowly I stroll to the Gymnasium where so many games were indulged in. I see the seven rings hanging from the ceiling, the handball and basketball courts, and I too remember how many times I was ejected from the Gym for misusing the Volley ball to "play chance," instead of using same for volley ball purposes only. This is my last post, and so to St. John's College at Loyola Park, I bid a last farewell to its grounds and surroundings.

Eventually Graduation night comes around, and after the speeches and addresses, no dance, no celebrations, I silently wend my way homewards. Sleep does not come immediately. And in the silence of the night it slowly begins to dawn on me how fortunate I am to be ONE of the EIGHT graduates of St. John's College for the year 1926. Gradually, I begin to realize the number of persons responsible for aiding me to obtain my diploma. My parents especially, for surely in these days money is not over bountiful. How can I ever forget the sacrifices they must have made to furnish me with the bare necessities of a school tuition, together with the cost of books, pens pencils, etc. Remember there are only five students that own bicycles. Then there are our teachers. All scholastics or priests; men who devote their entire lives to teaching. And then I commence wondering how many of us would take a little time out, for instance when reaching home, or perhaps even after graduation exercises to lay

hold of Mom and Dad and give them a very real, big and sincere hug and simply say "Thanks a million Mom and Dad I really appreciate this. God bless." And to out teachers individually, "A million thanks for all you have done. I promise that you will never have cause for regrets."

And so to-day, I enter the largest of all classrooms, the world. Again to commence learning. Now with my education as my tools, coupled with the high ideals and principles inculcated into me, I sally forth into the unknown confidently, with head lifted high and a continuous humming in my heart of the final lines of one of our College songs" When in lands afar we wander,
From your halls and verdant lawns,
Ever shall we love you fonder,
Alma Mater, Dear St. John's.

*Reprinted with permission from MEXICON, Vol. 3, No. 4*

# LAMANAI, 1981

*BELIZE*

*by DAVID M. PENDERGAST*

The 1981 season at Lamanai saw expansion of investigations in the northern suburbs and the north part of the site centre, while at the south end of the Central Precinct a previously unexplored complex of structures was extensively excavated (s. Fig. 1). The work yielded a massive body of data both on the Pre-Classic occupation and on terminal Classic and Post-Classic activity, and was of particular importance in expanding our knowledge of activity throughout the site in the 9th to early 11th centuries A.D.

Work in the north involved full excavation of a large three-chamber chultun and five associated structures, plus a small platform abutting the group at the north. The chultun yielded masses of ceramics of middle to late Pre-Classic date, with a very small quantity of mammiform-footed polychrome bowl fragments immediately below the entrance shaft. Atop the deposit lay intact late Pre-Classic vessels which set the date of the last major use of the chultun at about 100-50 B.C.; the distribution of later material below the entrance shaft indicates that the last dumping of refuse into the chambers occured not later than the 3rd century A.D.

Among the structures associated with the chultun is one of late Pre-Classic date that is of unique form, square on the exterior but with a circular to ellipsoidal interior. The walls rose about 75 cm, with a low vault above this, probably capped with wooden or other perishable construction. The exterior of the roof almost certainly duplicated the interior form, giving the building something of the appearance of a beehive. Burning of the floor might indicate that the structure was used as a sweathouse, though no vents or other features of this class of building were encountered in walls or floor. Other structures in the group are generally later in date, and all were either constructed or modified in terminal Classic or early Post-Classic times. Burials and middens associated with the structures yielded a very large sample of vessels, including forms not previously recorded at Lamanai and some heretofore unknown in the Central-Lowlands. There is no evidence of middle or late Post-Classic occupation in the group, but the presence of late Post-Classic material some 300 meters to the south indicates the need for further exploration of the northern site suburbs before we draw a firm conclusion regarding the extent of late settlement here.

At the south end of the site centre was began investigation of a complicated assemblage of structures north and west of the areas from which we recovered extensive evidence of Post-Classic occupation in 1974-77. In its final form the assemblage consisted of a series of contiguous platforms, their facings composed of boulders. Excavation has shown that the platforms were formed by filling of courtyards and other features with more than three meters of boulder core; the core concealed a group of structures of which we have excavated only two, and also contained a surprisingly large number and variety of offerings apparently contemporaneous with the construction, as well as burials that may have been intruded into the boulder mass. Offerings indicate a date for commencement of the construction not later than A.D. 1050-1100, while a lower limit date for the courtyard filling is set by core sherds from one of the earlier structures that fix the age of the building as not earlier than the 9th century, and probably 10th century or later. These data come from the east end of the complex; at the west,

sectioning of the boulder core has yielded sherds of 12th or 13th century date, indicating that the construction may have spanned two centuries or more. Midden associated with a large extensively modified residence at the west included a huge quantity of middle to late Post-Classic ceramics and other material, overlying a smaller terminal Classic/early Post-Classic deposit.

The buried earlier structures include one of which the chambered building was demolished before the boulder core was deposited, with the bulk of a very elaborate upper zone stucco frieze dumped at the base of the platform. The frieze remains include a large number and considerable variety of human and deity heads as well as elaborate border and panel mouldings and curvilinear motifs that may have surrounded the figures. Reconstruction of the brightly-painted facade will likely prove impossible, but we have a sufficient sample of the stuccowork to permit comparison with that from other sites. The similarities between the decoration and that from a terminal Classic structure at Altun Ha suggest a date for the Lamanai building, but we have not yet been able to support that suggestion with burial or offering data.

Burials in the boulder cove include several of middle to late Post-Classic date, and here as in the northern suburbs the excavations continue, despite the eight seasons we have now spent at the site, to produce new vessel forms and decorative motifs. We also continue to recover new artifact types in addition to the ceramics, among them a copper axe and tweezers from one of the late Post-Classic interments; these two comparatively rare forms add to the inventory of trade items in metal and other materials recovered in past seasons of excavation.

The results of the 1981 season set the directions for work in 1982, and the virtual absence of data duplication throughout the eight seasons now completed suggests that we should be able to continue work for some time before repetition becomes a problem; if the work does continue, it can scarcely fail to produce a significant augmentation of what is already a large and highly important body of information on life at a major Central Lowlands

centre form the Pre-Classic through the early Historic period.

Shell pendant with incised depiction of three seated figures, from early Post-Classic midden in the *chultun* structure group. Length 7.8 cm.

Fig. 1: Pottery object, perhaps an unusual drum form, a+b with eagle-head decoration. From a middle Post-Classic burial in the southern structure complex. Height 32.8 cm.

*FEEDING OURSELVES:*

# THE FLYING POTATO

*by I. E. SANCHEZ*

## INTRODUCTION

Countries like Belize are searching for import substitutes, that is, for products that can be grown or produced locally and so cut down their economic dependence on foreign suppliers. In Ancient Maya times Belize produced considerably more food than it does today. Some of these Maya foods have fallen into disuse, e.g. ramonal or breadnut. One of these that can be easily grown and supply an important nutritional need and act as an important substitute is the Flying Potato (Spanish: Papa Voladora; Yucatec Maya: Ak'ik Makal; Scientific species: Dioseorea). The Flying Potato is a robust one-crop vine with heart-shaped leaves and is a native of Central America. The Flying Potato thrives in ordinary good soil and being a native plant is resistant to pests and diseases. The Fruit is firm and compact and therefore weighs more for size than the Irish potato. This potato is hardy and can take some rough treatment. It is yellow inside and thus contains vitamin A. Otherwise it is similar to the Irish potato and can be cooked and served in the same way or ways. Propagation is effected by planting the entire seeded

fruit in situ in a mound situated in a cool location. The fruit should be fully mature. This method results in only one plant per fruit and so far is the only proven method known. Although the potato can be planted by just placing it in the earth, it would do better and yield more if planted on mounds. The mound should be well dug, like a small yam hill, and supplied with wood ashes, decayed compost or animal manure being worked in at the bottom of the hill. The mounds should be prepared at least one week before planting to allow the earth to settle. An area of ten or fifteen square yards should be allowed for each mound. Plant a seeded fruit in each mound, placing it about 2 to 3 inched down. Cover lightly with dry leaves or grass. Planting can be done from end of April to end of May and from end of November to December.

This potato grows similar to the Cho-Cho or Mirliton. The vine requires natural or artificial supports. It can be made to run on a dead tree, using its dry brances to spread its vines. Whenever natural support is not available a trellis of hard wood or wide-mesh wire would do. Do not let the vines and fruits to lie on the bare earth and weed around the roots regularly.

Flying Potatoes mature in six to eight months. They can be gathered as soon as ripe. The fruits are ready when the leaves on the vine dry up. Although the main crop consists of the fruits on the vines, the root of this potato also develops into a large tuber like a yam. However, this tuber is not to be harvested before the end of twelve months. Before this time it would be toxic. As the fruits are harvested they are ready for cooking. They should be stored in a cool dry place.

MY EXPERIENCE

I planted two seeded fruits in a well-prepared mound under a "Guvnor Plum tree" on the 26th April, 1982. The earth was mixed with chicken and sheep dung with some wood ashes added. I watered the mound regularly at least once a day until the vines started climbing on a live tree. Unfortunately the tree did not die but to my surprise the potato thrived and spread on the branches of the host tree. However, I

think this had something to do with the low yield of my plants. In all I reaped about 8 lbs at the end. Also two plants in one mound may have been one too much.

When the vines started to climb I was not sure which way it would go. I placed the young vines from right to left tying them securely. Nevertheless the vines followed its natural course and twined themselves from left to right. By August the vines had little fruits and when November came the leaves on the vines began to turn yellow and die. I reaped my Flying potatoes in December and first week of January 1983. I dug at the roots of my plants and found a small tuber which I threw away. I left one fruit on the ground and put the others in a dark cupboard and allowed them to be constantly wet. The one left in the open ground began to rot in about two weeks, remembering that it was raining most of the time. The ones in the cupboard absorbed the water slowly but it was not till after three weeks that one began to show signs of rotting, but it did not sprout. I left one on the vine and this one remained good in spite of the rains. It can be taken then that in a cool dry place the potatoes can be kept intact for long.

Propagating one plant per potato is rather limiting. For this reason I suggest that the following method be tried in an effort to increase the number of plants per fruit. Prepare a pit about 18 inches deep sifting the earth and mixing it with vegetable or animal manure. Put in the potatoes, placing them about their own thickness under, and spacing them about 1 foot apart. Cover lightly with dry grass or leaves. Water regularly. My hunch is that numerous shoots will be thrown out by the potatoes which can then be carefully lifted out with a hand fork. The shoots are severed from the tubers and planted out in the field immediately. Such plants obtained from tubers should be set just deep enough to cover the bit of potato and the earth pressed lightly all round and kept cool with a little light mulch. If this experiment works then propagation would be quicker and cheaper. Another experiment to find out if the tuber developed by the root would sprout into a new plant should also be carried out. The sweet potato and the yam left underground produce new plants thus

it could be that the Flying Potato would do the same.

I learnt from a Professor at Escuela Agricula Panamericana that the Flying Potato develops a tuber underground similar to the yam. This I did not know before. However, he advised that such tubers would be toxic until 12 months after planting.

ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE

The Papa Voladora or Flying Potato, so named because the fruits hang from the vines in mid-air, is a native of Central America. So far as it can be ascertained, this potato has been grown in Belize through the ages and it is still being grown by a few milpa farmers although in small quantities. Since this potato can readily substiture the Irish Potato and bearing in mind that Belize imports about 3,000,000 lbs of Irish Potatoes a year, I recommend that the cultivation of this native plant be actively encouraged. (Figures for importation of Irish Potatoes in 1980: 3,649,181 lbs costing $1,524,000.00) The cultivation and consumption of Flying Potatoes would not only keep our dollars at home but would also make us self-reliant by eating what we produce. Preparing and eating what we produce would also enhance our cultural identity.

# BELMOPAN BEFORE PAULING

*AN ANCIENT MAYA SITE*

*BY H. TOPSEY, J. AWE, J. MORRIS and A. MOORE*

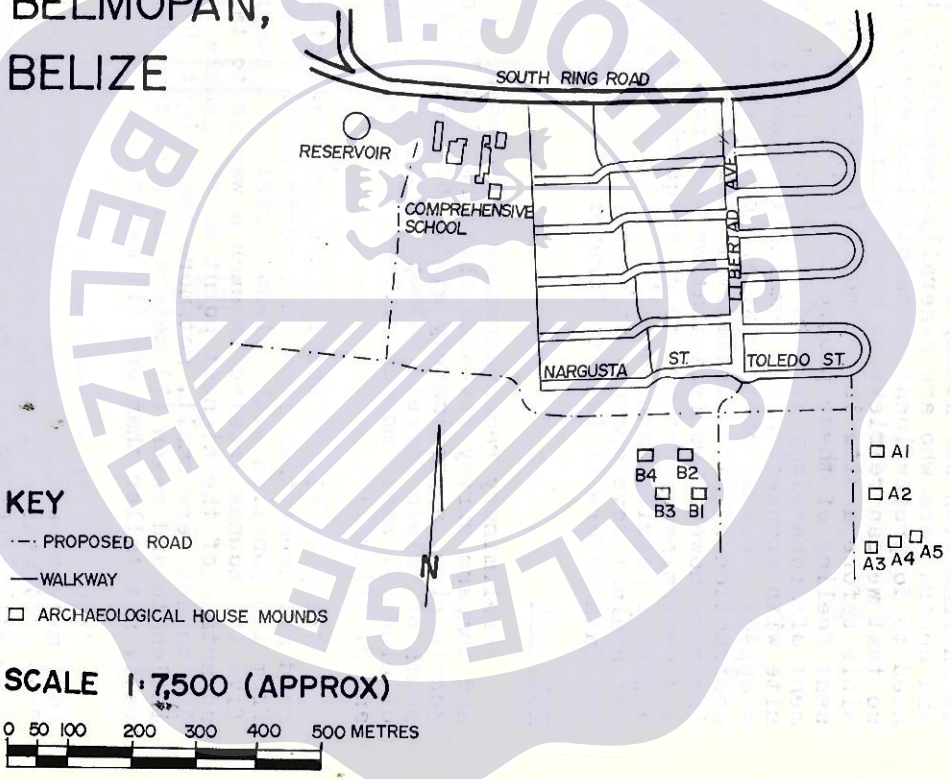
*of the Belize Department of Archaeology.*

*Maps by M. Campbell*

INTRODUCTION

In late August of 1981, H. Topsey went to check the site of the new low-cost housing project in the Southern section of Belmopan. The land had been cleared by the Reconstruction and Development Corporation (Recondev). On walking over the cleared area a few scattered pieces of pottery and several small mounds were seen. The latter were all partially destroyed. The following day, Recondev was contacted and informed that the project site had evidence of Maya remains on it. The manager of Recondev then consented to allow the Department of Archaeology to do salvage excavations prior to construction. As a result of this H. W. Topsey, J. Awe and A. Moore made a visit to the locale and did a more completed visual survey of the cleared area. It was noticed that all the mounds were diamaged by the use of a bulldozer during land clearing. Nontheless, taking into consideration the fact that once the housing project got under way any available information would be totally lost, it was decided to carry out salvage operations hoping that some light could be shed on this relatively unknown area.

# PLAN TO SHOW ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE OF BELMOPAN BELMOPAN, BELIZE



Salvage archaeology at its best is a hurried operation in Belize. The job must be done as quickly as possible so that development can continue. This is in line with our attempts to educate developers and contractors who are generally insensitive to the need to do professional archaeological excavations so that we can retrieve as much information as possible before a site is destroyed forever. The present feeling of these people is that if the Department of Archaeology is told of a development on a site with archaeological remains they would be stopped. Because of this we are often unaware of the destruction of sites until it is too late. In this instance however we felt that we were not too late and determinedly set out to do as quick and efficient a job as possible and show the public that we are not against development but simply want to retrieve the data before it is lost forever.

THE SITE

Preliminary reconnaissance followed by a tape and compass survey revealed that the site lay on a gentle rise, approximately sixty (60) meters due south of Toledo Street, Belmopan. The site consisted of nine (9) small mounds divided into two groups A and B. (figs 1+2)

Group A (fig 3) was located just east of a new road alignment that runs in a north south direction from its junction with Toledo Street. It comprised five (5) mounds located in such a way as to take advantage of the highest point on the gentle rise. The mounds were small, not more than eight (8) meters in length and seven (7) meters in breadth and probably not taller than one (1) meter.

Group B (fig 4) was located approximately sixty (60) meters west of Group A and approximately forty-five (45) meters south of Toledo Street at its junction with Libertad Avenue. This group consisted of four (4) mounds and like Group A, was located on higher terrain. Such a location can be appreciated when taking into consideration that the low-lying area around the site is subject to drainage problems during the rainy season. The mounds in this group were slightly smaller than those of group A but had suffered more extensive damage. With the exception

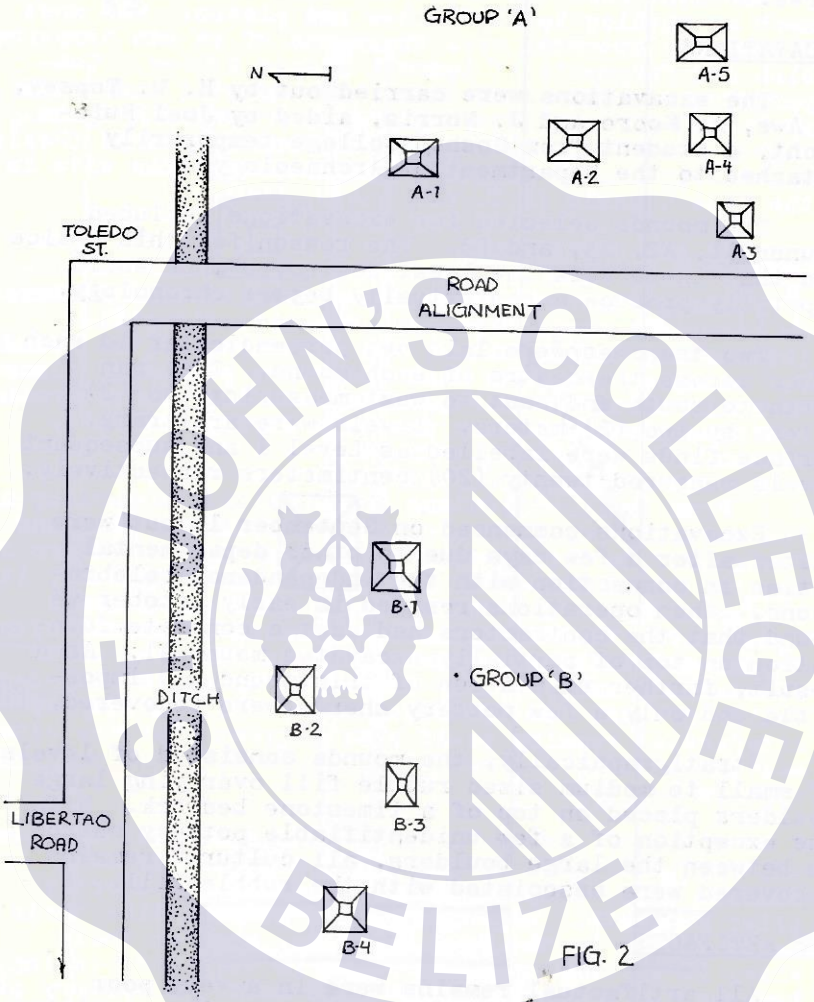



FIG. 2

of B3, all that was visible of B1, B2 and B4, were the alignments of the rock foundations of the structures.

EXCAVATIONS

The excavations were carried out by H. W. Topsey, J. Awe, A. Moore and J. Morris, aided by Joel Rufenacht, a student from Goshen College temporarily attached to the Department of Archaeology.

The mounds selected for excavations included mounds A1, A2, A5, and D3. The reason for this choice was that these were the least destroyed thus would hopefully produce a contextually better chronology.

Two trenches were laid out perpendicular to each other across the centre of each mound. They ran north to south and east to west measuring two (2) meters by two (2) meters. Levels were arbitrary. Surface finds were labelled as Level 1 and subsequent levels measured twenty (20) centimeters respectively.

Excavations commenced on September 1, but were halted after a few days due to other departmental duties in connection with the Independence celebrations. When operations resumed in early October we found that the contractors had cast a concrete foundation on top of partially excavated mound A1. As a result, further excavation of this mound was impossible and only a few pottery sherds were recovered.

Stratigraphically, the mounds consisted of levels of small to medium sized rubble fill overlying large boulders placed on top of a limestone bedrock. With the exception of a few unidentifiable pottery sherds in between the large boulders, all cultural remains recovered were associated with the rubble fill.

THE ARTIFACTS

All artifactual remains were in a very poor state of preservation. Non-ceramic remains consisted of a fragment of a metate which was used for the grinding of food crops and a crude unifacially chipped flint point.

Ceramic remains consisted of 154 poorly preserved

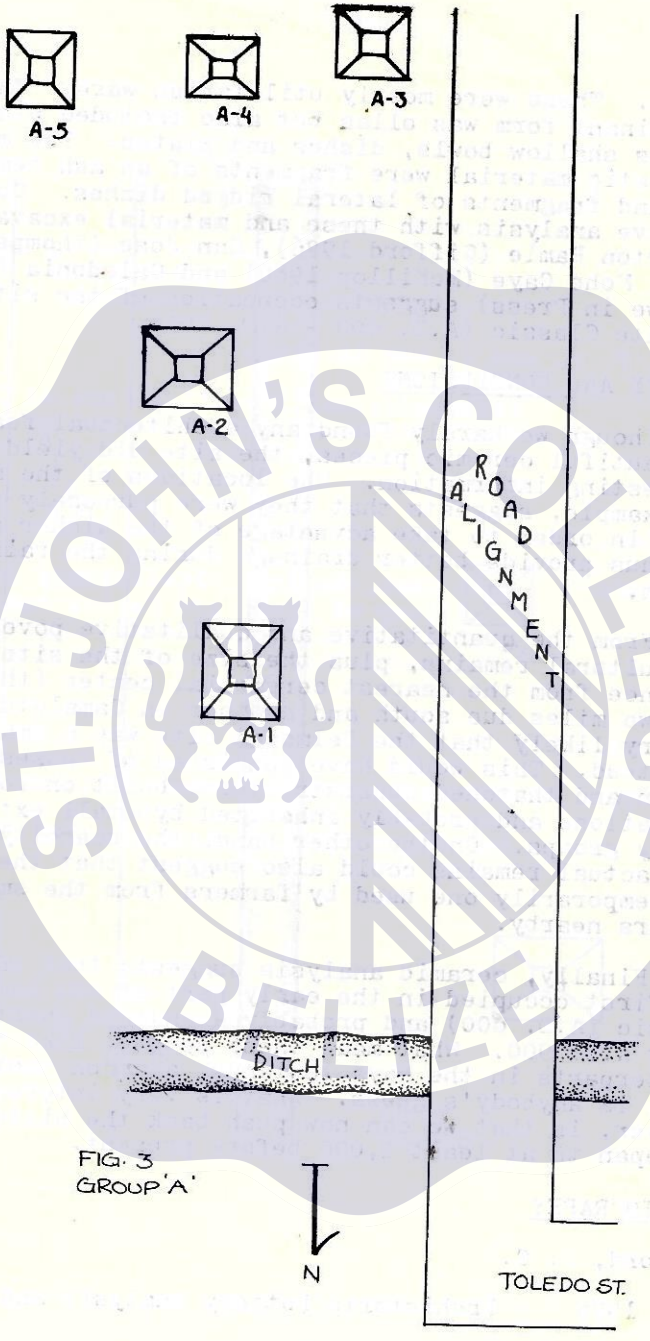



FIG. 3
GROUP 'A'

sherds. These were mostly utilitarian ware. The predominant form was ollas but also included others such as shallow bowls, dishes and plates. The most diagnostic material were fragments of an ash tempered dish and fragments of lateral ridged dishes. Comparative analysis with these and material excavated at Barton Ramie (Gifford 1976), San Jose (Thompson 1939), Moho Caye (McKillop 1980) and Caledonia (Healy and Awe in Press) suggests occupation of the site in the Late Classic (A.D. 600 - A.D. 900).

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Though we hardly found any architectual features or beautiful ceramic pieces, the site did yield interesting information. The locations of the mounds for example, suggests that they were purposely placed there in order to take advantage of the higher ground and thus provide better drainage during the rainy season.

From the quantitative and qualitative poverty of the cultural remains, plus the size of the site and distance from the nearest ceremonial center (there is one two miles due south and another in Camalote), it is very likely that the Belmopan site was a small farmstead. This would have consisted of houses with wooden and thatched superstructures built on rock foundations and probably inhabited by small extended family groups. On the other hand, the scarcity of artefactual remains could also suggest that the site was temporarily one used by farmers from the small centers nearby.

Finally, ceramic analysis suggests that the area was first occupied in the early part of the Late Classic (A.D. 600) and probably abandoned shortly after A.D. 900. What made these people, like their counterparts in the Maya lowlands, abandon their site, is anybody's guess. What is very interesting, however, is that we can now push back the history of Belmopan to at least 1,000 before present.

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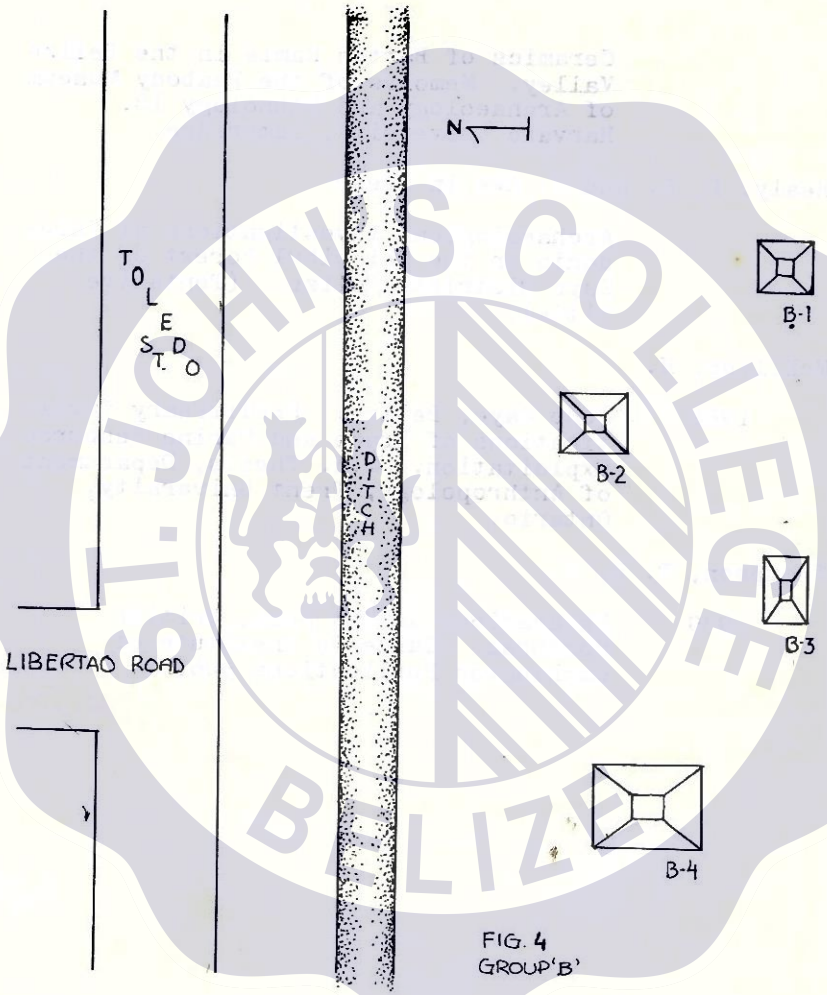


FIG. 4
GROUP 'B'

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# THE HISTORY OF Orange Walk SECOND EDITION


## Charles John Emond

ORANGE·WALK·BELIZE

This History of Orange Walk is respectfully dedicated to the late Don Alejo Ayuso, whose interest in preserving the history of his people gave birth to my own.

# THE HISTORY OF ORANGE WALK

BY

Charles John Emond

an ORANGE TREE production

# Preface

TO THE REVISED EDITION

My interest in the history of Orange Walk began with the work done by the late Alejo Ayuso back in the 1960's. Since then I have avidly read every primary and secondary source I have been able to locate that dealt with Orange Walk. I procured copies of documents from British Army Archives and from Archives in London and in Jamaica. I made good use of my visits to the Belizean National Archives in Belmopan, and had copies made of maps which I found in the Survey Department collection. I read and filed every reference to Orange Walk history that I came across in history books, and periodicals of all sorts.

In addition, I interviewed many of the older residents of town including Mr. Eugene Flowers and Mr.. Felipe Magaña. I am grateful for their accounts of the earlier days and for their kindness in sharing the legends passed on to them.

The historical writing of Alejo Ayuso; both that which he published and those unpublished materials which he entrusted to me, have also been much utilized.

Writing a history such as this is a matter of combining all these sources into one coherent story. I have had to decide, in some cases, between two conflicting reports, and I have had to decide what to include and what to omit. Throughout I have concentrated on the story of Orange Walk and limited myself to those aspects of national history which directly develop or illuminate that story. I have not, for example, presented a detailed history of the Maya, nor have I developed the topic of slavery. These and similar broad areas have already been amply treated by other historians whose works are readily available in Belize.

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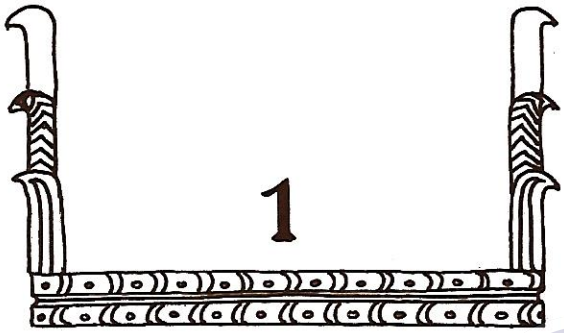
DRAWINGS BY THE AUTHOR




# THE MAYA

Based on recent excavations just outside Orange Walk (at the site called Cuello), the earliest residents of the area date back to 2500 B.C. These people cleared the virgin forests and, utilizing methods of advanced agriculture which included raised, irrigated fields, planted their corn and root crops. Upon this early foundation was built the great Maya civilization in this land which they came to call Acalan - the land of the canoe people.

The classic period of the ancient Maya began around 325 A.D. and flourished for the next 600 years. It was during these centuries that the temples seen around Orange Walk were built and that the society and culture of the Maya reached their highest point of development. It was then that relative peace reigned in the various city-states which stretched back into Peten and northward into Yucatan. And it was then that the farmers, following the directions of the priest-nobles, constructed ever larger and more beautiful temples. Artisans also developed their skills in carving, painting, weaving and pottery making.

Around 925 A.D. the Maya civilization collapsed for reasons that are still debated. In Yucatan, in the area of Chichen-Itza, it was later revived by the coming of the Toltecs who introduced changes. The Maya in Acalan, however, were not strongly influenced by the Toltecs and they continued to live their simple lives amid the ruins of their former greatness. From day to day and from decade to decade they followed the seasons with their milpas until they were touched by the coming of the Europeans.

The lives of the present-day Maya in the villages of Orange Walk District (at least a few years ago—before the advent of sugar cane as a major crop)

closely resemble the way the ancient Maya lived. Then, as now, the milpa was the main source of work and corn the staple food. The area around Orange Walk was also famous in ancient times for its orchards of cacao trees and for its production of honey. Their homes, as they still are today in many places, were of sticks called "pimento" lashed together and plastered with white marl. The roofs were thatched with palm leaves.

# 2

## HOLPATIN

The Maya settlement which stood on the spot where Orange Walk now stands was called, according to Thompson, Holpatin. Few traces of the Maya occupation are visible today. No important artifacts or burial sites have been found within the limits of the town. Whatever clues there might be lie buried under the streets and houses of modern Orange Walk. The extent of ancient Holpatin can only be guessed at, but two areas seem to indicate use by the Maya. The limestone hill on which the Post Office stands has pottery shards and flint chips embedded in the exposed side facing the river. Nearby is a steep hill in which have been found several openings or caves large enough to admit a man and going deep into the hillside. These are said to contain pots of some sort. Shards and pieces of flint are common in this area too.

These two sites may have been pyramids or at least an indication of where Holpatin stood. They are not more than a few hundred yards from each other and they overlook the river in the direction of San Estevan where a ceremonial center was located.

There are scores of house mounds in the area of Petville and the excavations at Cuello nearby which show, when taken together with the other indications, that this area was fairly well populated by the ancient Maya at some point in time.

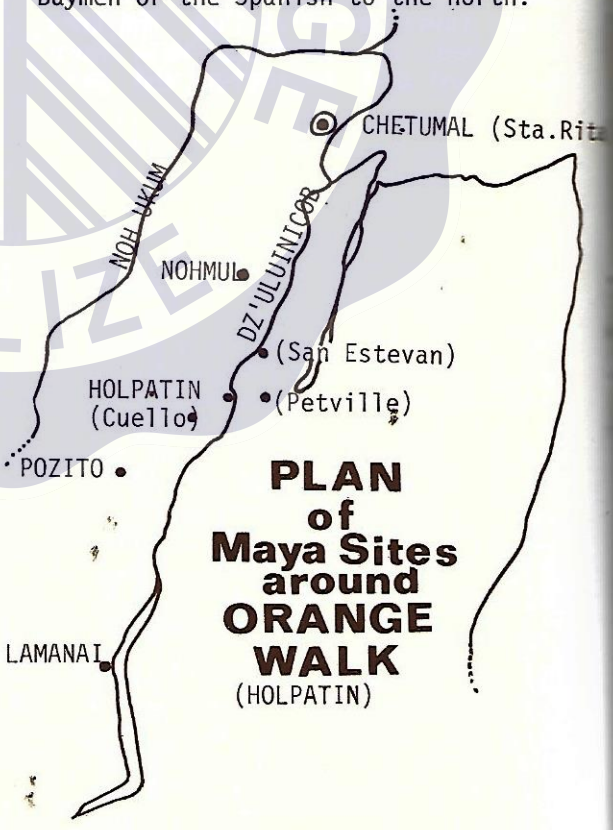
Why the Maya chose to build here is a matter for speculation. Perhaps the natural limestone ridges attracted them in the same way that similar ridges attracted them to Pozito and Nohmul. Perhaps their choice was influenced by the fact

that it lies just about half-way, by river, between the important ceremonial center at Indian Church (Lamanai) and the capital city of ancient Acalan at Santa Rita near Corozal. It may well have served as a resting place for canoes traveling between these cities.

This capital was called Chetumal and the state of Acalan was one of the League of Mayapan. This state was on the side of the Cocom family during the civil wars which enveloped the peninsula. It became a haven for the resisters of the Spanish when the northern states fell under their control.

When the Spanish made an attempt to conquer Chetumal between 1530 and 1550, some 200 warriors are reported to have come down the New River to help defend their capital. At the time of the attack, ancient Chetumal had over 2,000 houses. One hundred years later the population seems to have declined and most of the remaining groups of Maya withdrawn into the bush.

When the British logwood cutters arrived in the mid 1600's, they raided the villages which they came across. They attempted to enslave the Indians, but the Indians avoided them by moving to areas of the interior not under the control of either the Baymen or the Spanish to the north.



# 3

WOODCUTTERS 1600 -1730

During the late 1600's or early 1700's, another group of people began to use this highway to the sea. They came from England in search of the logwood which they found in abundance along the banks of the old (Belize)river and later along the banks of the New River.

These rugged and hardworking woodcutters began their work in August when a captain and from ten to fifteen men set out from Belize in pit-pans or dories. They had been preceeded by a huntsman who had located the trees to be cut and who now led them there.

At first, the trees closest to the river were taken, since they could be more easily removed. As time went by, however, the cutters had to go further into the bush. The type of wood they cut changed over the years from logwood,used as a dye, to mahogany, used in making fine furniture.

When the woodcutters arrived at the area in which they would work, they constructed a rough camp or "bank" where they lived and where the stores were kept. The men worked until November opening up rough logging roads to the trees and then cutting the trees down. They returned to Belize City for the Christmas holidays, and came back to the logging site a month or two later.At this time they worked at getting the logs to the river using ropes,with smaller logs as rollers. Later on, after 1805, oxen were brought in to assist in this work.

At the bank the logs were squared off, marked with the owner's initials and chained together. With the first heavy rains of June, these rafts were floated down the river to the boom - made up of logs chained across the mouth of the river. There they were sorted out and loaded onto ships for transport to Europe.

Orange Walk probably began as one of these riverside logging camps. As time went on, more and more logwood cutters traveled the New River to reach uncut timber.Some of these men settled down on a more or less permanent basis and the river camps became rough villages of thatched houses and small farms. It was some of these early settlers who named their village after a walk (plantation)of orange trees.

# 4

## THE SPANISH PROBLEM 1730-1798

As the woodcutters spread out from Belize City, they were given an increasingly hard time by the Spanish government in Yucatan. The spaniards claimed this area and wanted no British woodcutters here at all.

In 1730 there were several logging camps along the New River when the Spanish sent a force of soldiers to clear them out. They came upriver from the Bay of Chetumal and upon reaching the lagoon, crossed overland to Belize. They collected fifty prisoners on their way, but this did not discourage the cutters. They begged England for protection from the Spanish and at the same time moved back to their logging camps.

Again in 1745 the Spanish garrison sent soldiers up the river to destroy logging camps This time the settlers fled in their boats to the island of Roatan, but still they did not give up.They soon moved back and followed their trade in peace until 1763, when the Spanish forces made their third excursion up the river forcing the cutters to abandon their camps and seek refuge in Belize.Even after these three attacks, the woodcutters did not give up. They rebuilt their New River camps and continued as they had before. These early years of Orange Walk under the constant threat of Spanish attack were not peaceful ones,but the woodcutters were strong and independent men. They were used to being free and to moving about as they wished. They were not easily discouraged, but then neither were the Spanish.

The governor of Yucatan made two more attempts to dislodge the British settlers, both by sea and both failures. In 1779 they attacked the settlement at St.George's Caye. As a result, a treaty was signed with Spain which allowed the cutting of logwood in the area of the New River. But it also included many restrictions on the activities of the Baymen that they did not feel they

could follow.So the Spanish made one last attempt to force them out on the 10th of September, 1798.This attack, again on St.George's Caye, was repulsed and the Spanish sailed away for good.

After the last attack, in 1763, on the New River logging settlements, Orange Walk was left to develop in peace.It saw the change from logwood to mahogany and the beginning of the chicle gathering industry. It observed the acquisition of huge areas of forest stretching south to the lagoon and well into the foothills of Peten by the British Honduras Company (later the Belize Estate and Produce Company.) It attracted Maya settlers from the interior and welcomed refugees from the north during the War of the Castes.And as Orange Walk grew, the slow and winding road to the sea which had brought brave Baymen and Spanish soldiers,carried away on its flood vast mountains of mahogany.

# 5

## THE WAR OF THE CASTES COMES SOUTH 1847 - 1867

The twenty-five years between 1847 and 1872 were troubled ones for the people of Orange Walk. The War of the Castes which raged throughout Yucatan to the north, gradually came closer and closer to the colony. The first concrete sign of the fighting was the flood of refugees across the border. With them came the news of advancing warriors, and the border settlements were thrown into a panic.

The Icaiche and Santa Cruz Indians were Maya tribes from the interior. which had felt threatened by the spread of Mexican control from the north and the invasion of their lands by the Baymen from the south. Thus caught in the middle, they fought back in various ways, under different leaders and with varying degrees of intensity for over fifty years.

During the War of the Castes, the Indians obtained a large part of their guns and ammunition from the British colony. This practice, though strongly protested against by the Mexican authorities, continued throughout this period and substantially enriched the merchants engaged in this trade. Several Orange Walk firms, including that of Escalante and Company, did very well.

Marcus Canul, an Icaiche chief, can be credited with bringing the war across the border. He was encouraged by a Mexican government decree in 1864 which claimed this area for Mexico. Also, the Icaiche village of San Pedro Siris, located within the colony, had been supplied by the British with arms to help protect the border but instead, they welcomed Canul and his men, and joined him in his efforts against the colonists.

Canul's first action was his capture of the logging camp called Qualm Hill in 1866.He held the inhabitants for $12,000 ransom, but later released them to the British representative Mr. Von Ohlafen for $3,000 at Corozalito.

This caused much excitement in the colony, and the garrison at Orange Walk was increased by eighty men. Two patrols were then sent out against Canul, but neither was successful.

The first of these, in September of 1866, was led by Captain Delamere. This small group found itself vastly outnumbered and it retreated. The second expedition at the end of December was commanded by Major MacKay. This detachment was ambushed just before reaching the village of San Pedro. After a brief fight against over 400 of Canul's men, the British retreated with five dead and sixteen wounded. In the confusion they left behind equipment and ammunition, as well as the Civil Commissioner, Mr. Rhys, who had accompanied them.

Naturally, all this military activity worried the people of Orange Walk, especially in light of the British rout.Appeals were made for more help and reinforcements were sent to the colony from Jamaica, under Lieutenant-Colonel Harley.

In early 1867, Canul captured Indian Church, located on the New River lagoon. Several people in Orange Walk expressed a desire to move across the New River for greater protection, but this was discouraged by the local authorities. Also in 1867,a village militia was raised and drilled and in 1868 a Frontier Police Force was instituted to patrol the border. These two forces were in addition to the garrison of soldiers of the West India Regiment which had the responsibility of protecting the colony against Indian attacks.

Lieutenant-Colonel Harley set out against the Indians on February 9, 1867 with the augmented British forces.They attacked and burned the villages of San Pedro Siris and San Jose which had welcomed and given aid to Canul. This action seems to have given the colonists much confidence. During the following two years of relative peace, the "battle fever" died down, and people seemed certain that Canul would not return

this way.The local militia was dis-. banded, the garrison force reduced, and the people allowed to turn their attention to logging,farming and mil-pa cultivation. Canul did send an occasional note demanding rent for the land on which the colonists lived and worked, but this did not cause the residents of Orange Walk much worry.

# 6

## BEFORE THE BATTLE

The years between 1867 and 1872 show a steady decline in preparations for battle and in provisions against attack. Even as early as April of 1868,not long after the burning of San Pedro, the townspeople seemed not to welcome the large garrison in their midst. Lieutenant-Colonel Harley complained to his superiors in Belize on April 2nd that the local people refused to supply the soldiers with drinking water and recommended that the soldiers be withdrawn if the situation continued that way.

The same month, a disastrous fire,accidently started by Commissariat Issnor's wife while she was cooking, burned down the barracks, the police station, several nearby houses and part of the surrounding stockade. The barracks had been in poor shape anyway, with a roof that leaked and a dirt floor that flooded when it rained.After the fire, the soldiers had to camp in tents on the parade grounds and they also camped in the nearby Catholic chapel. The stockade was not rebuilt, but the barracks was. This new building stood about 30 yards from the river , on a hill (in the vicinity of the present B.E.C. building.)

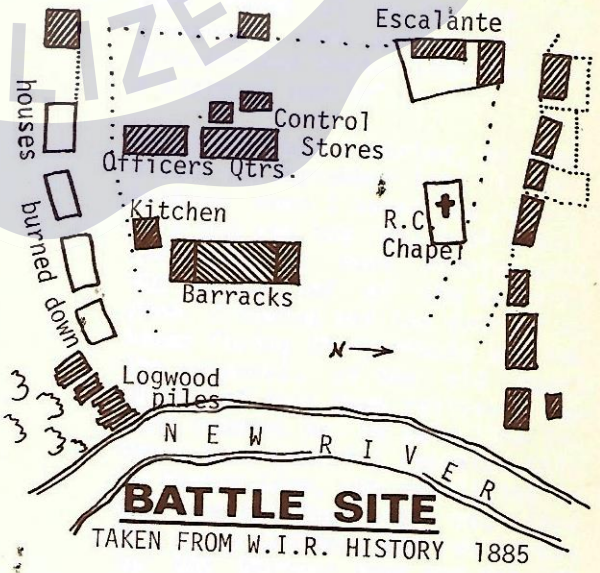
In 1870,taking advantage of the withdrawal of some of the soldiers from Corozal, Canul and his men "captured" that town without a fight. This and the occasional word that the Indians were passing nearby, showed that he was still active.During this time also, the British Honduras Company was attempting to remove the Icaiche Indians from their lands. The Jesuit priests who served the villages of San Pedro and San Jose, tried to help the Indians remain where

they had settled but they were unsuccessful.

Orange Walk in 1872 was a small town of about 1,200. The population was made up of creole woodcutters and Mestizo small farmers (milperos) or storekeepers, with an upper class of English managers and government officials. The town centered on the parade grounds near which was located the Catholic chapel and the five buildings of the First West India Regiment. The barracks was twenty by sixty feet in size and had the two ends partitioned off. It had a thatched roof, "pimento" and stick walls, and a board floor. The thirty-six men of the garrison lived in this building while the officer and doctor had their quarters on the other side.

To the west of the parade ground, the shops and houses were located without much regard for orderly streets. On either side of the barracks were also several thatched houses. (See map.)

A word about firearms would add to an understanding of how these battles were fought. The "Enfield" rifle was in general use. This was a single-shot muzzle loader. This means that after each shot, the barrel had to be cleaned out, a new ball cartridge loaded through the mouth of the gun and rammed down. Then a new percussion cap was placed on the pin where the hammer would touch and the gun was ready to fire. While reloading, the soldier was defenseless except for his bayonet or knife.



# 7

## THE BATTLE (part one)

September 1st,1872 began as an ordinary Sunday for the people of Orange Walk. They spent the early morning hours having breakfast and preparing for the day's activities. They had learned to live with rumors of Indian attacks, but on this particular morning, no one expected anything out of the ordinary to happen. The previous day, however, Marcus Canul and well over 150 of his men had crossed over the Rio Hondo and were this morning headed right for Orange Walk.

Since his last letters demanding rent had produced little response from either the magistrate at Orange Walk or the Lieutenant-Governor in Belize City, perhaps Canul intended to collect what he felt was his due. He may have wanted to show the British that he was still a powerful force to be feared and respected. He may have had in mind the 1864 Mexican claim to the British Colony, or perhaps he wanted to retaliate for the destruction of San Pedro Siris and San Jose. Whatever his reasons,his plan was clear.

When the peaceful morning was shattered by the fierce screams of the attackers, punctuated by the noise of their rifles, the people of Orange Walk must have realized immediately what was happening. For the wealthier residents, like Don Pancho Escalante,with strong houses,ammunition and guns, making a stand against them would have been the obvious choice. But the poorer inhabitants could only get out of the way as quickly as possible. Most grabbed what they could and took to the bush. Some women and children escaped by paddling dories across the river and then walking through the

bush to San Estevan.

The indians moved in from three directions.One group, coming in from the west, attacked the houses and stores.The other two groups converged on the barracks; one taking up a position on the southeast side, behind the piles of logwood and in the houses there, while the other took cover in the houses to the southwest, making especially good use of a stone house that stood on the corner.

One resident, a carpenter named John Haylock, lived in one of the houses to the southeast. He barely got his wife and little boy out the back door before eight or nine Indians burst in the front door and began firing at the barracks through the spaces in the wall. Haylock was lucky enough to have hidden himself behind the mosquito netting of his bed. He tells how the Indians spoke in Maya and in Spanish,which he understood a little,indicating that Corozal was next. As he lay hidden, the balls fired by the soldiers came through the walls and even struck close enough to him to throw dirt in his face.

The only warning the soldiers had was the sound of lead balls rattling against the walls of their barracks. Lieutenant Graham Smith and Staff Assistant Surgeon Edge were taking their Sunday morning baths at the time in the Officer's Quarters to the west of the barracks. They barely had time to run to the barracks and were fired at on the way. The lieutenant had pulled on his trousers,but Doctor Edge was "in a state of nudity".

The lieutenant reported,"at about 8 A.M. on September lst, I was bathing when I heard the report of a gun and the whizz of a bullet along the road running past the south end of the barracks room. I looked out the door of my house facing the barracks and saw the corporal, of the old guard which had just been relieved, running towards me. He said,'The Indians have come.' I repeated this to Doctor Edge, who was living in the same quarters with me, then put on my trousers and ran across to the barrack room and got the

men under arms as quickly as possible."

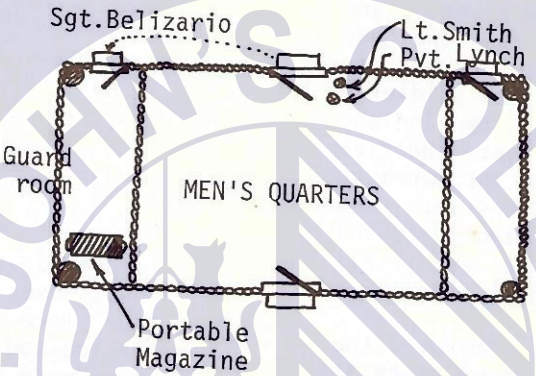
The only soldiers with ammunition at that point were those on guard duty. The rest of the ammunition was in the portable magazine in the guard-room. Unfortunately, in his haste,the lieutenant had forgotten the key to this chest, so he and Sergeant Edward Belizario had to brave the enemy gunfire to run across to his house to get it. It was something of a miracle that both of them arrived back at the barracks unscathed.

Nor was this their only problem. The guard-room could not be entered without going outside. Sergeant Belizario volunteered once again to go out and to try to bring the magazine around.He managed to drag the heavy box about halfway back, but he could not get it any further. He then had to open the box where it was and pass the ammunition bags over the wall to the men inside, all while being shot at by the Indians.Even though the magazine was hit many times(it was afterwards described as being"starred with white splashes of leaden bullets") he reached safety without a scratch. on him.

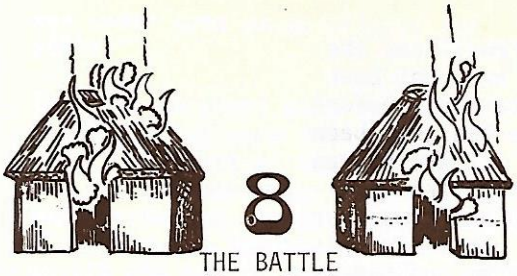
The barracks had not been constructed for use as a fort. The enemy bullets came right through the walls. The soldiers had to use their iron bedsteads for additional protection inside. Even so, fully one third were wounded during the battle and one man was hit four times. Afterwards over 300 bullet holes were counted in the walls and in some places even the thatch had been shot away.

Once the soldiers were armed and the battle under way, the lieutenant took up a rifle and began firing out the door on the western side. Beside him stood Private Robert Lynch. Within minutes both had been hit;the lieutenant receiving a serious wound in his left side and the private falling dead. Although Smith continued in command as long as he could, he eventually had to hand it over to Sergeant Belizario and Doctor Edge.(The latter was a non-combatant, but was the only other officer and Englishman in the detachment.)

Private George Bidwell was the only soldier who had not been able to reach the barracks before the siege began. He had just been assigned to duty at the stores shed and fought from this position until the Indians took over the buildings. He then used his bayonet on one of them and made a run for Escalante's yard. From there he fired at the Indians until his ammunition ran out. He informed Don Pancho that he was going across to the barracks for more and was fatally shot on the way.




**BARRACKS**
DETAILED PLAN



# 8

## THE BATTLE
(Part Two)

There was one event that stood out from the battle as especially important. The Indians had become increasingly frustrated by their inability to drive out the soldiers, so they decided to try fire. They withdrew to the logwood piles near the river, and then they ignited the thatched roofs of the houses nearest to the barracks. When the soldier's kitchen caught fire, the Indians cheered, thinking that the fire would soon spread to the barracks and force the soldiers out. But the luck of the Regiment held,and the kitchen fire burned itself out without spreading.

This fire actually improved the position of the garrison since it deprived the Indians of their best cover and confined them to the more distant and lower piles of logwood. Some of the attackers then made their way around to the northern side, but the houses there were too far away to provide the advantage they had lost with the fire.

Haylock, whose house was one of those burned,was fortunate to escape to the barracks while the Indians were regrouping behind the logwood piles.

Around noontime,two more men were also added to the garrison force in a spectacular fashion. Mr.J.W. Price, who lived at Tower Hill Rancho some four miles to the south, and a friend of his, Mr. O.E.Boudreaux, had heard about what was going on. As former Confederate soldiers, they felt they might be of assistance, so they saddled up their horses, armed themselves, and rode to Orange Walk. They carefully stole up behind the Indians who were using the logwood as cover, and suddenly burst out of the bush at them shooting.

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also been busy. In addition to looting and burning, they managed to capture the District Magistrate, Mr.Richard Downer. He was "vilely mistreated" by the Indians and flogged in the public square.

Not far from the besieged barracks, Don Pancho Escalante had barricaded himself and his fourteen year old son in the upstairs part of his house. While his son took care of reloading the extra rifles, Don Pancho fired after those Indians who came into his range.One of these was Canul himself. When the boy peeped out to see what was happening, he was shot in the head and killed. The enraged father then shot at Canul and wounded him fatally.

The battle left three of the defenders of Orange Walk dead: two soldiers and the Escalante boy, and a total of 31 wounded;14 soldiers and 17 civilians.Of the Indians, the number killed was estimated at fifty.The number wounded is not known, but one of them,Marcus Canul, is said to have died before reaching the Rio Hondo.

The people of Orange Walk must have rejoiced at their success in

driving off the Indians,but their elation was tempered by the sight of the burned and looted houses and stores,and the number of dead and wounded. Then too they had no way of knowing if or when the Indians would return. The next day, in fact, the rumor was spread that the Indians were on their way back. The people were ready for them this time, but the rumor proved false.

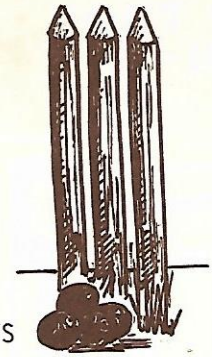
A message for help was sent to Belize, but it took two days for it to reach there. When it came, the Lieutenant-Governor, William Wellington Cairns directed the commander of the First West India Regiment, Major Johnston,"to proceed without loss of time to Orange Walk where the Indians are reported to have attacked the garrison,captured the Magistrate, and set fire to the houses." He went on to declare martial law in the Northern District and to direct that any Icaiche found on British territory be treated as the Queen's enemies. He sent his launch with a detachment of 20 men under Captain F.White which arrived in Orange Walk at midnight on the 4th of September,Major Johnston arrived the next day with another detachment of 53 officers and men, but the Indians had long since crossed back into Mexican territory.

The conduct of the soldiers during the battle received high praise from the residents and from the military and governmental authorities. Lt.Smith,Dr.Edge, and Lance-Corporals Spencer and Stirling were all promoted as a result of their valor. Sgt. Belizario was given a distinguished conduct medal and several of the Privates were highly commended.

One of the residents wrote of them,"I have nothing to say but what redounds to their credit ...as British soldiers; and if medals and crosses were distributed among the dusky warriors... all that I can say is that every one of the brave fellows...would be entitled to a medal at least."

# 9

## THE FORTS



In the years following the battle with Canul, despite the news of his death and the declarations of peace made by his successors, the chief concern of the people of Orange Walk was protection from Indian attack. Within four years, Orange Walk had been fortified by two forts. These were built outside what was then the limits of the village. They were named after men who had served as Lieutenant-Governors during this period. (Major Robert Mundy from 1874 to 1876 and William Wellington Cairns from 1870 to 1874.

Fort Mundy was completed two years after the battle, in 1874. Although built to overlook the river, this was not an actual fort like Fort Cairns. It was a simple wood and masonry fence erected to protect the gaol, police station and courthouse. It was under the command of the Police Force.

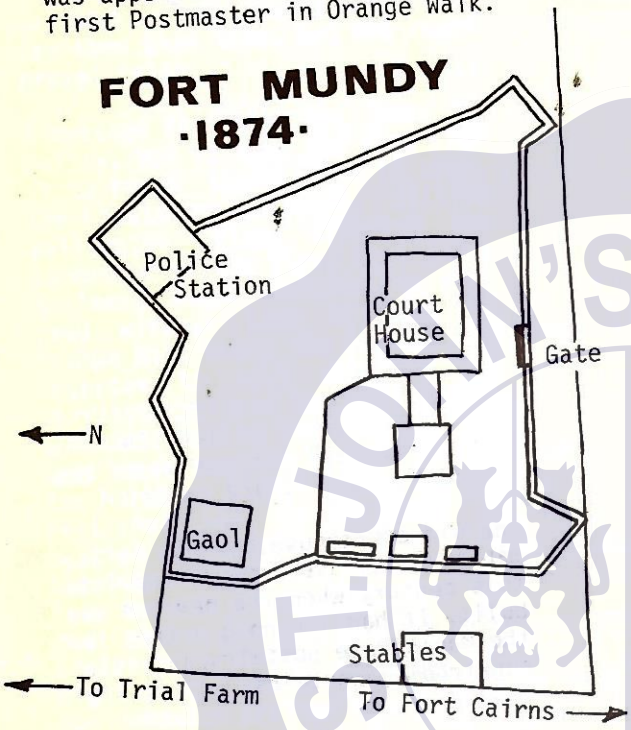
The old courthouse, shown on the map of 1887, served well up into this century when the new one was built. It had living quarters for the magistrate upstairs, and the courtroom downstairs.

In 1878, Fort Mundy was very nearly lost to fire. The area around the fort had not been kept clear and the houses had been built quite close by. The "ready and able aid" of the West India Regiment under Captain Hill saved the fort. The Lieutenant-Governor at that time, Sir Fredrick P.Barlee, sent these men his thanks for their bravery and a fifty dollar reward. The survey map of 1888 shows the lands within a 150 foot radius of the fort having been purchased from residents of Orange Walk (including F.Escalante, E.Cervantes, and Eugenia Gonzalez) by "Barlee".

The Police Force that manned this fort numbered 17 men in 1882 with one, Robert Wallen, having been on the force since 1863. (When he retired in 1888, he ran the ferry

named the "Scoro" which operated across the New River near the fort.

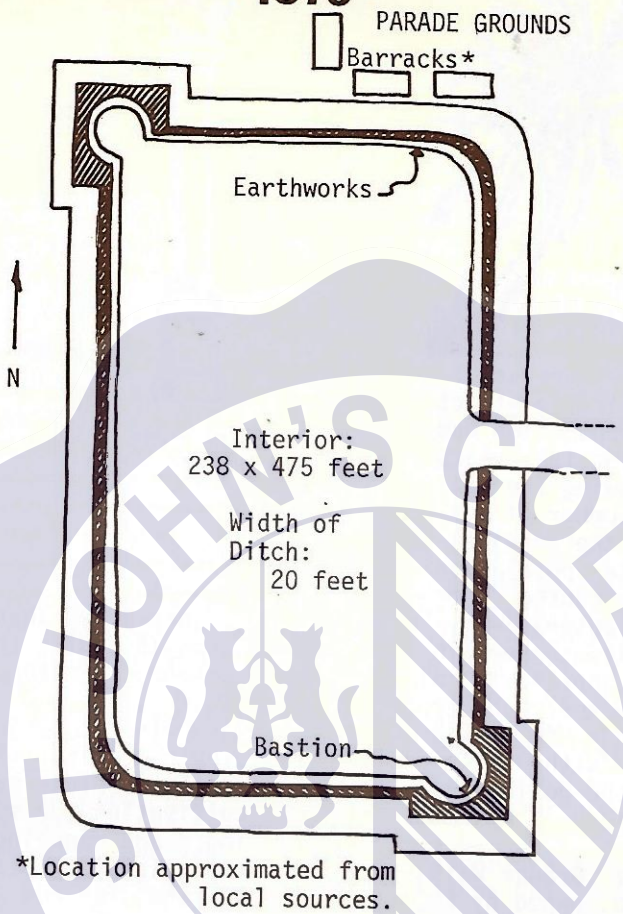
Before 1880. the Sergeant of Police was also the Postmaster. He complained that the two jobs were too much for one man to handle with the result that a Mr.Smith was appointed that year as the first Postmaster in Orange Walk.



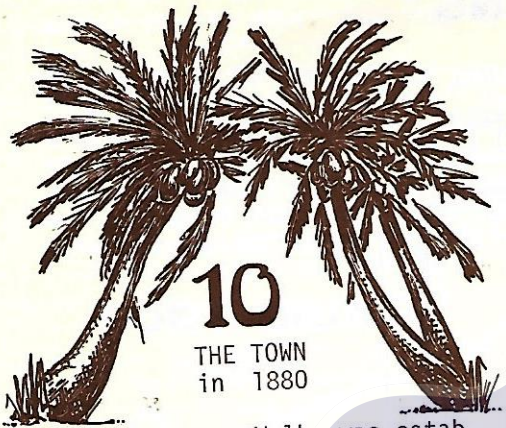

Fort Cairns was completed in 1876, most likely having been built by the men of the West India Regiment.This was a true fort consisting of a ditch which enclosed earthworks. These were surmounted by a stout wooden fence or stockade.The fort had a single gate on the eastern side which could be closed off by means of a drawbridge.On the southeast and northwest corners were masonry bastions the remains of which can be clearly seen today, as can the remains of the earthworks and moat. The bastion afforded the defenders crossfire along the walls in the event of an attack. Around the fort,the perimeter was kept clear even well up into this century to deprive attackers of cover from which to fire upon the soldiers.

The northern part of this perimeter was used as a parade grounds and was faced by three barrack buildings,and St.Peter's Anglican Church. This field, now used for football, is still called "the barracks". When it was active, Fort Cairns was under the command of the West India Regiment.

# FORT CAIRNS
## ·1876·




*Location approximated from local sources.



# 10

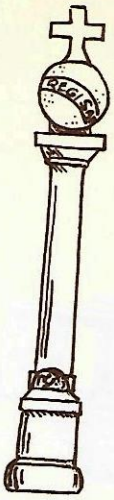
## THE TOWN in 1880

In 1881, Orange Walk was established as a separate district from Corozal. The population had risen rapidly during the years preceeding and following the battle,adding a large number of mestizo "Yucatecans"to the previously creole and white population. This appears to have caused some conflicts as the Lieutenant-Governor expressed his concern in 1873 that the two groups learn to live together in peace. Another letter to the Governor from the police noted that although the creoles would help the police,the Yucatecans would not.

The growing town of Orange Walk had two bars in 1882, owned by F. Escalante and J.W.Price. The latter also held a license to make rum. The license book for that year also lists fourteen horses and one mule. There were eleven shops including those of Hopun,C. Briceño, W.Smith, and J.Alpuche.

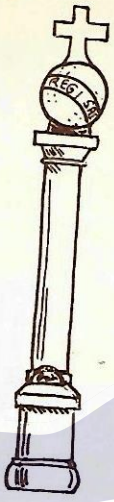
The main occupations of the townspeople during these years were logging, chicle gathering, milpa cultivating (or subsistence farming ) and ranching which included the raising of cattle and of sugar cane for rum. These occupations tended to be limited to one class of people. The ranchers,the upper class, were of European ancestry either refugee Spanish,local English or Confederate American. The merchants were also in this group. The logging workers were, and still are,largely creole while the milperos were mestizo or Indian in background.

One of the biggest employers in the District was the Belize Estate and Produce Company, which had been formed in 1875 from the former British Honduras Company. This company owned vast tracts of timber land along the New River south from Orange Walk, including the New River Lagoon.



# 11

## THE CATHOLIC CHURCH



The dramatic influx of Spanish and Mestizo Catholics met with a corresponding increase in the activity of the church in Orange Walk. Although the people of the New River had been served by various priests on a missionary basis, the first to be sent here as pastor was Father Alphonse Parisi, an Italian Jesuit. He served Orange Walk from 1875 to 1880. His church,which had been built sometime before 1872, was a simple thatched structure located near the present Pallotine convent. Several years before his arrival it had served the soldiers as a barracks.

Father Parisi started the first school in Orange Walk in 1876 and applied to the government for aid in running it. This aid was to be given, the Governor noted when he agreed to assist, as long as a resident, English-speaking priest was in charge. As a sign of encouragement, the Governor even sent prizes to be distributed to the children

Father Parisi was replaced by Father Chiarello,S.J., who served for two years.Father P.J.Piemonte replaced him and served as pastor until 1886 when he returned to Spain to complete his studies.

Father Pastor Molina was a Yucatecan priest sent north because he could speak Maya. He served this area from 1885 to 1890 and made visits to the Icaiche tribes across the border. The Register he kept shows that he traveled almost constantly.

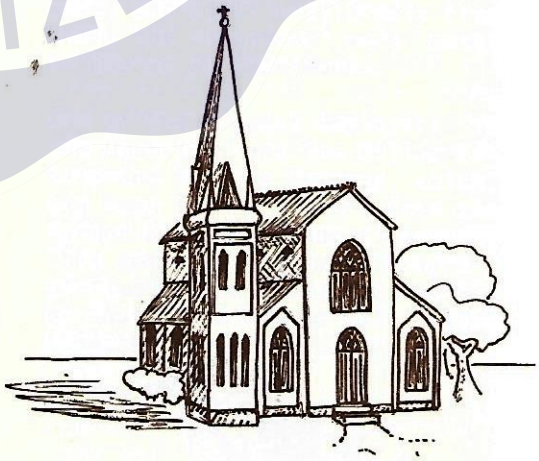
Father Piemonte came back and worked in various parts of Belize until 1897 when he returned to Orange Walk.In 1898 he supervised the building of a convent and invited the Sisters of the Third Order of Mt. Carmel from New Orleans to live in it and run the school. Sister Apoline and three other sisters arrived in Orange

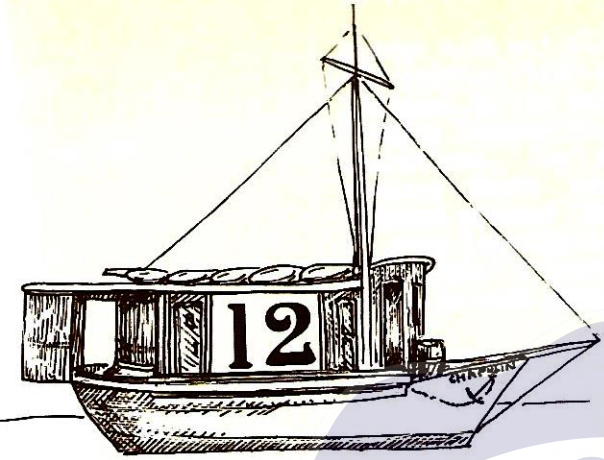
Walk on February 20, 1899, and opened two schools: a public school with 124 students and a select school with 35.Due to sickness, the sisters had to return to New Orleans a year after their arrival. They did not return.

The building of the granite monument that stands in front of the present church was also directed by Father Piemonte.It was brought in pieces by boat and erected to mark the beginning of the Holy Year and of the 20th century. It bears the names of the devoted citizens of Orange Walk including Mrs.P.Price, the Ayuso and Escalante families and the Hon. J.M. Rosado. Also there is Father Piemonte's name.

The turn of the century and the unveiling of the monument was celebrated by people from all over the area at an outdoor Mass at midnight on December 31st,1899. There were so many people that it took over an hour to distribute Communion. Just six months after this celebration, Father Piemonte died and was buried in Orange Walk with great ceremony and devotion. He was 47 years old. He had begun work on the new La Inmaculada Church (the present ediface) but it was up to his successor, Father Joseph Muffles, to complete this task.

Father Muffles was assigned to Orange Walk in May of 1900, and with the death of Father Piemonte in June, began his twenty-one year pastorship of the Orange Walk church - an extraordinary record of service. He was highly regarded by his people and still remembered for his dedication.






THE RIVERBOATS

Before the construction of the road to Belize City in 1925, the river provided the highway and chief means of communication with the outside world.Overland travel on horseback was arduous and slow. River travel was not much faster. Until the invention of the steam engine,it consisted of boats that had to be paddled or rowed.

The earliest mention of larger vessels traveling the river is that of the launch sent by the Governor following the battle in 1872. A boat called the "Pioneer" was in regular service in 1875, and might have been one of the first to run the regular route between Belize City, Corozal and Orange Walk, with stops at the villages along the way. The "Freddie M."was carrying mail when it was wrecked near Corozal in 1895.

The turn of the century ushered in the golden age of the northern steamers. One of the earliest boats of this period was an unnamed one owned by Katherine A. Leitch. This eighty-foot steam vessel carried ten cabin and forty deck passengers. The "Edgarton" (a 114 foot, twin-engined vessel) was licensed in 1914 and the "Star"( a two-decker) was licensed in 1916. The "Star" took a day and a half to reach Belize City from Orange Walk.In 1920,the "Star" carried fifty men of the Volunteer Guard into Belize for a shooting competition.

Perhaps the best-known vessel was the "Africola"(72 tons) owned by L.G.Chavannes and registered in 1922. She left Belize on Mondays at noon for Corozal and the New River,with stops at Pueblo Nuevo, Caledonia and San Estevan. She returned to Belize on Thursdays.The First Class fare was$6.50 and the

Second Class fare was $3.25. Freight charges included 50¢ for a bag of rice, 10¢ for a box of candles, 40¢ for a bag of corn, and 25¢ for a block of chicle.

Besides carrying the mail and passengers, the river steamers brought in to Orange Walk; rice, boxes of condensed milk, drums of oil, kegs of butter, candles, salt, flour, barrels of pork and pigtail, and (carefully packed into barrels) bottles of Chavannes Lemonade; the real "Afri-Kola" for which the boat was named. It carried back to the City: chicle in blocks (each stamped with the owner's initials) corn in sacks, green avocados and ripe pineapples, oranges, bananas, and watermelons from San Estevan. From the mill of J.W.Price came brown sugar in 100 pound sacks. From Caledonia came pigs, alligator skins, tobacco leaves bound into bundles. And from the Gonzalez distillery came fifteen and twenty-five gallon casks of "Taste-Tells" rum.

With the construction of the road to the City in the late 1920's and early 1930's, it was only a matter of a few years before the slow-moving steamers were replaced by trucks. The "Chapulin" was the last steamer in regular service. It was owned by R.S.Turton and registered in 1923. It carried six First Class or cabin passengers and twenty Second class or deck passengers. The "Chapulin" made its final voyage in 1939 under Captain Felipe Magaña.

Spectacular scenes brightened up the years between 1900 and 1939, not the least of which was the destruction by fire of the "City of Belize" while it was tied up at the wharf in Orange Walk in 1911 or 1912. The "E.M.L." was a smaller boat which figured heavily in the history of the country as the cause of the loss of a Catholic Bishop. The "E.M.L." was on its way to Orange Walk on April 10, 1923, with Bishop Hopkins and three Pallotine sisters when it sank while nearing the Bay of Corozal. He is said to have spent his last moments seeing that the women and children got what life-jackets there were on board. The Bishop and two of the sisters were drowned.

Long time residents mention two other boats as traveling to Belize from Orange Walk on a regular basis: the "Florin" and a boat

called the "L.G.C.(or L.A.C.)

Orange Walk was also the terminal for another fleet of boats -those operated by the Belize Estate and Produce Company in its logging operations. Two of the earlier company boats were the paddle-wheeled steamer "Don Felipe" of 24 tons (registered in 1890) and the "Alpha" a stern paddle-wheeler in service about the same time.

The "Ella" was a motor schooner of 59 tons, registered in 1903 by the Belize Estate and Produce Company, which later sold it to the Escalante family of Orange Walk. It was used to haul out logs and after it had outlived its usefulness, it was driven up a creek in the vicinity of Trial Farm and burned.

Though the New River still serves as a highway for the rafts of logs, and for the barges of sugar and molasses produced at Tower Hill, the time when it was the sole link with the rest of the world has long passed and the northern steamer has become the stuff of history.

# REFERENCES

The following is a partial list of references for this book. Published articles, books, archival materials, and Survey Department maps are listed, however I have made no attempt to list unpublished materials or the results of my own interviews and investigations.

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Map of Fort Mundy c.1
Map of Orange Wk.(und

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# BELIZEAN STUDIES

VOL. 11, No. 5, 1983

a journal of social research and thought

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT COLHA, BELIZE: The 1981 Season

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT NOHMUL AND SANTA RITA: 1979 – 1980

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VOL. 11, No. 5, 1983

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT COLHA, BELIZE: The 1981 Season

Thomas R. Hester, Giancarlo Ligabue,
Jack D. Eaton, Harry J. Shafer,
and R. E. W. Adams

## INTRODUCTION

The 1981 season was our third at Colha (Fig. 1), preceded by seasons in 1979, and 1980. All of these investigations have been documented through the publication of interim reports (Hester 1979; Hester, Eaton, and Shafer 1980; Hester, Shafer, and Eaton 1982). In addition, a film dealing with the 1979 season has been issued by the Centro Studi e Ricerche Ligabue and filming for a second documentary was done during the 1981 investigations.

As in the past, the Colha Project remained a collaborative effort involving the Centro Studi e Ricerche Ligabue (CSRL), The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA), and Texas A & M University (TAMU). The project has been administered by the Center for Archaeological Research at UTSA. The project co-directors for 1981 were: Dr. Thomas R. Hester (UTSA; administrator), Dott. Giancarlo Ligabue (CSRL), Dr. Harry J. Shafer (TAMU), and Jack D. Eaton and R.E.W. Adams (UTSA). The staff of the Colha Project in 1981 was as follows: Susan Montanari (camp Manager); Janet Stock (laboratory director); Debra Selsor

(assistant laboratory director); Thomas C. Kelly (regional survey director), Fred Valdez, Jr. (ceramicist, working with R. E. W. Adams), Daniel R. Potter (field director at Operation 2012), Erwin Roemer, Jr. (field director at Operation 2024 and other lithic workshops), Eric Gibson (assistant on the regional survey and field director at Operation 1002), Kathy Bareiss Roemer (field assistant and artist), Michael Woerner (field assistant at Operation 2012), and the following students in the UTSA graduate field school (in addition to Potter, Selsor, and Kathy Roemer) who worked in various capacities in several investigations: Stephen Black, Joyce Davis, Judy Gillis, Peter Stainken, and Cindy Ximenes. Ralph Eakin of Berkeley, California, volunteered to work with the regional survey. Members of the Herbert and John Masson families provided, as in the past two seasons, invaluable assistance. Filming was done by Sergio Manzoni and Piero Basaglia (CSRL); they were accompanied by Viviano Domenici, a journalist from Milan. The project greatly benefited from the week-long visit of Professor Gordon R. Willey of Harvard University, as well as from visits and discussions with other colleagues including Dr. Richard S. MacNeish, Professor Norman Hammond, Dr. Peter Harrison, Dr. Bruce Dahlin, Dr. and Mrs. Harold Haley, Professor David Freidel and his staff from the Cerros Project, Dean Dwight F. Henderson (College of Humanities and Social Sciences at UTSA), Mr. John Gooding (state highway archaeologist of Colorado), Harvey P. Smith, Jr. (San Antonio), and Rebecca McSwain (Tucson).

## RESEARCH GOALS FOR 1981

The field investigations at Colha and other sites in northern Belize during 1981 were carried out under the terms of Antiquities Permit No. 70/2/81, issued by the Department of Archaeology, Mr. Harriott Topsey, Archaeological Commissioner. The goals of the 1981 research were designed to build upon our earlier objectives (see Hester 1979; Hester, Eaton, and Shafer 1980) in the study of this site of massive chert tool production. In 1981, we specifically wished to accomplish the following tasks:

1. continue the regional survey in an effort to better document the extent of the chert-bearing zone (Fig. 2) and the types of sites within it;

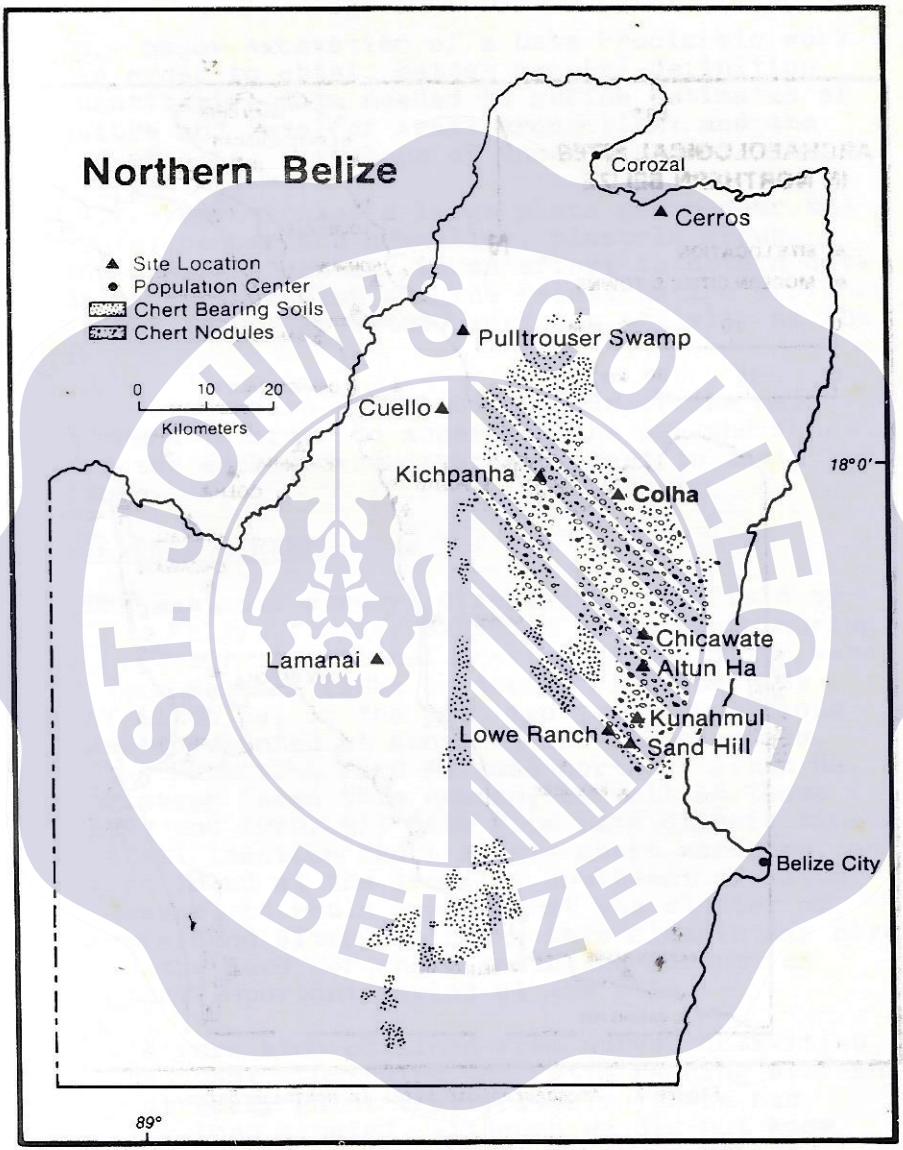


Figure 1. *Location of Colha and Other Sites in Northern Belize.*

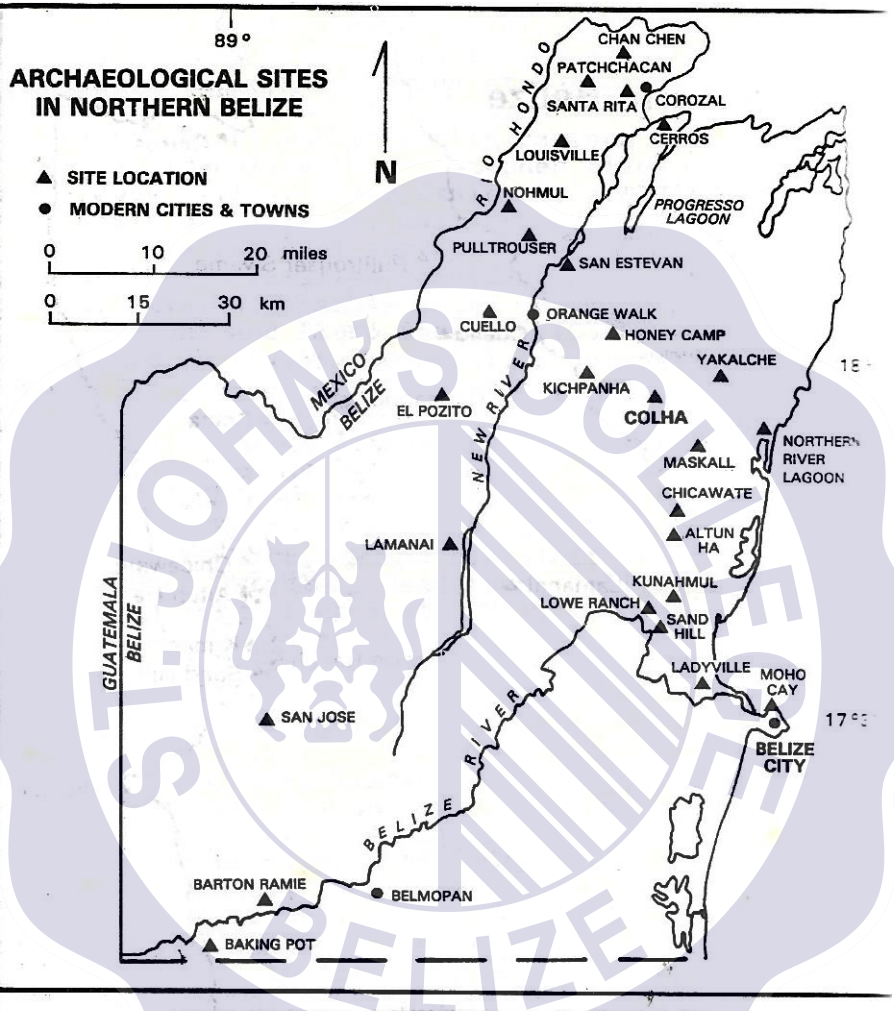


Figure 2. *Archaeological Sites in Northern Belize.*

2. continue excavation at Operation 2012 (Potter 1980), where early Middle Preclassic remains had been found underlying a series of platforms;

3. major excavation of a Late Preclassic workshop in order to obtain better spatial definition and quantitative data needed to refine estimates of the nature and level of craft production; and the testing of other workshops of uncertain date;

4. excavation of a large plaza group near the monumental center and a smaller, plazuela group distant from the center, in an effort to obtain data on social organization and the relationships of these structural groups to lithic workshop activity at the site;

5. excavation on the north side of the main datum mound in order to ascertain the age and function of the enclosed courtyard adjacent to that structure.

## THE REGIONAL SURVEY

The regional survey, directed in the field by Thomas C. Kelly, further expanded its efforts during 1981 (Fig. 2). Additional chert workshop sites were found near Maskall (12km southeast of Colha) and west of Altun Ha; in the past two years, workshops had been documented at Kunahmul and at Chicawate, along the Rockstone Pond #2 road north of Altun Ha. The workshops found this season, as well as those from 1979 and 1980, all date from Late Classic times. The Maskall location had a single chert workshop, and four were found at the locality southwest of Altun Ha. However, it would appear that the cluster of workshops around Altun Ha in the Late Classic may have supplied the need for chert tools and eccentrics during that important period at the site.

Data were also obtained from survey activities along the coast, including the Potts Landing site and another at Rocky Point (Kelly 1982). These had originally been studied, although we did not know this at the time, in 1950 by Clement Meighan and James Bennyhoff (both then at the University of California, Berkeley). Prof. Meighan of the University of California, Los Angeles, has recently con-

firmed (personal communication, June 4, 1982) the descriptions published by Kelly of the Potts Landing site. He observed that they also recovered "a very large number of the clay fire-dogs" (fired cylindrical clay objects in Kelly 1982) at Potts Landing.

The survey team also conducted extensive mapping at the site of Kichpanha, about 12 km north of Colha (Fig. 2; Gibson 1982a). This site had originally been recorded by Norman Hammond's Corozal Project in 1973; at that time, they knew of a pyramid and a acattering of plazuela groups and mounds on the west side of the Northern Highway. This year, we noted that the bush on the east side of the highway had been cleared and sugar cane fields had been put in. Forty-six structures were mapped, including house mounds, plazuelas, a large plaza group (the pyramidal structure which had been badly looted) and, at the eastern extremity of the site, one small, thin workshop deposit. Chert of high quality is abundant in the area, but lithics at the site were almost entirely derived from Colha (Shafer 1982a). Hammond had classified the site as a Late Preclassic minor ceremonial center, but this new survey and mapping data indicates that the most intensive use of the site was during the Late Classic.

The regional survey also served to better map the chert-bearing zone as originally defined in the land use study published by Wright et al. (1959). Additionally, modern chert samples were collected from around the zone. Though the principal goals of the survey were to better define the chert-bearing zone and to identify other chert workshop sites, other sites of various types were recorded during the course of the survey. These included mound groups in the chert zone and along the coast, and lithic scatters of mixed Maya and preceramic contexts. Most such surface scatters contained some specimens clearly of Maya derivation. However, there were tools and considerable debitage, often heavily patinated, that are probably preceramic in age. R. S. MacNeish will be investigating these sites further. At one of the sites found by the Colha survey team, Ladyville #1, a large fluted point (Fig. 3) was collected from the surface (Hester, Shafer, Kelly, and Ligabue 1982).

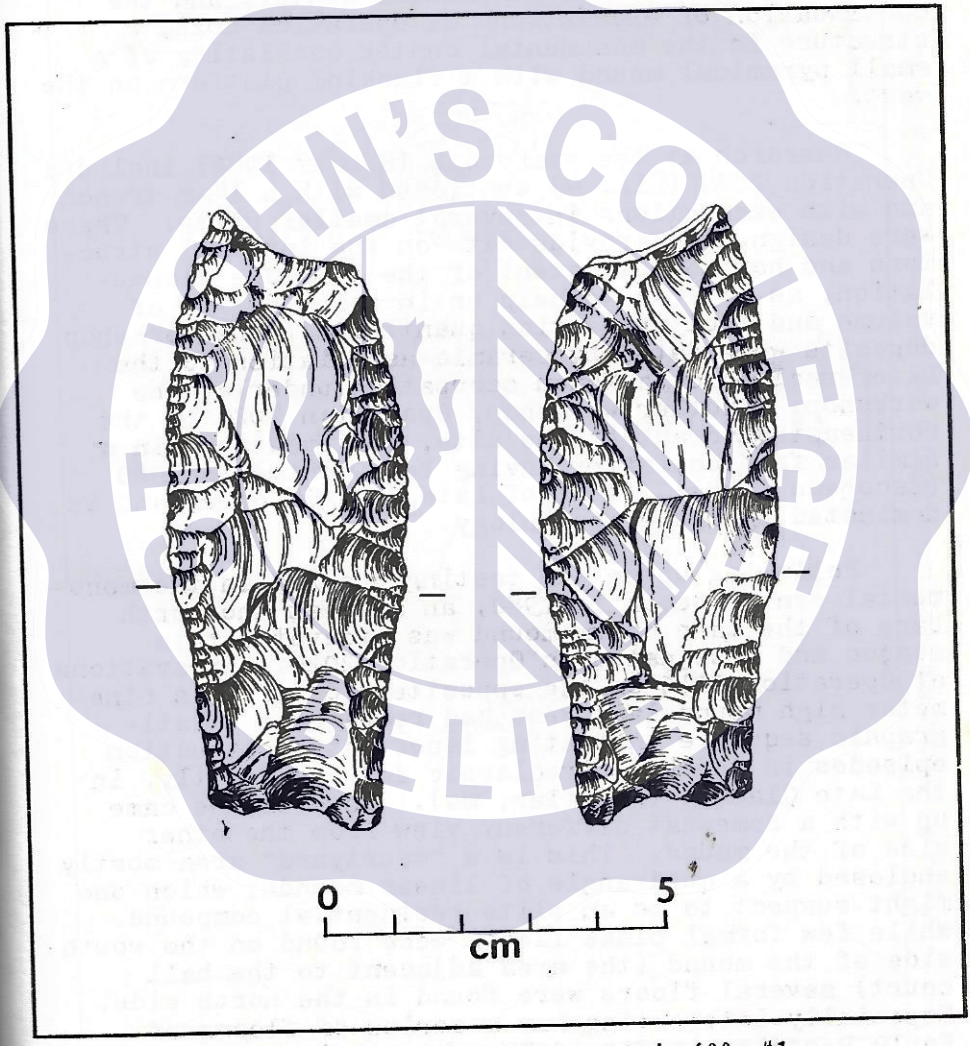


Figure 3. *The Fluted Point from Ladyville #1.*

## INVESTIGATIONS AT COLHA

The research priorities established for Colha during the 1981 season led to the excavation of eight areas at the site. The excavations focused on four lithic workshops (two of Late Preclassic date and two of the Late Classic), a courtyard area on the north side of the main datum mound, a plaza group 500 m south of the monumental center, a plazuela group one kilometer south of the monumental center, and the continuation of excavations at Operation 2012, a structure in the monumental center consisting of a small pyramidal mound with a flanking platform on the west.

Research at the workshops (Roemer 1982) included Operation 2024 (Fig. 4) sectioned with a 14-m trench and with excavations in several smaller units. These were designed to provide data on the internal structure and horizontal extent of the debitage accumulation, as well as to help us in calculations of volume and tool production quantities. The workshop deposits were dated by ceramic association to the Late Preclassic; a Mamom occupation underlay the workshop. Another workshop, Operation 4026 in the northeast quadrant of the site, was excavated in a similar fashion, after having been tested in 1980 (Escobedo 1980). It is of Late Classic date, and is dominated by blade technology.

Following up on the testing program in the monumental center begun in 1980, an area at the north base of the main datum mound was excavated this season and designated as Operation 2026. Excavations at Operation 2015 on the opposite side of this nine-meter high mound last year had revealed a stratigraphic sequence indicating important construction episodes in the Late Preclassic and, especially, in the Late Classic (Kunstler, ms). However, we came up with a somewhat different view from the other side of the mound. This is a "courtyard" area mostly enclosed by a quadrangle of linear mounds, which one might suspect to be an elite residential compound. While few formal plaza floors were found on the south side of the mound (the area adjacent to the ball court) several floors were found in the north side. Especially interesting was a series of floors of Early Postclassic date. These are brick red in color

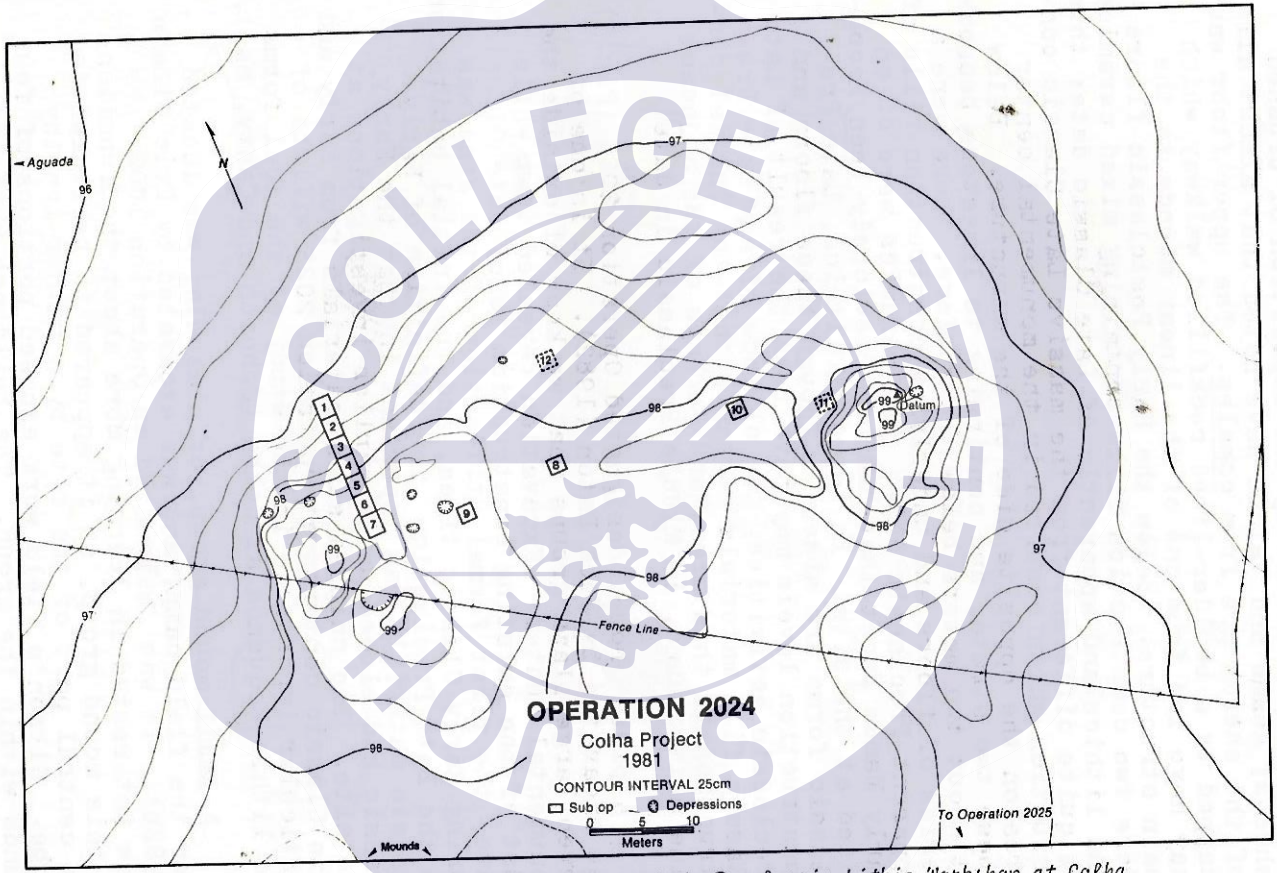


Figure 4. Contour Map of Operation 2024, a Late Preclassic Lithic Workshop at Colha.

and have been formed by the deposition of crushed sherds; Adams and Valdez have noted that almost all of the sherds are from comales. The upper floor was capped by a boulder-lined rockfilled walkway which may have led from one of the linear mounds to the main structure. Below the Early Postclassic floors were two construction fills containing mixed ceramics and lithics and apparently of Late Classic date; this is quite different from the massive Late Classic construction which occurred in the monumental center area on the opposite side of the structure. Below these two strata, and continuing to limestone bedrock at about two meters below the surface, there were a series of floors and underlying construction fills of apparent Preclassic date. The ceramics were of an early Mamom facet that had not previously been recognized at the site. In terms of lithics, Late Preclassic forms are absent. Though these floors and construction levels may have been the result of Late Preclassic activities, the absence of any Late Preclassic fill materials suggests that the initial construction in this area, and perhaps of the adjacent nine meter mound, is Middle Preclassic in date.

A plaza group, designated Operation 2025 (Fig.5) was excavated by Jack Eaton (1982). It is one of seven large plaza groups that we know of outside the monumental center. Excavation revealed that while most of the existing construction is of Late Classic date, the first formal utilization of the area was during Early Classic times, and the initial habitation in the Late Preclassic. The definition of Early Classic materials was important in that the Early Classic had eluded us in earlier investigations at the site. The chipped stone materials from Early and Late Classic contexts at Operation 2025 will be of particular importance in the study of the tool forms and lithic sequence at Colha (Johnson and Canty, ms.).

A small mound group, or plazuela, was located near the field camp, and was excavated by Eric Gibson (1982b). It was designated as Operation 1002. We were interested in learning more about the function of this mound group, as it appeared to be linked to the central part of the site by a rather lengthy sacbe. Gibson's field work exposed portions of four mounds within the group. The buildings were badly damaged, but intact floors or living surfaces were

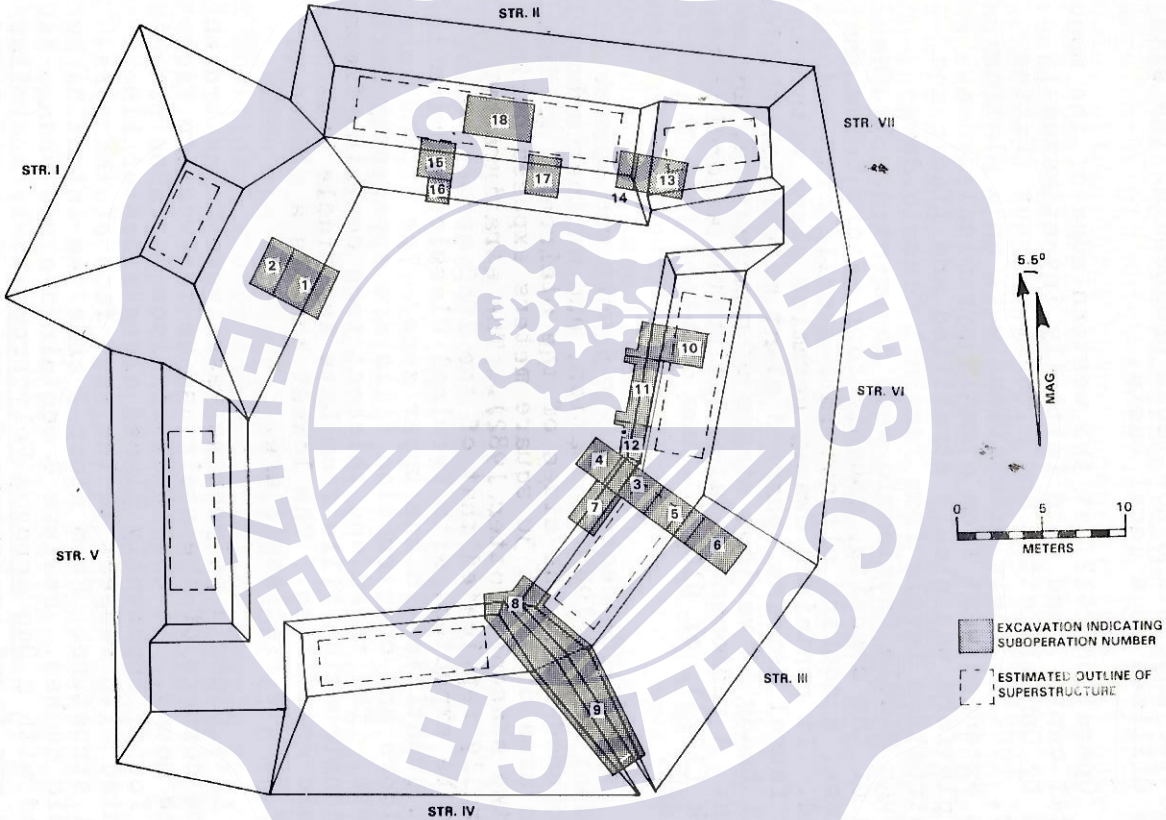


Figure 5. *Operation 2025 Plaza Group, Colha, Belize.* Plan of mound group based on plane table survey; locations of suboperations are indicated.

sampled, as were midden deposits off the end of one structure. The plazuela is Late Classic (Tepeu 3) in date. The associated lithic artifacts enabled us to better understand how tools produced at the site were utilized on a local basis.

Operation 2012, at the western edge of the monumental center, had been initially investigated in 1980 by Daniel Potter and Michael Woerner (Potter 1980, 1982). Their excavations were on a platform that extended west from a small pyramidal mound. The platform was nicely stratified and floors and construction levels from Terminal Classic down through Middle Preclassic were documented. At the base of the deposits, roughly four meters below the surface, a cooking pit cut into sterile clay was found. It contained Swasey ceramics along with abundant faunal remains, charred plant materials, lithics, shell beads in various stages of manufacture, and so forth. A radiocarbon date, calibrated according to Clark (1975), of 910 B.C. was obtained from the feature.

In the 1981 season, a 3 x 5 unit was opened adjacent to the 1980 excavation, and another subop was opened along the sides of the staircase, giving us an area of about 30 square meters exposed during the two seasons (Potter 1982). The stratigraphy generally replicated that of the 1980 season, as would be expected, with Terminal Classic ceramics in great quantities in the upper zone. The second zone of floors and construction fills are apparently Early Classic. The third and thickest zone contains floors and construction fills from Late and Middle Preclassic activities. The lowest zone is a midden of early Middle Preclassic age.

Late Classic polychrome vases were found broken at the corners of the staircase on the western face of the mound. At the level of Floor 3, cache pits were found, apparently placed along a center line oriented with respect to the west face of the pyramidal structure. From Floor 3 came two intact Early Classic caches. Feature 8 contained a red-orange jar capped with a Dos Arroyos Polychrome bowl; a similar cache was found in Feature 9 nearby. Both jars contained fragmentary postcranial skeletal remains, probably of a child. At the level of Floor 4, Late Pre-

classic caches were found, including Feature 15, a large cache pit which contained two small Sierra Red bowls, with a large chert eccentric (Fig. 6) overlying them. Immediately below, on Floor 5, a Late Preclassic cemetery area was uncovered. Burials and caches were first noted in apparent association with the remains of a structure and a large burial pit was recorded with that structure. Additional burials were found under the walls of the structure, intruding into Floor 6. In essence, this was a preferred cemetery or burial area of Late Preclassic times, and perhaps in the final burial phases in the Late Preclassic, had a mortuary structure associated with it.

The burials had been placed in crypts cut through the plaster surface of Floor 5. Most crypts had been reused, with a primary burial found at the bottom, and the remains of earlier occupants (and their grave goods) thrown back into the grave. A wide range of Late Preclassic (Chicanel) vessels were found with the burials (Valdez and Adams 1982). With one burial there were a few lithic artifacts, including a tranchet bit tool.

The most complex burial group was B-3, in which at least five individuals had been interred, apparently at different times. With one of the individuals (B-5), there was a cluster of about 30 tiny anthropomorphic bone beads in the chest area. The lowest interment in the B-3 crypt had four vessels associated with it.

Below the cemetery, and below Floor 6, a series of additional floors and construction levels and middens were found down to a midden that overlies sterile clay. The midden is Middle Preclassic in date, with lower portions going back in time to the early Middle Preclassic (Swasey and Xe ceramics, and a distinctive set of lithics; Fig. 7). This had been indicated in 1980, and was further confirmed this season by the recovery of additional Swasey ceramics and a cache. The cache consisted of a Swasey redware bowl, filled with 103 shell beads (Dreiss 198 ) in various stages of manufacture (Fig. 8). Above and possibly associated with the cache episode were two jades.

Figure 6. Eccentric from Feature 15, Operation 2012, Colha. Length is 25 cm.

## CONCLUDING COMMENTS

After three seasons, we can summarize some of the basic facts about Colha. Much laboratory analysis remains to be done and a variety of special studies are underway (radiocarbon dating, obsidian trace element analysis, physical anthropology; wood species identification, faunal analysis, etc.).

The focus of the research has been to define the nature of the lithic production systems at Colha and to see what role these played in the Maya lowlands of Belize. The earliest occupations at the site were around 900 B.C., based on radiocarbon dates; this is a midden at the base of Op. 2012 and contains a mixture of Swasey and Xe ceramics (the Bolay complex; Valdez and Adams 1982). There was an extensive Middle Preclassic (Mamom ceramic sphere) occupation at the site, radiocarbon-dated ca. 800-500 B.C. (calibrated). Although a wide range of lithic tools are present in the assemblages of these earliest components, we have not yet found any evidence for workshop level or large scale manufacture. They were exploiting local cherts and had developed certain technologies (for example, blade production) and specific tool forms (an earlier form of adze) which would later be adapted to the production of lithics on a massive scale (Hester 1982). In essence, the technologies and the raw materials were in place at the time, in the Late Preclassic, when there became a need for large numbers of tools.

It is, therefore, in the Late Preclassic that chert tool production becomes extremely important at Colha. There are more than 22 workshops identified from this period, spanning the time from ca. 300 B.C. to perhaps A.D. 250. We believe that the mass production of stone implements can be correlated with the development of intensive farming (for example, raised fields and canal systems) in the region of northern Belize, beginning during the Late Preclassic. The nature of the craft specilization and the possible mechanics of trade relationships have been explored by Shafer (1982b). It is suspected, however, that the products from Colha were designed primarily for export within a regional sphere centered in northern Belize.

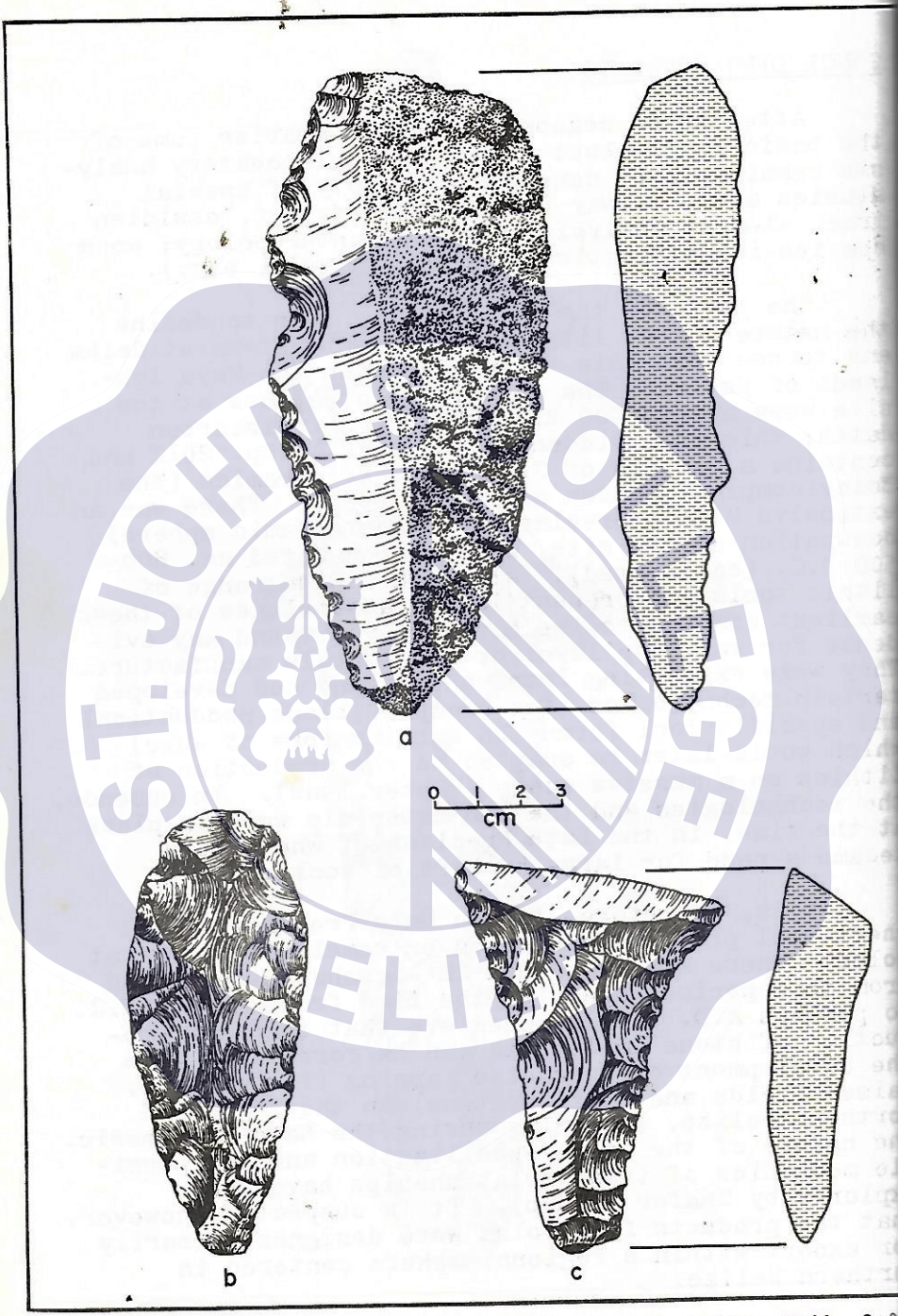


Figure 7. *Middle Preclassic Stone Tools from Operation 2012, Col*

The 1981 season also produced more data on the Early Classic at the site. While we do not yet have an idea as to what happened in terms of the lithic production activities, the stratigraphic data seem to indicate that it greatly diminished. No workshops attributable to the Early Classic have been identified.

However, the technologies recorded for the Late Preclassic seem to have, for the most part, carried on through the Classic, as the Late Classic workshops at the site, at least 17 of them reflect the continued or renewed production of certain Late Preclassic tool forms, such as the trachet tool, in Late Classic times. However, the numbers of such tools are fewer than in the Late Preclassic and the technological skill with which they were produced seems lessened. There is an emphisis on the production of chert blades, using polyhedral and unifacial blade cores, and the manufacture of stemmed points on the blades. Distributional data on these materials are still unclear, although they are observed in collections in northern Belize. As Eaton (1982) notes, the Late Classic marked the other major building period at Colha, aside from the Late Preclassic.

Data from the 1980 season suggest that the Classic period ended violently at Colha, given the presence of the "skull pit" and other disarticulated skeletal materials associated with Terminal Classic ceramic deposits. A single radiocarbon date attributable to this period is ca. A.D. 850. The ceramic and lithic assemblages that follow are quite different in style, form, and function. Adams and Valdez (1980) have observed a northern Yucatecan influence in the ceramic assemblage. The lithic artifacts were still being produced in workshops, 12 recorded to date, although these are usually associated with middens and scatters of household debris in the monumental center, where the Early Postclassic occupations are concentrated. The lithic assemblage is dominated by leaf-shaped and side-notched dart points as well as other forms which represent a clear break with the Classic and Preclassic lithic traditions. Of the other sites and collections we have examined in northern Belize, we have seen these lithic materials only at Lamanai. Early Postclassic remains at Colha are radiocarbon dated at around A.D. 900-1000.

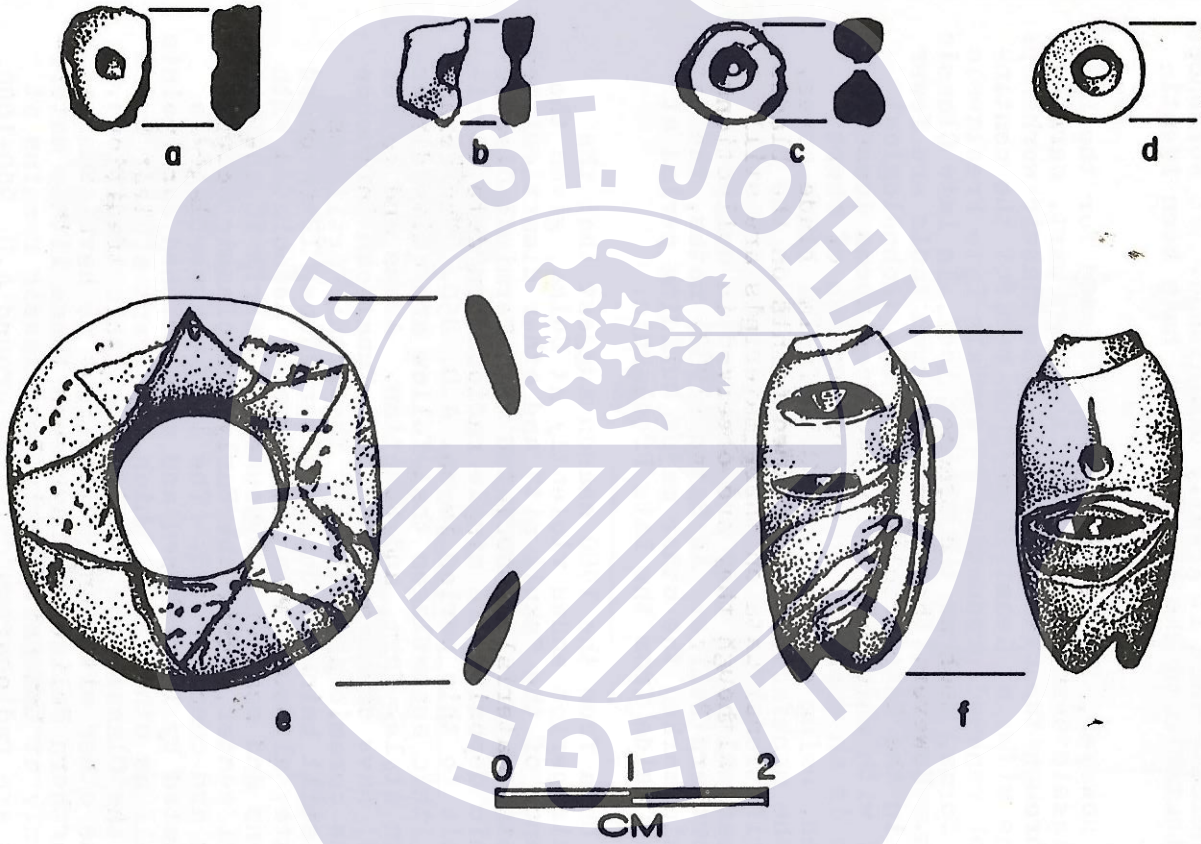


Figure 8. *Shell Artifacts from Colha, Belize.* a-d, apparent sequence of bead manufacture; specimens from Op. 2012, Feature 5; e, incised disc adorno (2012/5-2); f, tinkler (Q1-S).

It should be emphasized that Late Postclassic ceramics, of the types found by Pendergast at Lamanai or by the Chases at Santa Rita, Corozal, are absent at Colha; similarly, Late Postclassic lithic forms are absent, with the exception of two or three small side-notched arrow points from surface contexts.

As a result of the 1981 season and the two seasons that preceded it, nearly four tons of artifactual and ecological materials are in various stages of study. Thus, it will be some time before detailed analyses are completed and broad-ranging interpretations can be offered. Our primary orientation has been on tracing the development and extent of the lithic production systems at this site. However, it is necessary to place such information into a cultural perspective from which we can evaluate what appears to be a unique pattern and to be able to relate this to other events in the region. The project has progressed a long way toward such a goal, although many important and perplexing problems remain to be investigated.

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# ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT NOHMUL AND SANTA RITA: 1979 – 1980

by Arlen F. Chase and Diane Z. Chase

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Work by Thomas Gann (1900, 1918) showed the northern part of Belize to be studded with important archaeological sites and to be extremely "productive" in an archaeological sense. Although his excavations in this northern area revealed a sequence which ran from Preclassic to Historic, it is a difficult task to relate the beautiful objects which he uncovered to their more mundane archaeological context. The Corozal Postclassic Project (A. Chase 1980, D. Chase 1981) was begun in 1979 in order to investigate Postclassic remains in northern Belize and attempt to relate the resultant Postclassic sequence to the rest of the Maya area. Two years of excavation have both broadened and more clearly defined these initial goals and resulted in a focus on the site of Santa Rita Corozal. Besides increasing knowledge of the Postclassic aspects of Santa Rita, first described by Gann, ongoing investigations have also delved into the site's earlier occupations.

In 1979, excavation was split between the sites of Nohmul and Santa Rita. Structure 20 at Nohmul had been excavated in 1978 by the authors in conjunction with Norman Hammond's Corozal Project

(Hammond 1973, 1979). The structure 20 investigations revealed a patio-quad building. Both architecture and ceramics hinted at a strong Yucatec presence at this site during the Terminal Classic/Early Postclassic Period. Excavations were, therefore, undertaken in 1979 at Nohmul Structure 9 to attempt to confirm the presence. A three meter tall round structure, reminiscent of the Caracol at Chichen-Itza architecture and Nohmul Structures 9 and 20, a Terminal Classic/Early Postclassic Yucatec counterthrust is seen as occurring in the eastern lowlands, possibly to offset events occurring simultaneously in the Usumacinta drainage of Guatemala (Chase and Chase in press).

While Nohmul proved instrumental in identifying forces at work during the Terminal Classic/Early Postclassic Period, excavation was shifted to Santa Rita in 1979 and continued there in 1980 in order to locate later materials. The site of Santa Pita has long been recognized by Maya archaeologists as important in unraveling the little known events of the Maya Postclassic Period. The site had been excavated by Thomas Gann (1900, 1918), a British medical officer stationed in Belize, at the turn of the present century. His widespread investigations "tested" most of the mounds known on the old Santa Rita Estate located on a bluff above modern Corozal Town. While his excavations uncovered a wide realm of artifactual material relating to the Postclassic Period including spectacular murals, they, and the modernization processes undergone by Corozal Town, resulted in discouraging present-day Maya archaeologists from returning to the site for other than a few brief stays (Sidrys 1976; Green 1973; Pring 1975).

The two seasons of work by the C.P.P. at Santa Rita have shown that despite destruction, there is still much of the site left to investigate. Excavations have produced ample amounts of Postclassic materials, including four Postclassic caches. Almost every structure in the northern part of the site has remains dating to the Late Postclassic. As these remains were widespread and fairly evenly distributed over the landscape, there is most likely a heavy occupation during this period. While the constructions and artifacts evince close affinities to those excavated by the Carnegie Institutuion three

decades earlier at Mayapan (Pollock et. at. 1962; Smith 1971), the Santa Rita data also exhibit a marked regionalization.

Excavation into Postclassic Period locales at Santa Rita disclosed both low structure platforms and larger multi-roomed buildings. Pottery includes redware ceramics and a new censer type, Cohokum Modeled. The distribution of Cohokum Modeled incensarios contrasts with that of the more widely known Chen-Mul Modeled, although the two types do occasionally occur in the same deposits. 1979 and 1980 work has thus far uncovered 61 burials at the site with 79 individuals being represented. In general, the Postclassic and Classic Period burials are accompanied by a single vessel. Flexed and extended burials are common to all time periods, but flexed burials are especially seen in the Late Postclassic. Multiple individuals in the same burial are also more prevalent in the Postclassic although the trait occurs in a slightly varied form in the Late Postclassic. Postclassic individuals are frequentl interred with nothing, although women are sometimes found with copper rings and other burials are occasionally occompanied by broken vessels. Other artifactual remains have been located from varying Postcalssic context at Santa Rita. Indications of trade can be seen in many of these objects. Two of the modeled cache vessels contain smaller items, including one small piece of tumbaga and a fragment of turquoise. Perhaps the single most important object, suggestive of connections external to the Maya area, is a double-spouted blackware vessel of probable Peruvian derivation.

Perhaps as interesting as the Late Postclassic materials recovered from Santa Rita is the almost continuous sequence of occupation which begins at the site circa 2000 B.C. Investigations undertaken in 1980 in the southern portion of the site produced some of the earliest ceramic materials uncovered in the Maya area. They are comparable to those encountered at the site of Cuello some 30 miles to the south (Hammond 1977; Hammond et at. 1979; Hammond 1981). At Santa Rita these ceramics have been recovered from both primary and fill deposits associated with structural remains. Sealed burial deposits contain small, flat-bottomed, vertical-sided

red dishes. Similar pieces were apparently found by Gann (1918; Fig. 24a, d, e, g) in this same portion of the site. Although such early ceramics are also reported as existing in the Santa Rita Str. 7 area (Pring 1975; Hammond 1977:89), Corozal Postclassic Project excavations did not confirm their presence.

While Santa Rita exhibits a strong Preclassic and Postclassic component, there are also abundant Classic Period remains. The Early Classic Period is well represented by both burials and middens while the Middle Classic is represented by intense building activity in the site center which included the construction of stucco masks (A. Chase 1980:2) on Str. 7 and the later interment of a spectacular burial in the same building. Late Classic occupation, although present, does not typify the site. It is suspected that this is in part due to sampling forced by the intense destruction of the Santa Rita site core or the prominence of Aventura, seven miles south of Santa Rita during this period and the succeeding Terminal Classic/Early Postclassic Period (Ball, personal communication).

After two years of excavation, the Corozal Postclassic Project has succeeded in answering some of its original questions concerning the Postclassic but has raised a whole host of new ones. The Postclassic sequence is seen as being quite regionalized in the Early Postclassic with a new tradition, probably the Tulum Ceramic Sphere, arising out of the north-central part of Belize (see also Pendergast 1981:96); Santa Rita and Nohmul, however, do not appear to be full participants within this sphere during the early part of the Postclassic. The Late Postclassic Period at Santa Rita, while having its origins in the central Belize Early Postclassic redwares, cannot be included in the better known Mayapan or Tulum redwares although close similarities exist. Perhaps the most interesting question raised for an earlier period is the apparent continuity between Swasey and Chicanel materials without a distinct Mamom horizon, apparently different from the Preclassic situation at Cuello (Hammond 1977:80, 81, 89). Future investigations at Santa Rita will attempt to garner further information on this obviously important site before it becomes a memory engulfed in the rapidly expandin Corozal Town.

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# Rank Size Analysis of Northern Belize Maya Sites

by R.E.W. ADAMS

The following paper is a first trial at rank size analysis of northern Belize Maya centers for two sequent time periods. Implications are drawn from the analysis, and comparative comments made in the context of similar analysis done for other lowland Maya regions.

In a previous paper (Adams and Jones 1981) a colleague and I attempted to deal with the problem of definition of hierarchial relationships among Classic Maya cities in given lowland regions. We applied a rank order analysis developed on samples of 52 sites from the Central Peten and 46 sites from the Central Yucatan area (Adams 1981; Turner, Turner, and Adams 1981). We then geographically segregated regional groupings of cities based on a combination of nearest neighbor analysis and rank ordering. The nearest neighbor statistic was modified by use of the average distance, 20 km, between centers in the lowlands. We began drawing out boundaries around the largest sites, proceeding to the peripheries. We dealt with the regions, in turn, by the rank-size method taken from geography. Modern cities are analyzed according tc population sizes and ranked

according to regions, areas, and nations. Jones and I have ranked the Classic cities according to architectural mass. This has the advantage of being a directly observable archaeological measurement, and of being adjustable as the quality of the data improves.

Rank size analysis produces patterns which we believe reflect the degrees of centralization or diffusion of economic and political power, polulation sizes, and other implied qualities. Thus, in the lowlands, at the end of the Classic, Tikal seems to reflect an economically and politically mature system. The various ranks below it are well filled with numbers of subordinate administrative centers. The Rio Bec region, on the other hand, in the bulge off the lognormal line, seems to reflect the duplication of function and size which are characteristic of much looser political and economic organizations. A primate pattern is also possible and occurs when a city absorbs a disproportionate amount of the resources and population of an area. This occurs only as a temporary phenomenon in the modern world, and is only occasionally visible in the Maya data now in hand (Adams n.d.). The characteristic primate pattern is convex in relationship to a lognormal line drawn from the largest site of a region.

One feature of all these related analysis done thus far is that most are based on the Terminal Classic patterns of the lowlands and assume a rough contemporaneity among the centers in their last stages. For most regions, the excavated sample of sites is not large enough to attempt a rank order or rank size analysis of cities, and in that region I have analyzed the shifts in Late Classic patterns based to some degree on the patterns reflected in the dated monuments, ceramics, as well as in the architectural masses.

In the case of northern Belize, however, we now have a sufficiently reliable sample of excavated sites to be able to analyze them for two crucial periods, the Late Preclassic and the Terminal Classic (Table 1). It is possible that Early Postclassic patterns will also become accessible through the examination of surface survey and ceramic distribution, but this period is not included in this study.

The rank size analysis for northern Belize presented in Figure 1,a, is that of the Late Preclassic, while Figure 1,b,c presents the Late Classic data. There are several noteworthy things about the patterns. One is that the region is about 9300 km$^2$, of which about 3000 km$^2$ in the northeastern segment is mostly swampy and apparently lacking even the smallest centers, although not archaeological remains. Another point is that the site inventory is probably very complete compared to most other regions of the Maya lowlands. The sample is of 54 sites. For the Late Preclassic, no site exceeds six courtyards in size. To put this into perspective, to the west of Belize in the Central Peten area, El Mirador may be as large as 42 courtyards at about the same time. No center in northern Belize, as far as we know, ever exceeds 12 courtyards in size, even in the period of the Late Classic. Again, in relation to the Tikal region, most of the largest northern Belize sites are only in the third tier of Central Peten sites. The exception is Nohmul, which, in the Late Classic, grows to 12 courtyard size.[1] Even Nohmul, however, is barely within the size range of second sites in the zone of northwestern Belize where a center called La Milpa is known to exist, but which has not been explored. Further, the adjacent parts of Campeche and Quintana Roo in Mexico may also conceal larger sites. If fact, there seems little doubt that the northern Belize area was part of a larger Late Classic administrative region governed from the Peten. On the other hand, it seems likely that the region was highly fragmented politically during the Late Preclassic. The effect of the administrative change between Late Preclassic and Late Classic on northern Belize was relatively small in regard to rank-size patterns. However, gauged by information from two specific sites, one can see other certain effects. Colha was a Late Preclassic and Late Classic producer of hundreds of thousands of pieces of high quality chert tools. It is possible that the wealth necessary for the building of the Colha Late Preclassic monumental buildings was gained from the profits of the export of these tools. The site of Colha and its elite class were presumably independent or semi-independent during the Late Preclassic and Early Classic periods. However, Colha did not add a great deal to its size during the Late Classic as might have been expected based on its

previous economic success. Instead, as Shafer (this volume) points out, Altun Ha appears to the south of Colha, only 15 km away and, it seems, built entirely during the Late Classic to a five courtyard level. Colha Late Classic tombs discovered thus far have little to distinguish them from those of other Provincial elite burials. Altun Ha, however, has spectacularly rich tombs, with quantities of jade in them far beyond expectation. Shafer suggests that Altun Ha took over the export of Colha tools and skimmed the profits as Colha became a member of a larger network, as was also Altun Ha, perhaps. At any rate, as this shows, the rapidity of growth of a center will also have some effect on the manner in which the final rank size patterns are interpreted.

Jones and I suggested in our study of Maya regional urbanism, that there were at least two types of urban evolution possible (Adams and Jones 1981: 318). One was the type favored by the majority of theorists--"transformational"--that is, change in both scale and quality of structural components within a society through time. The other is what may be called a "chrysalis" effect, in which change is largely in terms of scale. Theoretically, the two can be combined and may have thresholds of size which triggered qualitative change.

The northern Belize centers as they change from Late Preclassic to Late Classic seem to be mainly a chrysalis type of change. On the other hand, it seems likely that because of the failure of the largest sites to reach greater sizes, the thresholds for qualitative change had not been reached. In the Central Peten regions there indeed seems to be a qualitative difference between the centers of 20 courtyards or more, and those that fall below the line. It is probably possible to define a finer gradation of such thresholds, especially when excavational evidence is available. However, that is the subject of another study.

One final observation is worth making. Of the 54 known sites in northern Belize, only 15 are of two courtyard size or larger. The other 39 sites are one courtyard centers. In terms of the model of feudal society advanced for Classic Maya civilization (Adams and Smith 1981), these smallest centers could

TABLE 1. SITE INDEX FOR FIGURE 1,a. Site list is from Hammond 1975:Fig. 2, but not in the same order. Altun Ha and Lamanai are added to the list.

1. Nohmul
2. Aventura
3. Cerros
4. S. Estavan
5. Lamanai
6. El Pozito
7. Colha
8. Louisville
9. (Altun Ha) omitted on 1,a; no Late Preclassic remains
10. Cuello
11. Caledonia
12. S. Luis
13. Chowacol
14. S. Antonio
15. Benque Viejo
16. Sta. Rita
17. San Victor
18. Progresso I
19. Kichpanha
20. Sta. Elena
21. Buena Vista
22. Hipolito Group
23. Martinez Group
24. Chan Chen
25. Patchchacan
26. Progresso II
27. Honey Camp
28. S. Lorenzo
29. Yo Creek
30. S. Lazaro I
31. Barklog
32. Chunox
33. Pueblo Nuevo
34. Chan Pine Ridge
35. San Pedro Pidge
36. San Juan Ambergris
37. Bound to Shine
38. Sarteneja
39. Saltillo
40. Sajomal
41. Consejo
42. Orange Walk
43. Carolina
44. Spanish Point
45. Yakalche
46. August Pine Ridge
47. S. Roman
48. S. Lazaro II
49. Chiwa Lagoon
50. Shipstern
51. Mile 70
52. Indian Hill
53. High Bluff
54. Condemned Point
55. Rocky Point North

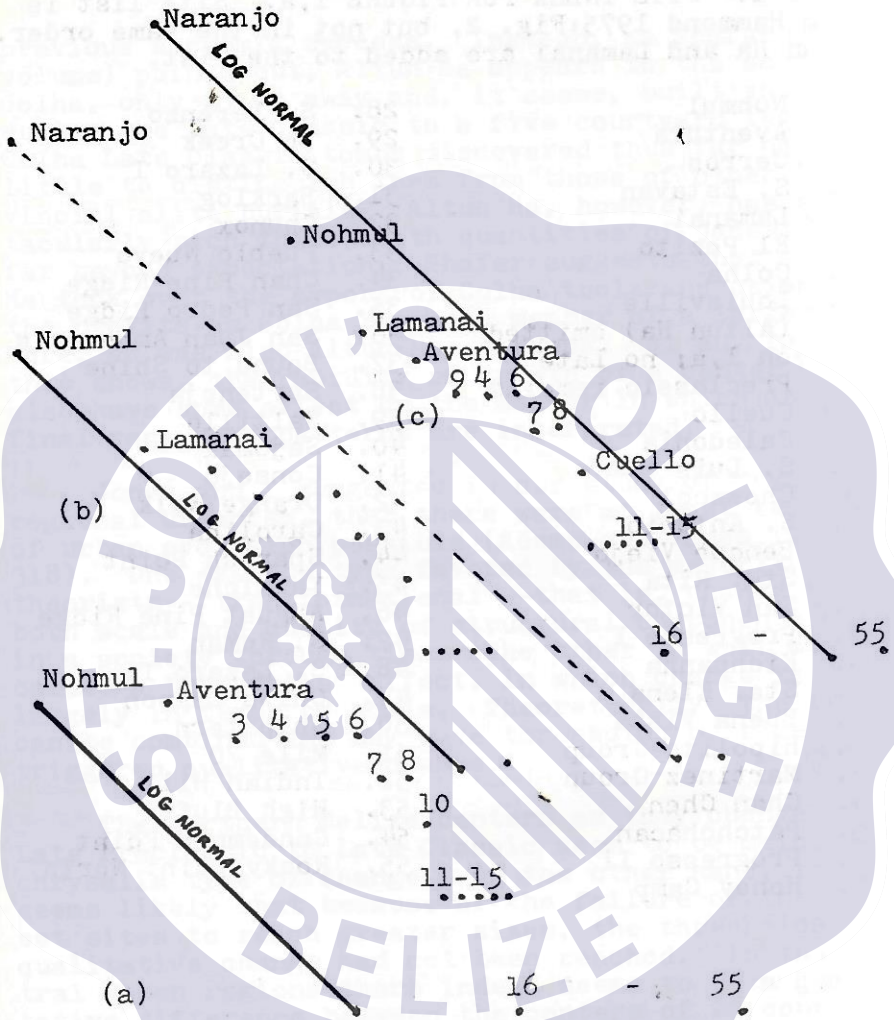


Figure 1. Comparative Rank-Size Analysis of North Belize Sites. a, Late Preclassic pattern; b, Late Classic pattern assuming administrative autonomy of northern Belize; c, Late Classic pattern assuming administrative hierarchical relation between north Belize sites and the major Peten site of Naranjo.

represent the country residences of the elite, or perhaps serve other diverse functions.

## FOOTNOTE

[1]The assessment of Nohmul as six in the Late Preclassic and as 12 in the Late Classic is based on the preliminary survey and excavation data from Hammond's 1974 and 1975 work, and especially the data summarized in Figures 3.35, and 3/36 (Hammond 1975). The dating and assessments may change with the additional data which will be produced from an intensive excavation project now under way (1982) at Nohmul under Hammond's direction.

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# Belize and Its Neighbours: A Preliminary Report on Colonial Records of the Audiencia of Guatemala

by L. H. FELDMAN

## INTRODUCTION

Reports on the contacts of the British with their neighbors, particularly the Maya, are rare in papers from the 17th and 18th centuries. Reasons have been claimed in the illiteracy of the English settlers and hazards of the times (Bolland 1977). Information on the indigenous inhabitants has also been sought, with some success, in the papers of the Audiencia of Mexico (of. Scholes and Thompson 1977), as is logical, for much of this area was administered, via Salamanca de Bacalar, ultimately by the Audiencia of Mexico.

For reasons unrelated to the purposes of the Colha Project, I recently had the occasion to systematically go through the papers of another Audiencia, that of Guatemala, during which many interesting and important references were found to the area that is now known as Belize. Time has not yet been available to systematically study these papers, so what I would like to present here is simply a sampling of the data with some commentary. The focus will be first on Belize after 1700 and then Colonial Peten, and finally the 17th century Manche Chol. Manuscripts cited are from the Archivo General de Indias and the Archivo de

Simancas. A subsequent more complete version of this paper should include all relevant texts and citations from these and other Spanish and Central American archives now in the possession of the author.

BELIZE

Citations by Year

1695 - Guatemala 153
1702 - Escribania de Camera 339
1714 - Guatemala 196, Guatemala 197
1725 - Mexico 1017
1727 - Guatemala 251
1728 - Guatemala 251
1729 - Guatemala 251
1733 - Guatemala 252
1756 - Guatemala 237
1757 - Guatemala 207
1758 - Guatemala 238
1767 - Guatemala 544
1774 - Guatemala 409, Guatemala 643
1776 - Guatemala 878, Guatemala 770
1783 - MyP Guatemala 297, 314 Simancas, Seccion Mapas IV-2
1798 - Simancas Serie 51, Legajo 6937
1800 - Papeles de Estado 49.
1819 - Guatemala 638
1821 - Guatemala 530

Commentary

Spanish records begin with a forced withdrawal of Indians. Because of the English threat, towns near the Lago de Izabal (southern Belize?) were depopulated in 1691 (Escribania de Camera 339). Towns cited as still existing in 1702 near the Rio Bacalar include Tipu and Espapantou. Action was taken against the English settlements in 1714. An expedition of 15 soldiers and some Indian "volunteers" was sent by canoe from the fortress at Peten Itza. Thirty Indians were captured a short distance from a settlement of 19 Englishmen, 10 blacks, 1 Englishwoman, and 6 Indians. Three widely separated coastal Indian towns were in contact with traders from Jamaica and the Zambos of the Mosquito coast (Honduras/Nicaragua--a British protectorate). All together it was estimated that a force of 250 men

was available to attack the Spanish settlements in the Peten. The effect of this and a subsequent Spanish expedition was to deport most of these Indians from the coast. By 1725 it was emphatically stated that the English of the "Rio Walis" were exterminated and the Indian settlements removed from their sphere of influence.

But the English kept on coming and in the absence of a large Indian work force, the dyewood cutters imported black slaves. Beginning in 1727, these blacks fled south and west seeking freedom under the Spanish crown. Thus (1728) a black fugitive from the Rio Belize was taken by a member of the San Felipe garrison on the Lago de Izabal, 6 fugitives traveled for three months from the Belize river to the Peten town of San Pedro Chinoja in 1729; there were more fugitives in 1733 and a massive escape in 1756. Eighteen black males, five black females, one English catholic and a male Indian "infidel" fled west from the ranch of an "ingles called Yachibul" on the edge of Cohaa lagoon where they cut dye wood and from ranches on the New River like that of "Capitan Jones." All told, there were ten of these "ranchos de ingleses." Fleeing "in search of the Spaniards and Christianity" they were "lost" in the forest for five months during which time they planted crops until "one day they encountered a corral and followed the path into this province" of the Peten.

The many papers of the subsequent investigation (130 pages) note, among other things, the route in existence in 1756 used by those traveling from the Peten to the British settlements. There were ten parts to this trip. On the first day one went from the Fortress (now Flores) to a settlement called Momunti. The second day took one to the settlement of Yalam, the third day to the by then depopulated town of San Pedro Chinoxa, the fourth day to the settlement of El Tubuco, the fifth to the settlement of Ouza, the sixth to the settlement of Canumbu, the seventh to the settlement of Jalal, and the eight to the settlement of Yasma. From Yasma one could see "the river which goes to Baliz, at whose mouth they load the dyewood which is removed from Cobaa lagoon." The ninth day finds one at the settlement of Tuqui "where they embark to go to the ranchos of the Yngleses. ...There is another road by land called

el Rio de los Tipues which in the summer is easy to travel but few use it in the winter because of the abundant water." The last stage of the journey, is one went by water, took six days to arrive at the settlement called Chumucum "which means 'Head of the River'; from here it is two days to Cobaa lagoon which is close to the settlement of the Ingleses."

Fugitives kept on coming to the Peten and the Lago de Izabal. In 1757 they appeared at the hacienda San Felipe, 22 leagues from Peten (Flores); more arrived in 1758, 1767, 1774 and even as late as 1800. Occasionally, as in 1774, they were joined by white (Irish and English) fugutives from British rule. Meanwhile by formal agreement with the Spanish authorities, English settlers were evacuated from the coast of Nicaragua to Belize (1758) and the Belize settlements, ultimately, were recognized as British possessions (cf. maps of 1776 and 1783; Figs. 1, 2).

Although as late as 1798 an expedition was being launched to destroy them, the Colony remained and developed into the haven for rebels and center for contraband that it was famous for by the end of the Colonial period (cf. Guatemala 638). Spanish predictions of the impact of the British colonists (i.e., in 17th century justifications for the conquest of the Peten, not otherwise cited here) had become unpleasant reality.

COLONIAL PETEN

Citations by Year

1710 - Guatemala 186
1714 - Guatemala 196
1716 - Guatemala 197, Guatemala 186, Guatemala 908
1732 - Guatemala 333
1737 - Guatemala 508
1754 - Guatemala 237
1766 - Guatemala 859
1774 - Guatemala 409
1778 - Gazeta de Guatemala 6

Commentary

Even more than Belize, references to Colonial Peten were a byproduct of other research. For the Audiencia of Guatemala papers, only the most obvious (of ethnographic interest) citations were recorded and some of those were not copied out. Nor are the

most important records in Spain. There are many papers, most of which have not been examined by this author, in the Archivo General de Centro America, in Guatemala City. And surely others, of equal importance, in Mexico; for while politically the Peten was under the Audiencia of Guatemala, ecclesiastically it was in the Archbishopric of Mexico.

Officially Colonial Peten history begins with the conquest of the Tah Itza on March 13th, 1697, and ends with independence on the 15th of September 1821. Actually things weren't so simple. Reduction of "infideles" was going on at least into the 1720s with contact between the Indians and the English only complicating matters further (cf. Guatemala 186 and above). As late as 1754, expeditions were still being sent out (unsuccessfully) to look for the unconverted Xomoes in or about the Maya mountains. Reports of prisoners of war fleeing Belize on the presence of such settlements and the trade, said to exist between the Indians of Cahabon and the said Indians of cacoa in pots for machetes, axes, and salt were the sources of these hopes (Guatemala 237; another copy of this manuscript may be found in the AGCA as A1.6-3799-1754-15 and was published in the Boletin of the Archivo General del Gobierno 1:3:257-293). In any case, the settlements under Spanish control were not doing so well. From a total of 15 towns and a population of 3027 people in 1714 (Guatemala 196), the population declined to five small towns by 1732 (Guatemala 333). The cause was said to be illnesses and epidemics "in the last 38 years" (Guatemala 508). By 1778, and this may have been after the low point had been reached, the population was 2555 inhabitants (Gazeta de Guatemala 6).

The most important of the manuscripts on Colonial Peten discovered in Spain was a geographical relation for the year 1766. It contains detailed information on population, subsistence, and other aspects of native life (including the prospects for a native revolt!). These 85 pages of text are still being transcribed for future publication, but as an example of its contents I offer the following excerpts:

On Hunger

"...if the harvests be bad, they make other

sowing, such as plantain, sweet manioc, sweet potatoes and macales and even use the forests saving themselves with the fruits of the ramon, mamey and zapotes...".

On the Road to Belize

"On the distance from the Fort (Flores) to Walis, I don't know; only I have heard that when the sergent major Don Melchor Mencos and Capitan Don Pedro Montanez were with their troops in the said Valis making a new road, this was not straight but with much twisting and turning, so much that on one occasion they left in the morning encountered at nightfall (after going a considerable distance) their camp sites of the previous evening. In this manner it took them thirty three days to arrive at Walis; and from here left an indian scout of our troops for the Fort of the Peten and he returned in seven days. If it took only seven days to go from Walis to the Peten obviously the road was not straight. ...And the closeness of Walis to the Peten is not disputable because on some occasions, as all inhabitants of this province will bear witness, we have heard the thunder of the British cannons in Walis. Also as proof of the closeness of Walis to this province, on diverse occasions have left from there many black men and women, with children at their breasts, who have been baptized in the Peten, as I have witnessed."

THE MANCHE CHOL

Citations by Year

1604 - Guatemala 181
1624 - Guatemala 67
1673 - Guatemala 158
1676 - Guatemala 25
1680 - Guatemala 179
1689 - Guatemala 152
1696 - Guatemala 152

Commentary

These people occupied an ill-defined territory north east of the Verapaz towns of Lanquin and Cahabon, north of the Lago de Izabal, and south of the Itzas. In terms of the boundaries of modern Belize, this means lands south of the Moho River, and that part of Guatemala beyond the southwest corner of Belize. There are several major published reference sources for the Manche Chol, most importantly Tovilla (1960), Leon Pinelo (1960), and Ximenez (1930) as well as the references utilized by Hellmuth (1971) and Saint-Lu (1968). To these must now be added the "Descripcion Breve de la Tierra Manche" of Fray Gabriel Salazar (1624 - Guatemals 67) and the "Memorial que con tiene las Materias y Progresos del Chol y Manche" by Fray Francisco Gallegos (1676 - Guatemala 25) discovered by Feldman in Spain. The towns of the coast of Bacalar, that is of north/central Belize, had regular intercourse with those of Manche. In particular "the towns of the priests of Bacalar which they call Canpin, Tzoite, Xibum, Maiha Chinamic, Zactam Guacatibah up to the estancia of Pedro Hernandez, communicate very often with those of Manche... being in the towns of Tzoite 3 Indians, one being fiscal, who came from the Manche with the same costume, same language, and perforated ears, in search of women with whom to marry. ...Indian merchants of Manche came another time to the town of Santa Cruz... Now been two years that the prople of Campin, not wanting to obey the priest of Bacalar, fled to the Manche town of Ah Ixil," (Salazar 1624).

The following abstract, defines a route from Verapaz to Manche and the Belize coast (of Bacalar) at the end of the 17th century. One should note that the number of people per "house" is far larger than that found in modern households. Finally, included to provide a basis of comparison, are population summaries for various Manche towns under Spanish control in the 17th century (Table 1). Seemingly all Manche Chols were deported (e.g., those of Uchin to El Chol Baja Verapaz) at the end of the century (Guatemala 152). Except for the Xomoes rumors of the 18th century (see above) and the even more tenuous ones of this century (Ray Freeze, personal communication), the Manche settlements vanish with the end of the 17th century.

Autos hechos Sobre la Reduccion de los indios de Chol de la Provincia de Verapaz. Guatemala 152. Year 1696.

CAHABON TO MANCHE ROUTE

(1) from Cahabon to Cerro Tituz, 8 leagues
(2) Cerro Titutz to Rio Camquen, 18 leagues
(3) Rio Camquen to the town of San Jacinto Matzim, 1st Chol town, 2 leagues
(4) San Jacinto to the town of Noxoy, 5 leagues
(5) Noxoy to the town of San Francisco Xocmo, 4 leagues
(6) Xocmo to the town of Asumpcion Chocahau, 5 leagues
(7) Chocahau to the town of San Joseph May, 5 leagues
(8) May to the Town of Asumpcion Chocahau (also called town of Los Mulattos), 5 leagues
(9) Town of Los Mulatos to San Miguel Manche, 5 leagues

MANCHE TO ITZA ROUTE

(1) Manche to rancheria Boloy, 4 leagues
(2) Boloy to rancheria of Marcos Tzibac, 4 leagues
(3) Tzibac to Rio Sacapulas and the rancheria of an Indian called Juan Petz on the bank of the river, 5 leagues
(4) Petz to other rancheria of Juan Petz on the Rio Yaxal, 5 leagues
(5) Yaxal to an arroyuleo called Conconha, 8 leagues
(6) Conconha to Rio Latetum, 4 leagues
(7) Latetum to rancheria grande of Vicente Pachay (priest of the infideles), 4 leagues
(8) from Pachay (on Rio Yaxal) to rancheria of Martin Petz, 10 leagues

----In all these rancherias they have in each house twenty or thirty persons. And in others there are many houses from half league to two leagues with many people.

----In the house of Martin Petz we find Spaniards from the provinces of Yucatan who

have come to regulate cacao.

(9) North to a rancheria on the other side of the Rio Yaxal, called Batenas with three houses in which there are thirty or forty people, 1 league
(10) from Batenas to the house of the cacique Tzunumcham which has ten to twelve persons, 1 league
(11) from Tzunumcham to the rancheria called Yahcab, 3 leagues
(12) from Yahcab north to the rancheria of the indian called Guyzquim, it has five houses with forty people, 1 league
(13) from Guyzquim to a rancheria of three houses in which they have twenty persons, they call its cacique Pot, 2 leagues
(14) from Pot to the rancheria of an indian named Tzac, of ten people, 1 league
(15) from Tzac to the rancheria of Joseph Tzac of fifty persons, 1 league. Near here there is a rancheria where the houses each have fifteen or twenty people.

THE FOLLOWING RANCHERIAS GO NORTH TO BACALAR FROM THE RIO YAXAL

(1) from the house of Martin Petz to the rancheria of Tzimil Ahau, 7 leagues
(2) from Tzimil Ahau to Yocaba, the rancheria of Juan Quimenche, 8 leagues
(3) from Yocaba to the rancheria of Pococ, 6 leagues
(4) from Pococ to the rancheria of Saca where Joseph Yahcab is cacique, 5 leagues
(5) from Saca to the town of Campin which was anciently of the province of Yucatan and where Juan Chech is cacique, 2 leagues
(6) from Campin to the rancheria of Los Chaves, 7 leagues
(7) from Los Chaves to Ychtutz, rancherias of the indian called Tziquem, 4 leagues
(8) from Ychtutz to the rancheria of Ajopan, where Juan Tziquem is cacique, 8 leagues
(9) from Ajopan to the large town of Tzaquin, cacique Juan Muzul, 8 leagues
(10) from Tzaquin to the town of Tipu of the

| TOWNS | SOULS PER YEAR | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1604 | 1623 | 1626 | 1673 | 1676 | 1680 | 1696 |
| San Jacinto Matzin | 75 | 25 | 30 | 200 | 200 | 198 | 198 |
| San Pable y Pedro Xinoxoy | | | 40 | 220 | 220 | 240 | 290 |
| San Francisco Xocmo (Sacomo) | | 200 | | 200 | 200 | 185 | 185 |
| Asumpcion Chocahau | | | | | | 150 | 150 |
| San Jacinto Chocahau | | | | 120 | 120 | | |
| San Joseph May | | | | 350 | 250 | 300 | 300 |
| San Miguel Manche | 209 | 90 | 50 | +300 | +200 | 248 | 298 |
| San Phelipe Cucul | 35 | | | | | | |
| San Vicente Ah Ixil | 57 | | 40 | | | | |
| San Pable Chiixtee | 33 | | | | | | |
| San Pable Yaxha | | 15 | 15 | | | | |
| San Lucas Tzalac | | 20 | 26 | 200 | 400 | 190 | 190 |
| Santo Domingo Yol | | 400 | 100 | | | | |
| Santa Maria Xicupin | | 50 | 50 | | | | |
| Santa Cruz Yaxcoc | | | 31 | | | | |
| Santiago Axitil | | | | 200 | | 194 | 199 |
| Rosario Cibalna | | | | 240 | 240 | 200 | 200 |
| San Fernando Axoy | | | | 150 | 150 | 180 | 180 |
| San Sebastian Uchin | | | | | | 43 | 93 |
| TOTALS | 409 | 800 | 382 | 2180 | 1980 | 2128 | 2283 |

Yucatec indians, 8 leagues.
(11) from Tipu to Bacalar, 25 to 30 leagues

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Both of these articles have been reprinted with permissior
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of Texas, San Antonio, and Centro Studi e Ricerche Ligabu

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