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# BELIZEAN STUDIES

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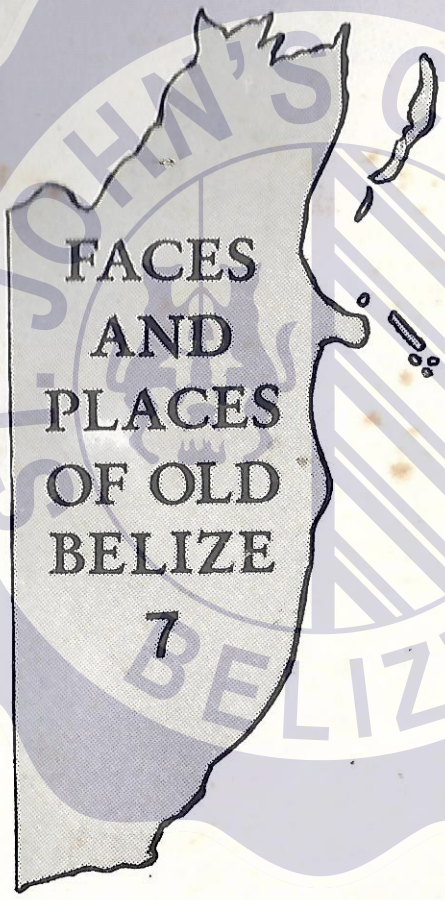

## FACES AND PLACES OF OLD BELIZE 7

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St. John's College
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# FACES AND PLACES OF OLD BELIZE

# 7

This is the Seventh Pictorial Issue published by BISRA: "Faces and Places of Old Belize # 7." Our past six special pictorial numbers have been among the most popular issues that we have published, and they have provided concrete images of what Belize was like in the past for the general public and in particular for students who are learning of their history.

Most of the photos in this issue have been supplied to BELIZEAN STUDIES from private collections. We wish to thank these public-spirited individuals who have been willing to share their momentos with others.

Our thanks go to our Premier, Hon. George C. Price, and to Mrs. Joyce Duncan (nee Pilling), who made available the photos of the Colonial Secretary's home and those of Government House and some of the hurricane photos. Mrs. Duncan's father had been Colonial Secretary in the early 1930's. Mrs. Toya Smith has supplied the photos of the government buildings under construction and being dedicated. Mrs. Sarifina Millar Vega supplied the photo of the Soberanis' 10th of September parade of 1934. The Hon. Jane Usher and Mr. A. E. Vellos supplied the photos of the Treasury and Income Tax Departments. Dr. Peter Ashdown supplied the reproduction of the portrait of Col. George Arthur. Mr. N. S. Stevenson has supplied the photos of the Maya ruins and modern Maya village life from the Toledo District. On behalf of the people of Belize, BELIZEAN STUDIES wishes to thank all of these people for making their photos available for our use and for their contribution to making the fascinating history of Belize better known. The St. John's College, Saltillo, and Newtown photos came from the Roman Catholic Church Archives.

We invite others to help BELIZEAN STUDIES in its attempt to make Belize's history better known by sharing their collection of past photos with us.

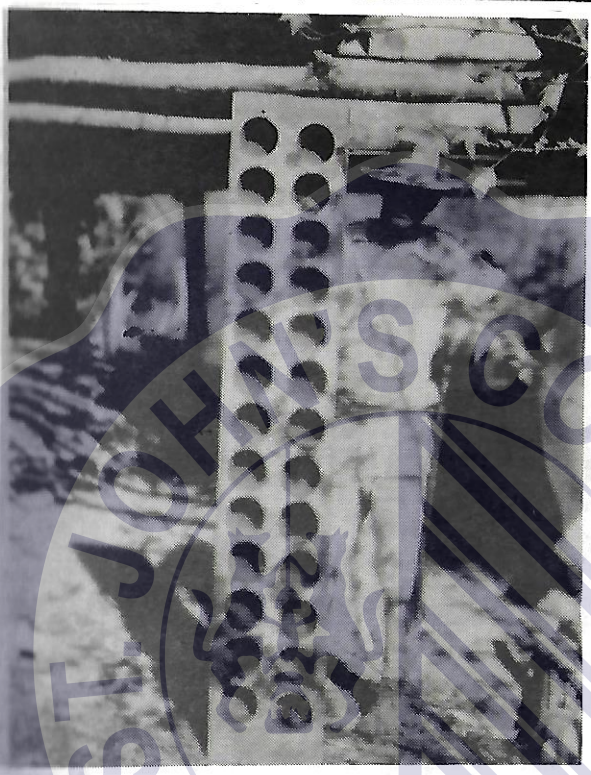
—The Editors

Old Belizean Maya Sugar Mill, Crique Negro, 1927.
(Top): Mr Fabio Bolon turns rollers by hand and foot.
(Bottom): "Feed side" rollers are of Sapodilla.

(Left): Tin Bath collects the juice.

(Bottom): Cast iron pot boils the molasses.

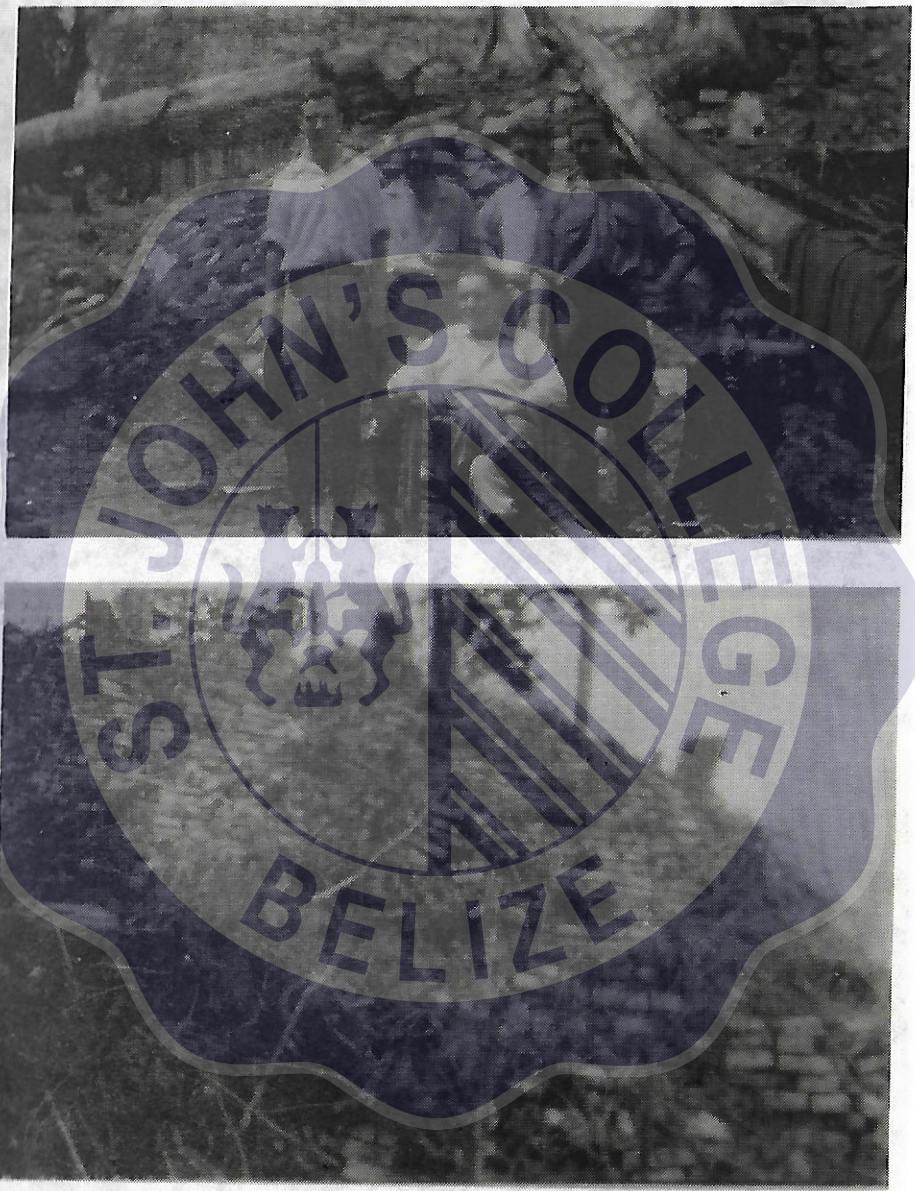
# Toledo District



(Left): Mr. Westby of Forestry holds mold for the "dulce".

(Below): The Bolon family of Crique Negro, 1927.

(Top): February, 1931; Crique Sarco, Masks for festive dance.
(Bottom): Initial archaeological investigations of Lubaantun, April 19, 1925. Mitchell Hedges ("the intrepid explorer"), Dr. Thomas Gann, J. N. Oliphant, Conservator of Forests (1925-1929).

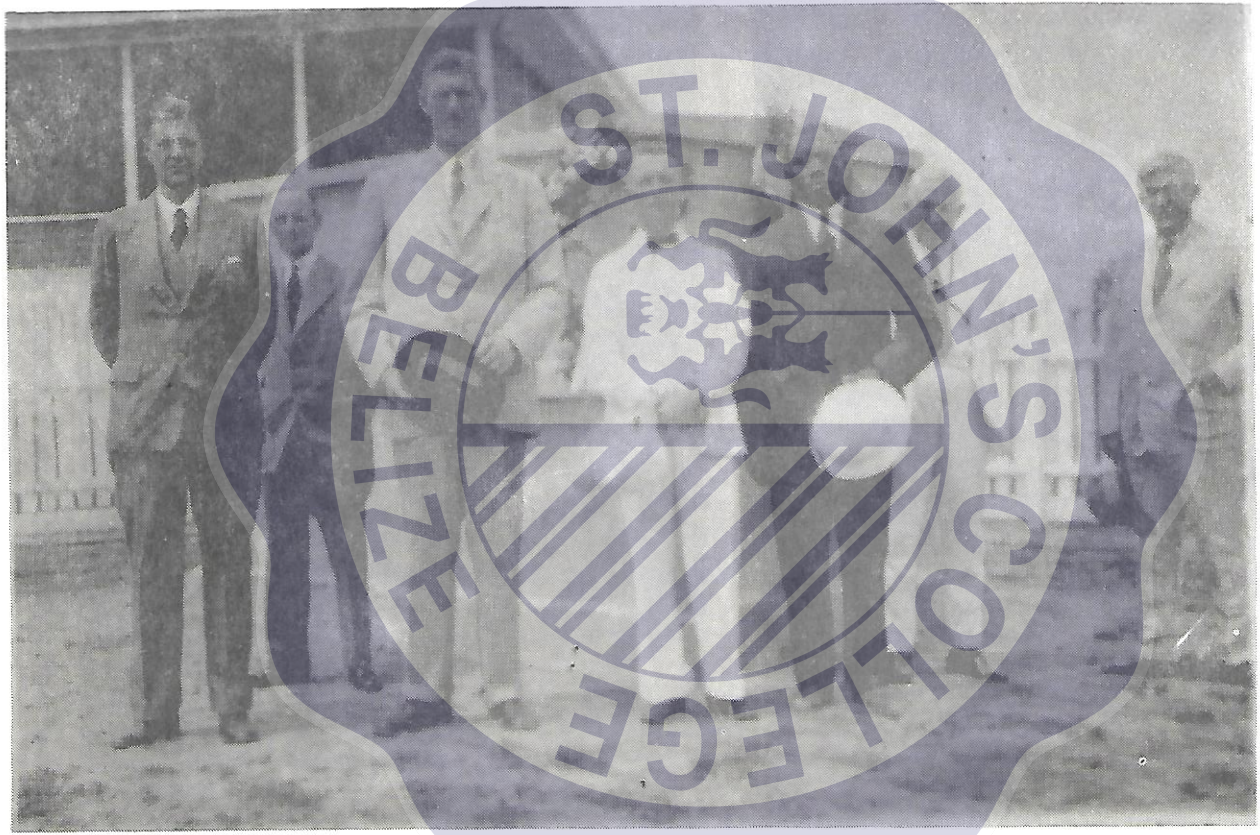


(Top): British Museum Team at Lubaantun, 1927. Geoffrey Laws, FRGS, in charge of mapping, Mr. Hannay, who had worked with Mitchell Hedges earlier, J. Eric Thompson, H. Calvert, and in front, Maj. J. Cooper Clark, the leader.
(Bottom): Lubaantun, 1925.

Two views of excavation work, Lubaantun, 1925.

A rare and little known achievement of the ancient Belizean Maya, a Bridge Abutment on both sides of the river at Pusilha. Presumably the bridge was of trees or vines attached across the abutments. Photos taken in 1927.

This photo, supplied through the courtesy of Mrs. S. Vega Millar of Orange Walk Town, is of the 10th of September celebration of 1934, organized and led by Mr. Antonio Soberanis. This particular celebration of the 10th was a milestone in Belizean history, for it helped to signal the beginnings of the Belizean Nationalist Movement that was to grow into the dominant force in the country in the 1950's. [For further information about Mr. Soberanis and his movement, refer to Dr. Peter Ashdown's articles in READINGS IN BELIZEAN HISTORY, Vol. I.]



BARON BLISS DAY in early 1930's: H. G. Pilling, Capt. Symons, Sir Harold Kittermaster (Governor of B.H.), Mr. Grant, another Mr. Grant, Dr. Cran and Mr. Melhado.

# Youth of Yesteryear

Youth of yesteryear: St. John's College students on excursions in 1921.

# LT. COL. GEORGE ARTHUR
## 1784 - 1854

The representative of the British Government in Belize before the achievement of colonial status was the Superintendent. Probably the best Superintendent that Belize had was Col. George Arthur, who held the position from 1814-1822. The position was an anamolous one with little authority unless the holder of the position took it for himself. Arthur gradually asserted an ever increasing British authority in the Belize Settlement that was to eventually bring colonial status.

One mark of a great man is that he is not afraid to admit that he had made mistakes and had been in error. Upon his first arrival in Belize Arthur had praised the system of slavery he found and had been quite critical of the role of the Free Coloured in the Settlement's life. After several years of first-hand experience in Belize, he changed considerably and became a sharp critic of the way the Baymen treated their slaves and he also came to see the Free Coloured segment of the population as the only one that was truly devoted to Belize as their home.

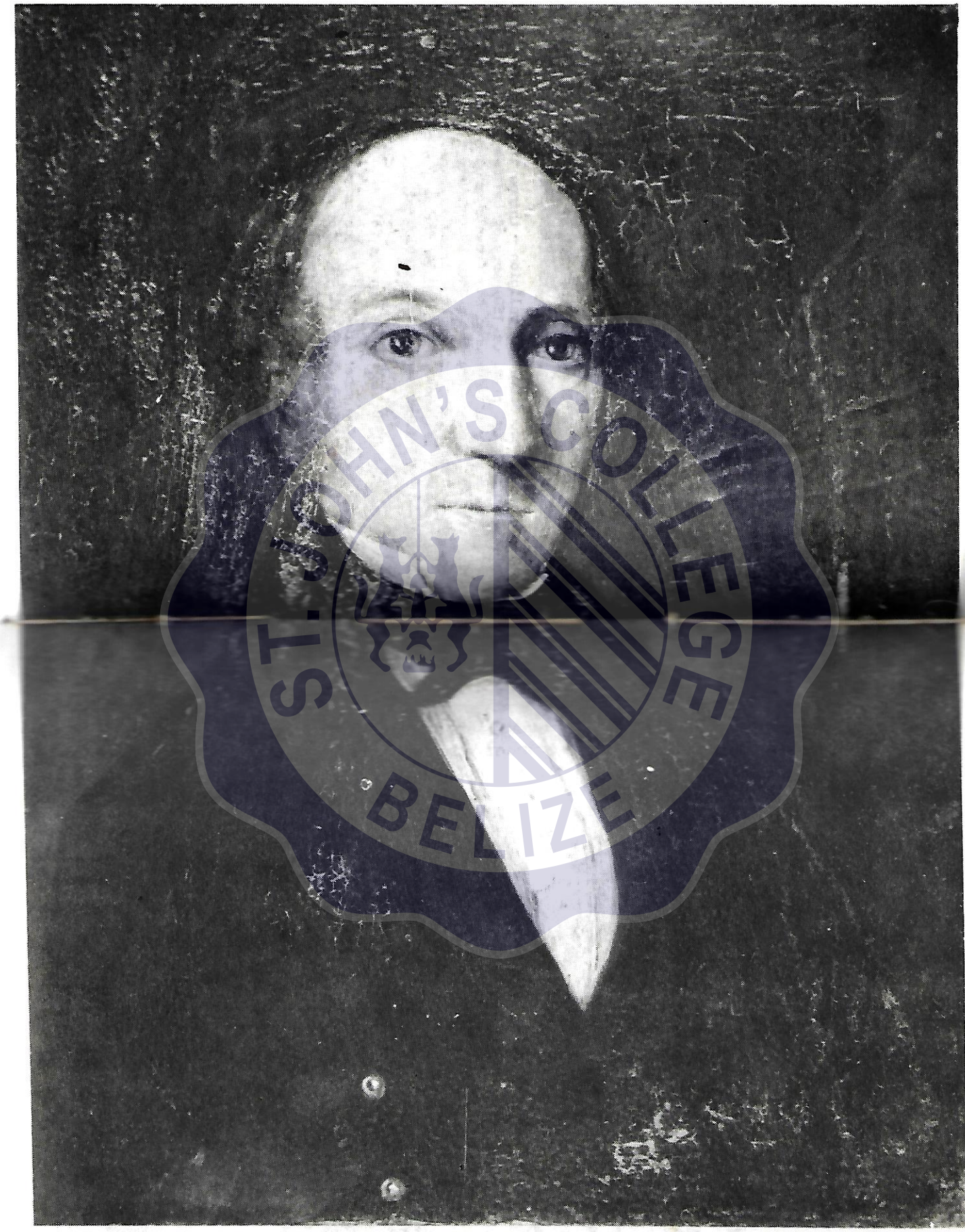
Arthur promoted education and religion — things that had been sorely neglected during the previous 150 years of British settlement in Belize. He greatly strengthened the Crown's powers in Belize and so helped to pave the way for the eventual achievement of colonial status. He attempted land reform and tried to curb the powers of the wealthy magistrates who had run Belize for many years. He defended the rights of the slaves and the Free Coloured.

Dobson's HISTORY OF BELIZE gives him the following tribute:

> He was the only superintendent of the settlement . . to achieve any wider distinction in the field of colonial administration. From Belize he went to Tasmania, later to Canada and finally to India. When ill-health compelled him to retire from the public service he was on the point of being made Governor-General of India . . Before his death in 1854 Arthur had received a baronetcy, been made Lieutenant General and Privy Councillor and had been given an honourary degree by the University of Oxford.

Arthur has an important place in the early history of Belize, and we are happy to have this picture of him in this issue on the following two pages.

[The portrait hangs in the National Gallery of Australia, and was painted by Benjamin Dutterrau.]



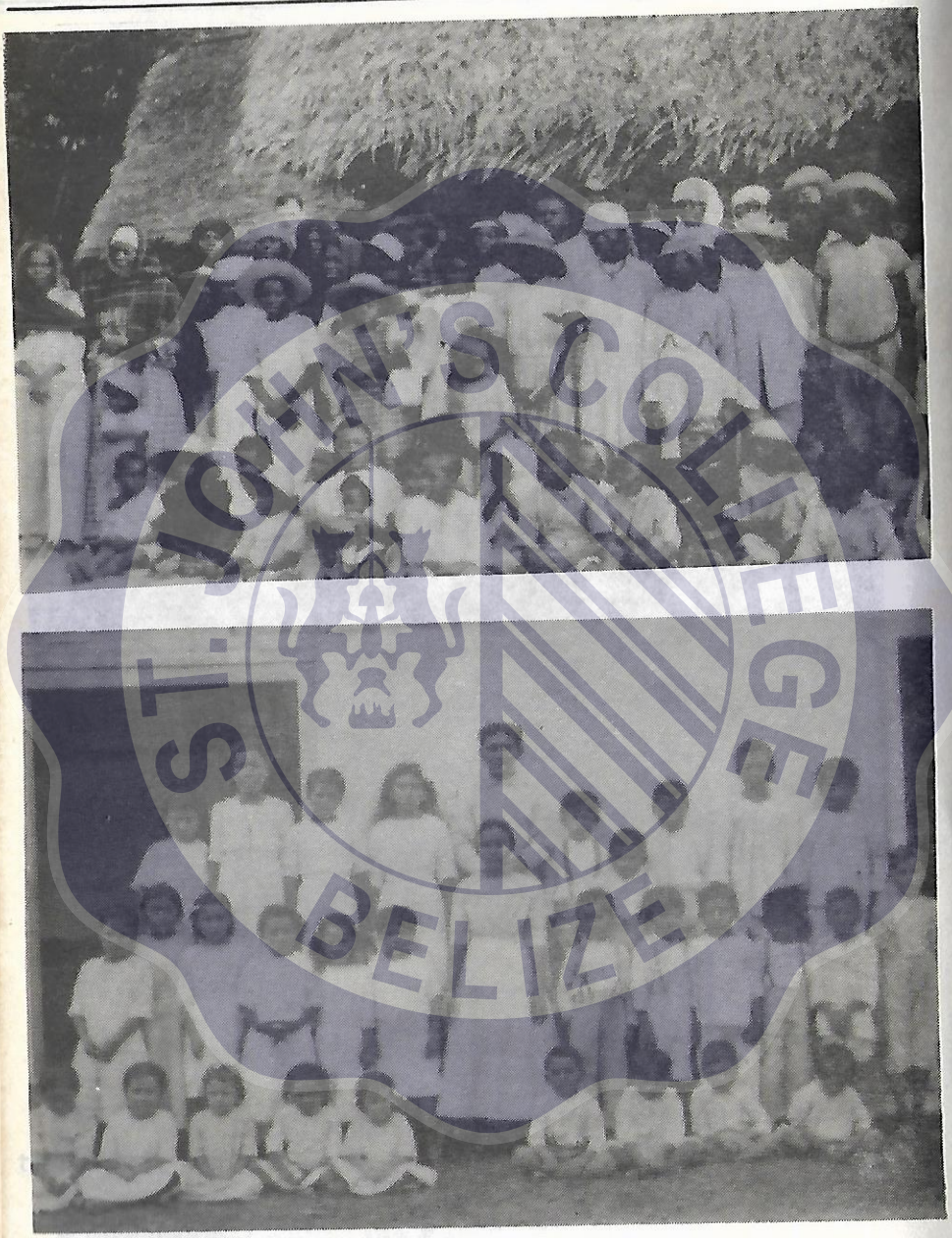
LT. COL. GEORGE ARTHUR

TREASURY & CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT, 1922. (Sitting): McField, Grey-Wilson, Phillips, Masson, Metzgen. (Standing): Marchand, Eyles, Gabourel, Lind, Barrow, Masson, Vellos, Wesby, Hulse, Ysaguirre, Romero, Reyes, Pepitune, Smith & Customs coxswain. (Behind): Tom Anderson. All men with hats were boatmen.

The Staff of the Internal Revenue Department, 1922.
(Seated): Commissioners of Income Tax, Mr. Grey-Wilson, Mr. Harold Phillips and Mr. Herbert Dunk (Registrar General).
(Standing): Messrs. Marchand, Metzgen, Eyles and Vellos.

In 1922 when the Income Tax Office was inaugurated the Land Tax division was included, so that it was named the Internal Revenue Office.

# Dress Styles



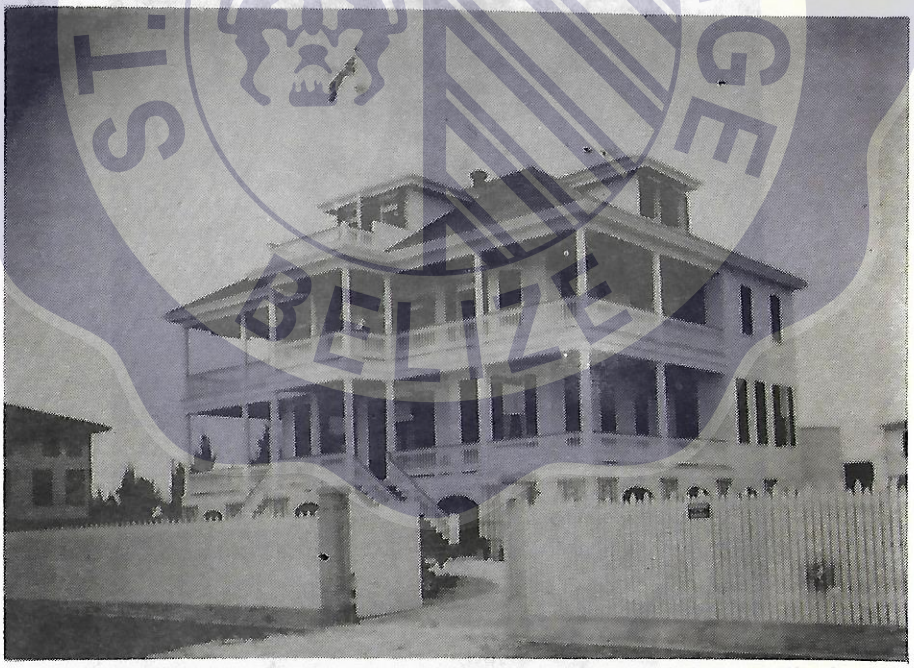
(Top): Inhabitants of Newtown, 1918. (The village is now known as Hopkins.)
(Bottom): Saltillo School, Corozal District, 1915. Sr. and Sra. Bernardo Oliva were the teachers.

Residence of the Colonial Secretary before and after the Hurricane of 1931.

Government House before the Hurricane of 1931.

Government House after the Hurricane of 1931.

(Top): Colonial Secretary's new residence under construction after the Hurricane of 1931.
(Bottom): Colonial Secretary's new residence after the Hurricane of 1931. Colonial Secretary and Mrs. Pilling on the steps.

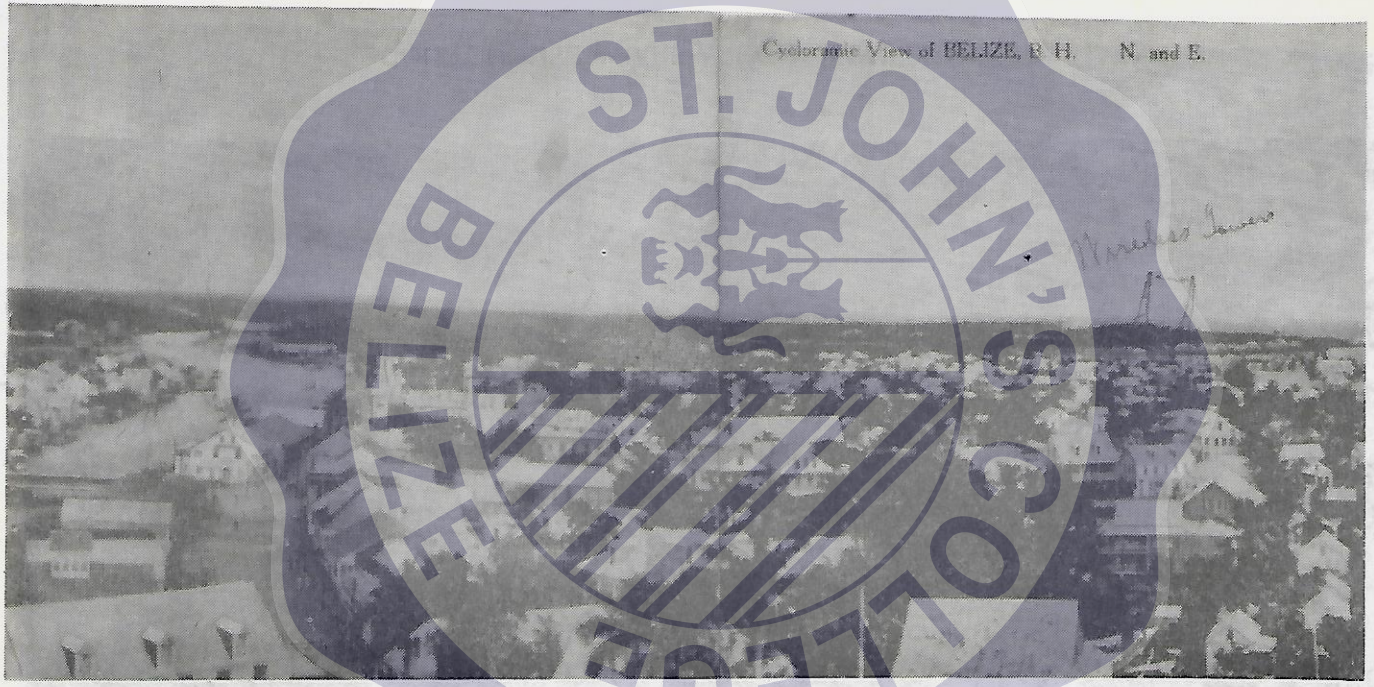


F. W. Biddle House before and after the Hurricane of 1931.

SOUTH SIDE OF BELIZE CITY

In the next few pages we present a cycloramic view of Belize City in 1913, taken from the smoke stack of the old ice factory situated in the North Front St., Angel Lane, area.

COURT HOUSE WHARF AREA & SWING BRIDGE




NORTH FRONT STREET & NORTH SIDE OF BELIZE CITY
[Note the towers on the Cathedral]

NORTH SIDE OF BELIZE CITY
[Steple in center foreground is Old St. Mary's Church.]

CONTINUATION OF NORTH SIDE OF BELIZE CITY
[Filling of what is now called Fort George Area.]

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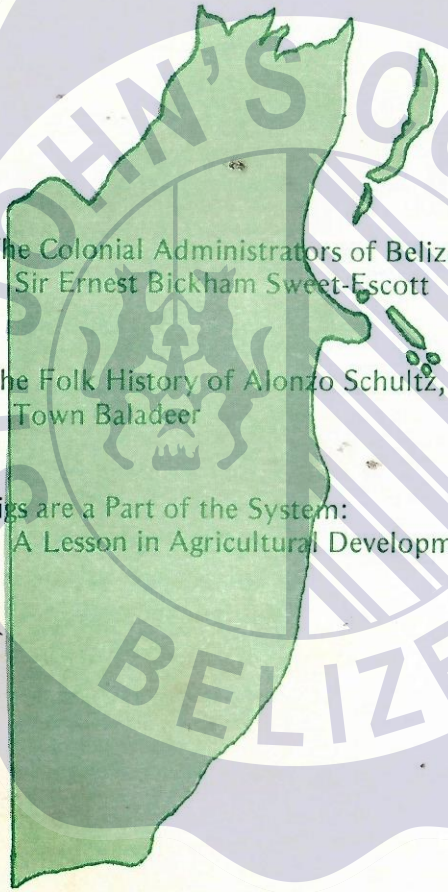

The Colonial Administrators of Belize:
Sir Ernest Bickham Sweet-Escott

The Folk History of Alonzo Schultz,
Town Baladeer

Pigs are a Part of the System:
A Lesson in Agricultural Development


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PETER ASHDOWN

# The Colonial Administrators of Belize:

# Sir Ernest Bickham Sweet-Escott

## Colonial Secretary of Belize: 1893-1897

## Governor of Belize: 1904-1906

Although he was Governor of Belize for only two years, Ernest Bickham Sweet-Escott was one of the most perspicacious administrators who ever set foot in the Colony. A scion of a distinguished English gentry family[1], he was educated at Balliol College, Oxford, and after obtaining his degree in 1880 started his career as the Professor of Classics at the Royal College in Mauritius. Six years later he entered the colonial service as assistant Colonial Secretary in that colony before being sent half way round the world in 1893 to become Colonial Secretary in Belize under the then Governor, Sir Alfred Moloney (1890-1896). His first sojurn in the Colony ended in 1897 when he was recalled to London and subsequently acted as Senior Clerk in the Colonial Office for a year before returning to the Indian Ocean as Administrator of the Seychelles in 1899. After four years as the chief executive in the Seychelles, he was appointed to the top post in Belize in 1904 to replace Moloney's successor, Sir David Wilson (1897-1902).[2]

Sweet-Escott arrived in Belize for the second time in October 1904 with a mandate for the Colony's betterment, as the Chamberlain-Lucas vision[3] for the development of the Empire's 'great underdeveloped estates' (of which Belize was truly one) had just begun to influence those in Downing Street associated with the affairs of the Colony. It was agreed in the Colonial Office that "B. Honduras was, it seems, rather a blot on the administration by this Office of a Crown Colony" as it

PETER ASHDOWN, a frequent Belizean Studies contributor, holds a Doctorate in modern Belizean history from the University of Sussex.

had always "stuck in the mud."[4] This stagnation and the fact that a revenue surplus had been in existence since 1900 led to the dispatch of an energetic colonial secretary, Philip Cork, in 1902 and a consultant engineer, Alexander Lane, in 1903. Cork and Lane were to detail the Colony's shortcomings and suggest various development schemes. Their subsequent reports stressed that significant progress was unlikely to be made until a loan was raised for a number of essential capital projects, including railways in the Stann Creek and Toledo districts, the dredging of the Belize River and the construction of a road from Belize City to the Peten. The Colonial Office, however, while desirous of effecting these improvements, was horrified by Lane's estimates and the size of the loan required, and immediately sent out Howard Dale (a second class clerk) to check the engineer's figures. Dale's revised estimates and his reduction of the number of projects originally envisaged by Lane was more to the liking of the West India department[6] but not to the newly arrived Governor, whose plans for Belize, based on his previous experience of the Colony, immediately provoked a confrontation with both Cork and his superiors in Downing Street.

Sweet-Escott argued that all Lane's projects should be implemented and a loan large enough to cover their cost be raised, as Dale had "overlooked the starved condition in which the Colony has been for many years past." The time had arrived, in his view

> . . . for deciding whether British Honduras shall remain the most backward country in Central America or whether, by judicious works of development, it shall take the high rank among the Colonies of the Empire which by its vast resources, great fertility of soil and favourable geographical position it would seem destined to occupy.

On the other hand, if the present opportunity were neglected:

> . . . it is certain that when the timber which is now available has been exhausted, and the fringe of land which has been brought under cultivation ceases to yield paying crops, there will follow a serious shrinkage in the Public Revenue, and British Honduras will afford an unenviable example of how a Colony should not be administered.[7]

This plea for immediate action, Sweet-Escott's statement of the unpalatable consequences of delay and a demand for a loan of £180,000 to pay for the development envisaged (to be funded from revenue) was not well received in the Colonial Office. Dale, back at his desk, believed that "the Governor wants to go too fast" as it was "absurd to expect a revenue of $400,000 out of a black population of 38,000 (mostly wood-

cutters at 30/- a month)". In the circumstances, he felt it was sufficient to say that is was "necessary to cut one's coat according to the cloth available."[8] In consequence a loan of only £50,000 was considered realistic and the Governor was informed that the question "was not whether development works are or are not to be undertaken in earnest, but whether or not the Colonial Government should proceed in these matters with caution and a due regard for the funds and credit at its disposal."[9] Such a rebuff was not, however, acceptable to Sweet-Escott and in a tone adopted from the outset he made no secret of his disapproval. "If there had been any serious desire to develop the Colony," he observed, "it appeared to have been lost sight of" and "it would be a bitter disappointment to the people of this Colony to find how restricted are the schemes which you [the Secretary of State] are prepared to approve."[10]

Sweet-Escott's outspoken criticism of its financial caution and parsimonious policies was not well received in the Colonial Office, but its displeasure with the Governor crystallised over a more fundamental issue. The problems facing attempts at development which had been listed previously by Cork – the great land monopolies, lack of investment capital and the pernicious labour law – were, in Sweet-Escott's eyes, secondary to one overriding obstacle which first had to be surmounted. This was the ambiguity of the Governor's own constitutional position as head of the executive – the legacy of Goldsworthy and the constitutional crisis of 1890-1892, the outcome of which had placed effective control of legislation and finance in the hands of the unofficial majority in the Legislative Council.[11] Sweet-Escott observed that

> In existing circumstances I am powerless to carry out any proposals, although they may be accepted generally as essential to the development of the Colony and may have been approved by the Secretary of State, unless I can secure the support of the five unofficial members of the Legislative Council. If these unofficial members were elected, they would be responsible to their electors, and would have to defer to the opinions and interests of their constituents. But this is not the case. They are nominated by the Crown, and practically for life, or 'quamdiu se bene gesserint,' and form a constant majority in the Legislative Council. They are in fact, an irresponsible oligarchy of five.
>
> My experience of the Colony is not of yesterday, and both as Colonial Secretary and Officer Administering the Government I acquired, from 1893 to 1897, an intimate acquaintance with all classes of the population. The present majority in the Legislative Council of nominated

unofficial members dates only from 1892; when under the Additional Royal Instruction of the 26th March 1892, the Inspector Commandant of Constabulary ceased to be an official member of the Legislative Council. If, during the period of over twelve years, that have elapsed since the change in the constitution, the Legislative Council could point to a record of work resulting in the progress and development of the Colony, there might be something to urge in favour of retaining the present unofficial majority. But they have no such record behind them, and I believe nine-tenths of the population would welcome a change in the constitution which would give the Governor and his officers a chance of carrying out schemes on the successful accomplishment of which it is not too much to say that the future, or rather the very existence of the Colony as a civilised country depends . . .

All that I ask, as I am responsible for the administration of the Government of this Colony in the interests of all classes of the people and not only one section only, so I may be given the power to make my administration a reality and not a sham. At present I am not the Governor of the Colony in the sense in which the term is used in other Crown Colonies. I desire to point out that British Honduras is the only Crown Colony where there exists in the Leslature a majority of nominated unofficial members, and to add that the constitutional experiment made in 1892 has proved a failure without any redeeming feature.[12]

This re-opening of an old wound caused some confusion at first in the Colonial Office. There was an immediate discussion as to what exactly was the constitutional position in British Honduras, it being initially held that in essentials it did not differ from that existing in the Bahamas, Barbados and British Guiana. Had this been true it would have meant, of course, that British Honduras was not a Crown Colony at all, but it was then pointed out that the unofficial majority in the Colony was not elected. Having established that British Honduras was a Crown Colony with an unofficial nominated majority, "however theoretically absurd," Howard Dale then moved to the defence of this anomoly. If absurd, "the simple fact that the unofficials represent the taxpaying community. The latter pay the piper, and may not unreasonably expect to have some voice in the selection of the tune." For "if in British Honduras these unofficial members do not represent the tax-payer, that is the fault of successive Governors, with whom the nomination of unofficial members practically rests. As a matter of fact, I think they are representative."

Whether or not the unofficials were representative was

not really the point, as Dale conceded. More important to the Office was the preservation of the omnipotence of the decisions of past Secretaries of State. He did not see "how the Secretary of State, after establishing a system in 1892, could now say without any specific and serious reason that he has come to the conclusion that it is absurd and must be abolished." In his opinion, "the system has worked well and will work well with a moderate and conciliatory governor."[13]

The inference was obvious and, already irritated by Sweet-Escott's deprecatory despatches, the Secretary of State replied in Dale's terms. He refused any modification of the constitution "unless and until the present system has in specific cases been productive of grave public injury and inconvenience." In his opinion the present system had "been worked not perhaps without difficulty and inconvenience, but at least without instance," so far as he was aware, "of really grave injury to the public interest." The Governor was warned to desist from further despatches "of a critical and controversial tone" and ordered to make his peace with the unofficial members of the Council.[14]

This warning fell on deaf ears. Sweet-Escott had burned his boats and was going to reign and rule or not reign at all. He stated bluntly that if he got his £200,000 loan and his public works he was "prepared to stake [my] reputation and future advancement on the success of these works." However, in the administration of government he would not be "hampered by an irresponsible majority in the Legislative Council" and he had to be "provided with officers competent to give effective help."[15] Without such persons and powers he was, he argued, about to put his name to half-hearted measures, the finances of which he could not effectively control. The need for Imperial action, he insisted, had been made even more pressing by the unofficials' rejection of his proposal that they should curtail their own powers and by their reduction of the salary of the Superintendent of Police.[16] The situation was anathema to him and "so that [there was] no misconception in the public mind as to what has taken place" he requested permission to publish all the relevant despatches on the Lane proposals and their funding.[17]

Such a series of imperatives produced a rash of underlining and exclamation marks in Downing Street. It was noted that Sweet-Escott's loan had increased by £20,000 and that he wanted to appeal to the public against the Secretary of State. His very urgency produced some sympathy for his anomalous constitutional position, it being agreed that the reduction of the Superintendent's salary was "ill-advised" but it was hardly of "really grave injury to the public interest" and grounds for

a constitutional crisis. There was recognition too that the Governor would either have to have his way or be replaced as "it is his opinion that he cannot carry out the Government satisfactorily under the present constitution." His idea that the forthcoming loan could be used as a lever to engineer a constitutional confrontation was considered and discarded. The loan "was practically already agreed" and the constitutional change envisaged, unless voluntarily accepted (which was unlikely), would require an act of the Imperial Parliament. In that case, the Colonial Office considered, it would be doubtful if the House of Commons would take up the matter.[18]

Unable and unwilling to allow Sweet-Escott his demands, the Secretary of State's advisers decided to set their collective face against him. Despite his previous good record, it was agreed he had gone out of his way to provoke his own Council and Downing Street by demanding a change in the constitution that was indefensible in Parliament, and by attempting to mortgage the Colony's revenues without a care for the future. It appeared that he had had a dislike for both Cork and Dale and his whole attitude had been that "he must have his way and he must have his measures and his men, that if he were not given his head, he would be a failure as others before him have been. He took up his duties on 1st November and we have had a series of proposals which take one's breath away and a tone of despatches which is open to exception."[19]

This rebuke, formally communicated, served only to provide the Colonial Office with the last word in its disagreement with the Governor. It was obvious to all that his transfer was both necessary and imminent. In August 1905 he requested that transfer himself for, just as the unofficials were about to demand his recall, he lost a daughter, Nora, in a renewed outbreak of yellow fever[20] which had been killing off recently arrived Europeans since May. As a parting shot Sweet-Escott suggested that if Belize could not be mended then its British connection, as an isolated and peripheral adjunct of the Empire, should be ended. Most of its trade was with the USA and undoubtedly, he argued, that nation would make more of its resources than had Britain. Could it not be exchanged for Hawaii?[21] To this "impossible suggestion" his superiors were dismissive, for although Belize was no doubt "one of the dependencies we could best spare" and the USA "the only Power to whom we could part with it," it was considered unlikely that the US government would regard such an exchange as realistic, the Hawaiian Islands being "very valuable to that power."[22]

Sweet-Escott's second period of office in Belize was very short but, in retrospect, proved a watershed in modern Bel-

izean history. Aware of the power relationships in the Colony produced by the constitutional crisis of 1890-1892, he had spelled out to the West India department the nature of the legislature created in 1892 and the consequences of the rule of the unofficial majority. His argument, that the majority was a self-interested oligarchy of landowners and merchants intent only on the preservation of their own profits and prerogatives, made no impression in Downing Street however, where the right of the 'forestocracy' to rule was upheld until 1930. Despite the endorsement of Sweet-Escott's arguments by his successor in 1910, no action was contemplated by the Colonial Office against the unofficial majority until some of its members threatened to endanger Anglo-American relations with their bootlegging activities at the end of the 1920's.[23] Even then the necessary resolve was not forthcoming and the power of the unofficial majority was not diminished until the Governor obtained reserve powers as a consequence of the 1931 hurricane. By that time it was too late, and the prophecies that Sweet-Escott had made had already been fulfilled. Belize was well into the twentieth century without a decent communications system or public services, and with its exploited labour force tied to a declining forest industry.

As to Sweet-Escott himself it was felt by his superiors that he was unlikely "to prove a first rate Governor anywhere,"[24] a prejudice reflected in the fact that he never obtained gubernatorial rank in an 'important' colony such as Jamaica, Trinidad or Kenya. From Belize he went to the Leeward Islands where he served a full term (1906-1912) before concluding his public life as Governor of Fiji and High Commissioner of the Western Pacific (1912-1918). he was retired at his own request in July 1918 and spent his long retirement in the U.K. at the Sussex seaside resort of Worthing, where he died and was buried on April 10, 1941. In its obituary the London Times, apart from listing his official postings, noted that General Gordon was a guest at his wedding in 1881.[25] In Belize however he should perhaps be remembered as the governor who marred his career in an unsuccessful attempt to remedy the constitutional situation which allowed a privileged elite of white and Creole businessmen to run the affairs of the Colony for their own benefit.

NOTES

1. See Burke's Landed Gentry, pp. 238-40. The Sweet-Escotts of Hartrow. A distinguished contemporary member of the family is B.A.C. Sweet-Escott, Assistant General Manager of the British Petroleum Company (B.P.).

2. Who Was Who: 1941-1950 (1964), pp. 1126-27.
3. For the implementation of the 'vision' see R.V. Kubicek, The Administration of Imperialism: Joseph Chamberlain at the Colonial Office (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1969).
4. CO 123/242, minute of Onslow (Under-Secretary of State) dated 3 Aug. 1902, on Cork to Dale, 22 July 1902.
5. Philip Clark Cork (1854-1936), Colonial Secretary of British Honduras (1901-1905); Administrator of St Lucia (1905-1908); Colonial Secretary of Jamaica (1909-1914).
6. For these reports and comment on them see various files in CO 123/240-245.
7. CO 123/248, Sweet-Escott to Lyttleton, 5 Dec. 1904.
8. CO 123/248, minute of H.E. Dale dated 5 Jan. 1905 on Sweet-Escott to Lyttleton, 5 Dec. 1904.
9. CO 123/248, Lyttleton to Sweet-Escott, 28 Feb. 1905.
10. CO 123/249, Sweet-Escott to Lyttleton, 19 Jan. 1905.
11. See Chapter 2, 'A Constitutional Crisis,' in P.D. Ashdown, "Race, Class and the Unofficial Majority in British Honduras: 1890-1949," D.Phil. Dissertation, University of Sussex 1979.
12. CO 123/247, Sweet-Escott to Lyttleton, 30 Nov. 1904.
13. CO 123/247, minute of H.E. Dale dated 27 Dec. on Sweet-Escott to Lyttleton, 30 Nov. 1904.
14. CO 123/247, Lyttleton to Sweet-Escott, 4 Feb. 1905.
15. CO 123/248, Sweet-Escott to Lyttleton, 5 Dec. 1904.
16. The unofficial members, led by J. M. Rosado, had declined to give up their majority and, as an act of spite, had voted for a reduction in the salary of the Superintendent of Police. CO 123/250, J. M. Rosado to Sweet-Escott, 20 July 1905, an enclosure with Sweet-Escott to Lyttleton, 20 July 1905.
17. CO 123/248, Sweet-Escott to Lyttleton, 5 Dec. 1904.
18. CO 123/250, minute of T. C. Macnaghten dated 10 Aug. 1905 on Sweet-Escott to Lyttleton, 20 July 1905.
19. CO 123/251, minute of C. P. Lucas dated 27 Jan. 1905 on Lyttleton to Sweet-Escott, 1 Feb. 1905.
20. There is a commemorative brass plaque to Nora Sweet-Escott in St John's Cathedral.
21. CO 123/249, Sweet-Escott to Lyttleton, 28 June 1905.
22. CO 123/249, minute of C. P. Lucas dated 9 Sept. 1905 on Sweet-Escott to Lyttleton, 28 June 1905.
23. See Ashdown, "Race, Class and the Unofficial Majority . . . ".
24. CO 123/249, minute of T. C. Macnaghten dated 19 June 1905 on Sweet-Escott to Lyttleton, 1 June 1905.
25. London Times, 12 April 1941, p. 6. General George Gordon obtained a niche in British Imperial history when in January 1885 he was killed at Khartoum in the Sudan by the forces of the Mahdi.

ERVIN BECK

# The Folk History of Alonzo Schultz, Town Baladeer

Behind an important group of Creolé songs looms the shadow of Alonzo Schultz, a colorful woodcutter who was also a notorious rascal and composer of topical songs in Belize City in the early 1920's. The ten songs attributed to him by various informants[1] include "Payo Bispo Jail," "Suaso Burn Dung de Lan," "White Garling Soup," "David Banner Digge Botty," "Annie, A Gaan, Gal," "Love, What a Funny Thing Like Love," "Gi-Gi Wap," "Mango Magitte," "A Light Me Candle da Sunshine Bay," and "Do No Talk, Boney."

Of these songs, only "Payo Bispo Jail" and "Suaso Burn Dung de Lan" are printed and annotated at the end of this essay, both because they are the only songs attributed to Schultz by more than one informant and also because they contain information that contributes evidence for the reconstruction of the person, life and career of this interesting folk virtuoso. Whether or not the other songs were composed by him, the many attributions suggest both the large number of songs that he must have composed and also the extent to which he and his work have captured the imaginations of Creole folk.

Schultz was a short, "meagre," "thin-bodied" man, with rope scars on his wrists and many other marks on his skin and face. Most informants agree that he was a native of Jamaica, which is supported by two references in the songs: his "life is

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across the sea" and his "home" is, too. Several informants also assume that he first lived or travelled through some of the "republics" – Cuba, Honduras, Panama, Guatemala, and/or Honduras – before arriving in British Honduras.

The reason for his leaving Jamaica is variously explained. Hubert Gardner's version of "Payo Bispo Jail" implies that Schultz left Jamaica because of disappointment in love. The voice in the song says:

Me Julia gone to Cuba.
Dinah gone to sea.
It's a pretty little gal dat cause me to wander
In dis colony.

But one informant claims that Schultz had escaped from prison in Jamaica and that the rope scars on his wrist came from that prison experience. He also claims that "Schultz" is the jailbreaker's assumed name and not an indication of any mixed German-Creole parentage.

In British Honduras Schultz became a mahogany-cutter, working in the bush during most of the year but coming to Belize City for the Christmas festivities, during which he established his reputation as a reveller. For, in addition to keeping Christmas "with a crowd" as a "Christmas man" dressed in the conventional straw hat and neckerchief, Schultz distinguished himself in a number of special ways.

He was regarded as the "town balladeer" – a "calypsonian" who composed "country songs." As one informant points out, "In those days many people made song about an occasion." Schultz had a special reputation as a "trouble-maker" and a "real mischief-maker" for composing songs about local people and events, particularly songs dealing with scandalous conduct. He was noted for the ability to compose a song on the spot, frequently when he was performing in the streets. These songs he then carried with him all over town, followed by bands of curious children. He would stand at the end of an alley, singing his songs and playing his guitar, mouth organ, comb or grater, while asking his audience and passers-by for money. This made him a "lazy" man in the eyes of more respectable citizens.

The special musical instrument associated with Schultz was the jackass, horse or cow jawbone, which contained loose teeth that rattled and produced a percussive effect. His use of the jawbone in music-making parallels the practice reported from Jamaica by Walter Jekyll in 1907[2] and also the tradition that continues in some boom-and-shine bands in Belize today.

Schultz made special use of his jawbone, however. It became an important feature of some of the fantastic costumes he wore as an entertainer on the streets and in the more formal Christmas shows. In addition to ribbons streaming from his shirt and bizarre headdresses created by decorations added to his straw hat, Schultz frequently wore the jawbone over his head, incorporating it into a horse-head simulated by means of a cloak thrown over his head or a face and ears made of cardboard. By moving an attached stick, or by manipulating strings inside his cloth headpiece, he tugged the jawbone up and down as he sang and talked, thereby giving his listeners "news," he said, "straight from the horse's mouth".[3]

"He was a lively guy, you know – all over the place." He seemed to be everywhere "parading and raising hell." "Everybody in Belize [City] suppose to know Schultz." They knew him as a "troublesome fellow" who "liked the bottle a lot" and frequently got into scraps. He was "very, very, very profane. He was a blasphemer," known for his shocking profanities and obscenities. People feared him because he was such an "evil" man. But some observers saw in this behavior a kind of compulsive obsession. "He was a man that was brutalized." He was a "tormented man" who never slept at night. He was "fanatic," not rational. "People said Schultz was crazy, but he wasn't crazy."

"Payo Bispo Jail" seems to be a more or less autobiographical document based on his imprisonment in Mexico. Sometime near the end of his stay in British Honduras, he was imprisoned in Payo Obispo (nowadays known as Chetumal), just across the northern border of British Honduras. Schultz must have experienced the kind of open prison that is regarded as innovative today. According to one informant, whose good friend was also imprisoned there around that time, prisoners were allowed to leave the jail during the day, provided they returned by 6 p.m. For a price, they had access to food, women and other comforts. Indeed, both versions of "Payo Bispo Jail" speak admiringly of that "damn fine jail," and refer to the gambling that regularly occurred in the prison. "You get a dollar fa you dinner," one version says. "You get you drink and you dollar," the other echoes. In light of the apparently benign nature of the jail experience, the informants who claim that Schultz's rope scars came from his imprisonment in Chetumal must be mistaken.

The White-Bevans version of "Payo Bispo Jail" suggests that Schultz joined a logging operation one month and ended up in jail exactly a month later:

> Twas on de first of January
> Wen dey signed him into Camp 6.

[Twas on] de first of February
Wen e [first?] get bile cake an pork.

This version also implies that Schultz was arrested at the same time another man was for assaulting (killing?) a Waika Indian:

Wen e chop open de Waika
An e drink out some a e blood.
Wen dey make de arrest pan Alanza too
Den e bawl pan top a e voice.

One informant recalls that Ben Stuart and Robert Sidney Turton carried out logging operations on the Mexican side of the Hondo River in the early 1920's. Perhaps Schultz, the Waika and the assailant were all working in Turton's "Camp 6," in Mexico; the Waika was killed in a fight; and Schultz was arrested and jailed for being implicated in the murder.

One convincing informant, however, claims that it wasn't murder at all. He insists that Schultz was imprisoned for smuggling on behalf of Turton. In fact, the informant's grandfather, also an employee of Turton, was sent to Mexico specifically to arrange Schultz's release from prison and his subsequent return to British Honduras.

Schultz's stay in Mexico may have included an even more bizarre, melodramatic episode. According to one informant, following release from jail Schultz was seized by chicleros, tied to a tree and left there to die of exposure. He was discovered before he died, however, and was released and returned to British Honduras – but he was so crippled by the experience that he never walked normally again. No other informant knows this story or recalls Schultz in this crippled condition. The informant heard the story in 1925 in Corozal, where he was teaching school, and assumes that Schultz's scarred writsts came from that harrowing experience.

The folk records of Schultz's career in British Honduras end by 1931, and the nature of his last days in the colony remains obscure. Two informants from the same family claim that Schultz died in the 1931 hurricane when he was between 50 and 60 years of age. But the informant who tells the story of Schultz tied to a tree insists that, upon his return to Belize City, Schultz was apprehended by authorities and extradited to Jamaica to stand trial for jail-breaking. He clsims to have read about the extradition in the Clarion and the Independent, the newspapers published in Belize City at that time. None of the other informants, however, support either alternative. They simply don't know what happened to Schultz. "He vanished," one says. Such ignorance of the end of a person who was so much in the public eye may be mute evi-

dence that undermines both of the more dramatic and specific stories of his last days in Belize.

Evidence from the songs suggests that he did indeed leave Belize. Hiw farewell chorus -- "Goodbye Honduras" or "Goodbye, sweet Belizereans" -- points to his knowledge that he had to leave British Honduras, or to his determination to do so. "Your rising sun" ("the rising sun" in Gardner's song) may suggest a destination in the east, perhaps Jamaica. And some lines in "Payo Bispo Jail" suggest that he expected to become a "soldier-a-man." Of course, evidence for this third alternative makes it finally no more convincing than the other two reported by the informants.

Were they available, newspaper accounts and jail and immigration records might clarify the precise nature of Schultz's last days in Belize. Even so, the bulk of his biography would remain in the oral tradition. What is impressive, however, is the amount of agreement on the overall nature of Schultz's career by the many informants who were first-hand witnesses to his presence in Belize City.

On the personal level, he emerges from their accounts as a little man -- sometimes pitiful, sometimes menacing, always awesome -- whose reckless living made him a homeless, wandering man. On the cultural level, he emerges as a man totally immersed in the traditional vocations and performances of the folk culture of the black English-speaking Caribbean. He was a songster whose legacy to Belize is a fascinating local character legend and a corpus of interesting folk songs, whose nature and extent need to be studied further.

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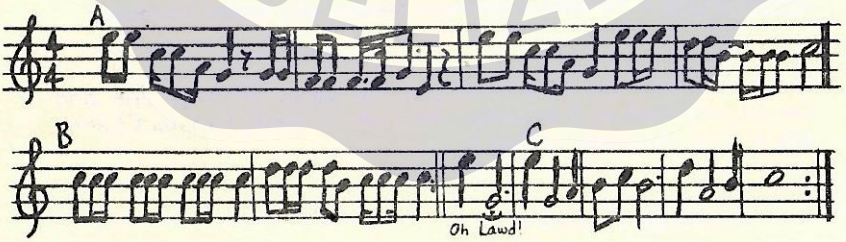



A. Payo Bispo Jail, da wa damn fine jail!
Payo Bispo Jail, da wa damn fine jail!

B. You get a dollar fa you dinner
An you roll da play you bone dice.
Policeman watch you day an night
To see dey doesn't rob you life.

C. O Alonzo, no mourn.
O Alonzo, no mourn.
O Alonzo, no mourn, no mourn,
Fa you life is acrosss de sea.

D. O hold me but no tear me.
Bam! Me go be a soldier-a-man.
Hold me but no tear me.
Bam! Me go be a soldier-a-man.

E. When e chop open de Waika
An e drink out some a e blood.
When dey make di arreşt pan Alonzo too
Den e bawl pan top a e voice.

(Repeat C with "Fa down by to Payo Bispo Jail you are going.")

(Repeat D)

(Repeat C with "Fa you home is across di sea.")

B. Twas on de first of January
When dey signed him into Camp 6.
[Twas on] de first of February
When e [first?] get bile cake an pork.

(Repeat C)

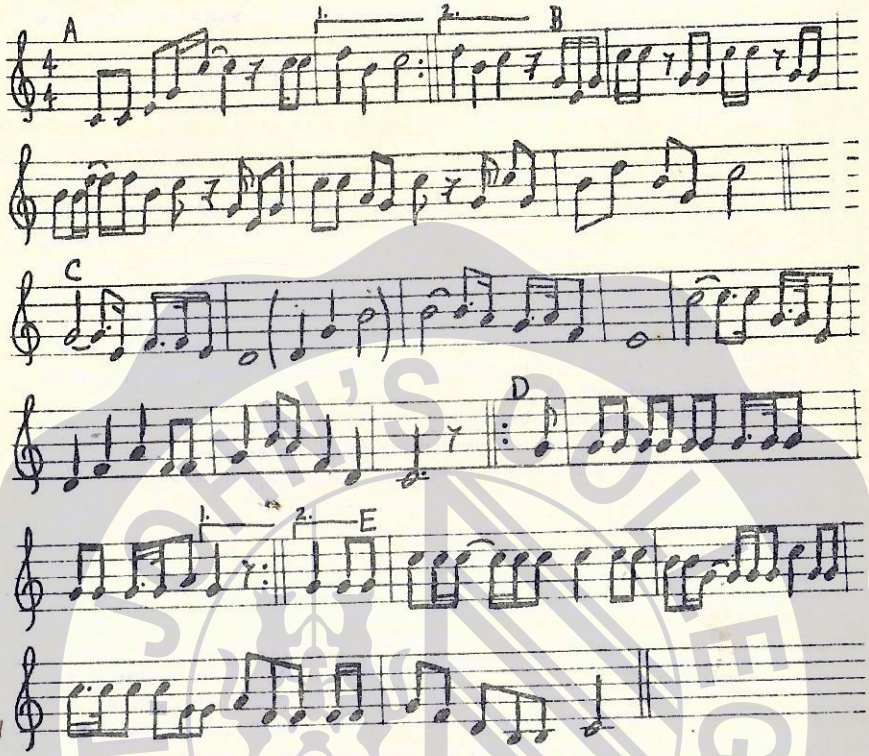
D. An e tek e foot fa go stop de train
Weh run over two hundred miles.
E tek e head e go bruk down di log bridge
Over Britannia Line.

(Repeat C)

[Christabel Bevans and Leonie White, Belize City, Aug. 12, 1975.]

bile cake = dumplings
Britannia Line = the border between Mexico and British Honduras

Christabel takes the lead in singing this song. Although she and Leonie sing most of it in unison, they join in close, two-part harmony in most renditions of Part C.




A. Suaso burn dung de lan,
An e burn dung Blancaneaux Bank.
Suaso burn dung de lan,
Yes, an e burn dung Blancaneaux Bank.

B. Look pan de hair pan e head like a nail.
Look pan e foot could measure de lan.
Look pan e belly like German balloon.
Look pan e teeth like ganga file.

O Lord!

C. Goodbye, sweet Belizereans,
Your rising sun.
Goodbye, sweet Belizereans,
Your rising sun.

(Repeat A)

(Repeat B with "Look pan e hand so long, long, long.")

(Repeat C with "Goodbye, Honduras.")

[Adelia Dixon, Belize City, July 22, 1978.]

Blancaneaux Bank = one of many logging sites by the same name cut under the direction of a Mr. Blancaneux, a sub-contractor for the Belize Estate and Produce Company
German balloon = large balloon imported from Germany
ganga = big-grooved
Belizereans = people of Belize City

According to Oswald Sutherland, who also knows a variant, this song is based on a lumber-camp incident that occurred in the mid-1920's and that involved a six-foot, six-inch Carib named Suaso, who was ordinarily a quiet man. But once when he felt cheated of his pay by his boss, Blancaneux, he burned down the camp in a fit of anger. He was tried, convicted of assaulting Blancaneux and a policeman, and then imprisoned. Adelia Dixon remembers Suaso as a tall, pleasant, one-legged mahogany-cutter who died in 1972 or 1973.
The section of the song beginning with "Look pan de hair" is subject to extensive, hyperbolic improvisation on the awesome physique of Suaso. Both Sutherland and Cleopatra White sing variants that are more interesting here than is Dixon's version. For instance, Cleopatra sings about "e mout like a big chiclero pot" and "e face like a tunder storm." Sutherland sings about "e bottom like a kerosene pan" and "e foot could stop wan train" —the latter line echoing one in the White-Bevans version of "Payo Bispo Jail."
The "Goodbye" stanzas hold interesting implications for the reconstructed career of Schultz. Sutherland says that, in his variant, the lines, "Goodbye, Honduras! / Goodbye, my love!" are spoken by Suaso to his sweetheart as he goes to jail. Adelia Dixon, however, refers to her song as Schultz's "farewell song" addressed to the people of Belize before he left the country. Ed Casasola agrees, saying that the farewell chorus rightly belongs in the "Payo Bispo Jail" song, where it is indeed placed in the following version by Hubert Gardner.
Because of the tentative way in which he sang it, Gardner's variant is printed here without musical transcription and with all repeated lines omitted. Asked on the spot to sing his version of "Payo Bispo Jail," he complied by singing Segment I. Following more discussion of Schultz and the song, and prompted by snatches quoted from the White-Bevans version, he sang his second, then his third segments, and admitted at the end of his performance that he had not recalled or sung a coherent whole.

SEGMENT I

Payo Obispo Jail, da wan damn fine jail.

You get you drink an you dollar
An you roll you good ol bone dice.

Dip dem, dip dem,
Dip dem in a rolling steam [=stream?]
You can dip dem once,

You can dip dem twice,
You can dip dem in a rolling steam.

Me Julia went to Cuba.
Dinah has gone to sea.
It's a pretty little gal
Dat cause me to wander
In dis colony.

What [rumble?] double round di corner
An you see me an me dish
An bring me bayonet an gun.

When I rebell it's a hell da me, sah,
In dis colony.

What a baby like dis, Lord,
What a baby like dat.
I put me baby to sleep
An de baby get up an walk.

Cungo round dis time
De cabin tumble dung
In dis colony.

Lord, I got to war in darkness,
Sand an gunpowder an smoke.
An da Julia cause me to roam
Cause she cause me to leave my home.

SEGMENT II

Goodbye, Belizerean, the rising sun.

Stick a feather in a rat-bat tail
An e must come out a jail.

Look pan e hair pen e head like a nail.
Look pan e eye like a hammer of death.
Look pan e teeth like a elephant's own.
Look pan e ears like a hammer of death.

E head so big dat e buck dung di world
An e weigh a million an one.
E foot so big dat e stop a train
Dat was gwine a million mile.

SEGMENT III

Why should Alonzo mourn?
His home is far across the sea.
Wishing that I should die my love,
I am on my way Payo Obispo Jail as I go.

Shub me but no kill me
For I'll be a [ ? ] a death.

[Hubert Gardner, Belize City, July 26, 1978.]

it's a hell da me = I really rebell
rat-bat tail = vampire bat's tale

Gardner includes in his song two elements that other songsters include in the Suaso song — the farewell chorus and the "Look pan" sequence. The presence of those elements here emphasizes the chant-like quality of parts of two songs attributed to Schultz and also the blurred distinctions that songsters tend to make between the songs attributed to him. We might also notice the similarly picaresque nature of both Schultz and Suaso.
Most biographical elements in Gardner's version have been commented on already, except for the rather strange references to the baby that "get up an walk" and "talk." Although these lines may be an insertion from an entirely different song, they may also relate to Schultz's domestic life. Some informants claim that Schultz fathered a son during his stay in Belize, although they disagree on whether his son has in recent years been a fishmonger or a carter in Belize City.

## NOTES

I am indebted to grants from the Faculty Research Fund of Goshen College and the Penrose Fund of the American Philosophical Society for assistance in my collection and study of Belizean folklore.

1. The informants who contributed to this composite portrait of Schultz include Edney Bennett, Adelia Dixon, Ed Casasola, Grace Reynolds, Gladys Stuart, Oswald Sutherland, Emily Trapp, Obadiah Trapp, Cleopatra White, and Leonie White. All quotations come from these people.

2. Jamaican Song and Story (rpt. New York: Dover, 1966), p. 216.

3. In his masquerade performances, which so impressed his Belize City audiences, Schultz was actually continuing a tradition of mumming in animal costume that was fast dying out in his presumed home country of Jamaica. On her visit to Lacovia parish, Jamaica, in 1919 Martha Beckwith observed the "Horse-head" mumming and wrote:

> The Horse-head dancer at Lacovia carried above his head the skull of a horse fixed to a wooden frame, embellished with bits of flannel and tinsel and so adjusted that the jaws could be made to open and shut in an exceedingly life-like fashion. His own body was hidden under a long cotton drape. Accompanying him were a group of musicians who played excellently on the flute, drum, tambourine and triangle. One lad played a singular scraping instrument consisting in the lower jaw

> of a horse dried in the smoke until the teeth rattled, over which he scraped a stick with a curious vibratory sound in time to the other instruments. In Orange Valley, a district just out of Brown's Town in the parish of St. Ann on the north side of the island, another Horse-head masker gave a performance in company with a figure in mask and fools-cap called "Masquerade" and a small band of drummers and fifers. The purpose of these lads was to make money during the holiday season. Both the leaders showed considerable skill with leg and body muscles in dancing on a single spot, and the Horse-head disguise was realistically managed. Until recently, both Horse-head and Ox-head dancers begged for money at Christmas-time in the streets of Kingston and other large centers, but their antics have finally banished them from city streets, and even in country districts the terror is so great at the appearance of the Ox-head dancer that he is now forbidden by law. (Jamaica Folk-Lore, MAFS, 21 [New York: American Folk-Lore Society, 1926], pp. 8-9.)

Although she also acknowledges the tradition of "animal masks and disguises" in Africa (p. 9), Beckwith assumes that the Jamaican custom is the survival of the British tradition of the "hobby-horse dancer" that was reported to be part of Christmas festivities in Staffordshire as early as 1686 (n. 17, p. 9). Other kinds of mumming survive today on English-speaking islands of the Caribbean, as well as in the John Canoe and Pia Manadi performances among the Caribs in Belize. One informant even recalls Schultz wearing a John Canoe mask as he performed, but no informant calls Schultz a Carib or says that he performed the John Canoe dance.

RICHARD WILK

# Pigs are a Part of the System: A Lesson in Agricultural Development

To a passerby, rural areas often seem deceptively simple. But a rural economy is actually a complex web, which becomes more and more intricate as one looks harder and harder. When we pick out a single element as a focus of development, be it rice fields, coffee trees or even pigs, we often find that that element is embedded in a complex network of physical and social relationships. When you change one thing, you find that other things which you didn't even think were connected also have to change.

Too often, rural development starts without any preliminary studies of this complex interrelationship. Farmers themselves often know the ways different parts of their farming system work together, so they can often see why a suggested innovation is not going to work long before the development specialist can.

Outsiders tend to see resistance to innovation as 'peasant conservatism', 'obstinacy', or as due to a lack of education or an ideological resistance to progress. This kind of reaction usually means the person has not understood how the rural production system is tied together. Farmers who have lived with a system all their lives, for whom the methods they know are the difference between life or starvation, are often in the best position to know whether a new crop or method is really going to improve their lot or not.

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For rural development to succeed, we must understand how the whole rural system works, and not just pick out one element at a time according to fashions or the commands of a distant bureaucracy. The best place to start is with the knowledge and experience of the rural people themselves.

## The K'ekchi' Maya

This lesson was taught to me while I was doing an anthropological and agricultural study in the far southern corner of Belize. The K'ekchi' Maya are presently making the transition from subsistence farming to cash cropping, and are gradually becoming a part of the Belizean national economy. Those who live deep in the forest, up to two days' walk from the nearest road, raise and sell pigs as a cash crop, while more progressive communities on or near the roads sell a great deal of rice and beans as well as pigs. Almost every K'ekchi' family, wherever they live, keeps pigs.

In line with the Belize Government's desire both to increase domestic pork production and to bring the K'ekchi' more into the mainstream of the national economy, several programs were started which intended to increase the efficiency and productivity of the Indians' pig-rearing. The K'ekchi' were encouraged, by various means including low-cost loans, to build permanent concrete floored pens where the pigs could be kept cleaner and healthier. A nutritionally balanced pig feed was made available, on which the pigs would grow quickly and profitably. lastly, improved varieties of swine from developed countries were imported, varieties which grow faster and to a larger size than the small local breed.

It sounded very good. And it didn't work.

Today, with a very few exceptions, the K'ekchi' still follow their traditional methods. Swine improvement schemes continued, to no avail, even when 'improved' pig varieties were being sold to farmers below their market value. The result is that government officials have become disillusioned or cynical about the desire or the capacity of the Indians to make progress. The K'ekchi' have become equally cynical about the ability of the government to help them out of their impoverishment.

## Pigs and the System

In this case, developers worked with a fundamental misunderstanding of the role of the pig in K'ekchi' life. Let's look at just a few of the ways in which pigs are a part of this system.

The K'ekchi' staple is maize, which is raised by the

common Mesoamerican practice of shifting cultivation. Some 60 other crops, including many tubers, vegetables and fruit trees, are raised among the corn or around the houses. But pigs determine where each crop must be planted, because anything which pigs like to eat must be grown at least 2.5 km from the village. This is because pigs are allowed to roam free each day, and their foraging takes them deep into the forest. Much effort must be expended on building pig-proof fences if a field is within 'pig range' of the village.

Allowing the pigs to roam has benefits as well as disadvantages. Their constant rooting in the ground keeps down the underbush in and around the village, and they are reputed to kill poisonous snakes on sight. Much more important, their foraging reduces their dependence on being fed by their owner.

Pigs are normally fed each night with about 1/2 to 3/4 of a liter of shelled corn. This feeding also attracts them back to the pen where they are locked up for safety during the night. They are also fed any other crops which happen to be in surplus at times during the year. But because they also forage, you can go without feeding your pigs for up to two weeks if you have run out of corn. During times of plenty you can fatten up your pigs, and when corn is short you can let them fend for themselves without huring them.

The pig, then, is essentially a bank . . . the only bank the Indian has. Corn itself is hard to store without spoilage in the humid climate; fed to pigs, the corn is preserved. When cash is needed, a pig can be sold. Pigs are a security against starvation. If crops fail completely, a pig can be sold and food purchased from others or from shops in town.

Pigs have another very special advantage over other cash crops; they are the only one which can walk to market. Pigs can always be sold for a fair price, because national demand outstrips supply. A further special attribute of the pig-rearing economy is that it is the community's only means of disposing of human wastes. If pigs were not allowed to roam freely, latrines would be an absolute necessity or serious health hazards would increase above their present level.

From this description of the role of pigs in the economy, we can picture what kinds of pigs the K'ekchi' select. Their animals are bred for toughness, rapid growth, resistance to disease, and most of all, the ability to tolerate long periods with a marginal self-supplied diet without serious damage to health. One thing the K'ekchi' do not want is a pig which grows to a very large maximum size (which is what pig breed-

ers in developing countries value above all else). There are several economic and social reasons why the K'ekchi' prefer a large number of small pigs over a smaller number of large pigs.

First is the simple fact that keeping a large group of small pigs reduces the farmer's risk. Accident or disease which kills a pig is destroying a proportionately smaller amount of the farmer's investment in meat. Smaller pigs are preferred also because there are no meat storage facilities in the village. If a man slaughters a pig for his own use, he will have to sell or give away most of a large animal because his family can't eat all the meat before it spoils.

Another very good reason for preferring small pigs is that there are numerous ceremonial occasions when a K'ekchi' man is required to slaughter a pig. When building a house, or calling his neighbors to help plant or harvest, the man must kill a pig. If his herd consisted of a few large pigs he would be wiped out by the end of the year.

To summarize, pigs are the most important way the K'ekchi' farmer has of storing the products of his labor, and reducing his risk of starvation. The pigs also take resources which are not usable to man, and make them available.

Changing the System

By looking at pigs as part of the system, it is easy to see why the development projects failed. The new breeds which were introduced had all the wrong characteristics. They had no resistance to local parasites, and so required more rather than less health care. The constant movement from village to village which is part of the K'ekchi social system made the prospect of investing in a concrete pig-pen seem ludicrous, especially when a pen built from traditional materials costs nothing except a few hours of labor. The idea of buying pig feed was equally unattractive – the K'ekchi' want to convert their labor into cash. They are not interested in trying to turn the little money they have into more money.

On a more fundamental level, the pig project would take away the farmer's greatest hedge against risk, his security, and give no security in return. Raising penned pigs on feed for cash is an economically risky business even in the developed world, where banks exist to cushion the farmer from the worst of the insecurity.

This is not to imply that the pig raising system of the K'ekchi' cannot be improved. Very basic (and very low-cost)

veterinary instruction and the provision of a few basic medicines would drastically cut the present high swine mortality. In villages where latrines are available pigs could be communally penned by building a fence around the village; this would keep the pigs from reaching the crops. Several villages have tried this already without any outside initiative.

More to the point, perhaps pigs are not the best possible cash crop for this particular group. Other cash crops may improve their lives more effectively. By studying the entire productive system we learn where and when the labor and resources are available for cash-cropping, so crops can be chosen which do not degrade or impinge upon the functioning subsistence system. We find out what forms of production are going to be appropriate to a people's social structure, which will be the less destructive and therefore the least expensive in the long run.

The most important source in searching for these solutions is the knowledge and experience of the people themselves. They are the ones who live in the system – they know it more intimately than any researcher can. The smallest development projects, those which are initiated without the help of 'developers', seem to be, in the long run, the most successful.

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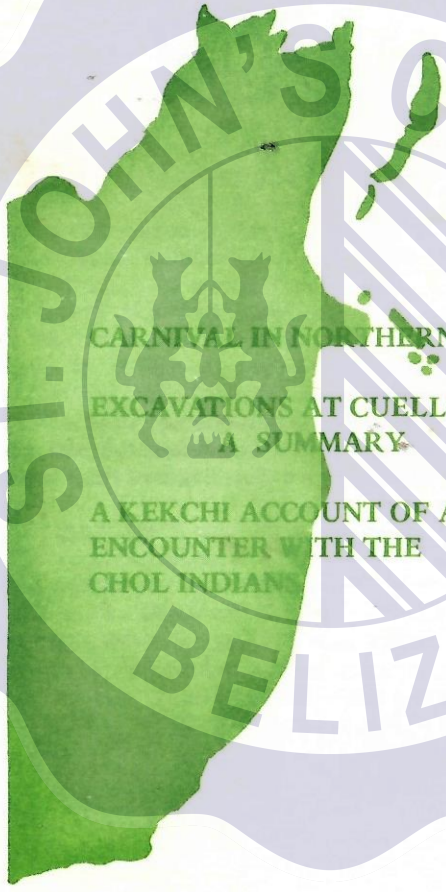

CARNIVAL IN NORTHERN BELIZE

EXCAVATIONS AT CUELLO, 1980: A SUMMARY

A KEKCHI ACCOUNT OF AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE CHOL INDIANS

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JAIME BRICEÑO

# Carnival in Northern Belize

Carnival originated in Europe in the Middle Ages as a boisterous communal celebration. The name "Carnival" probably came from the Latin words "carne vale" or flesh farewell, a name befitting the last days of fleshly unrestraint before Lent. It may have had its source in the Roman Bacchanalia, Lupercalia, or Saturnalia, or in the shipcart pageant for the German Nerthus or Nertha, earth mother and goddess of fertility. Whatever its source, Carnival was in its full glory in Europe by the fourteenth century, a glory which lasted up to the sixteenth century.

The festival itself was identified with the primitive ceremonies for the expulsion of death, winter and demons harmful to the coming crops. Small wonder then that when Spain conquered the New World and introduced Carnival here, it was embraced and adopted by the native peoples of the region. This was especially so for the peoples of Mexico and Central America who already had special dances and rituals associated with the beliefs with which Carnival was identified. What happened in effect was that the celebration of Carnival simply either replaced or absorbed these dances and rituals. The result was a dazzling array of dances: not only moros, diablos and muertes taken over from Spanish Carnival, but above all innumerable native dance survivals and native post-Columban inventions.

Carnival probably came to Belize with the Baymen through

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their favourite Morris dance, but native American Carnival came with the Mestizo and Indian refugees of the War of the Castes in the second half of the nineteenth century. As they settled in Northern Belize, they brought along with them part of their culture in the form of the Carnival fiesta. This celebration continued being a major feature of Mestizo and Indian culture for a century and satisfied important social, religious and economic needs.

Preparing for Carnival

Carnival season climaxed on the last three days before Ash Wednesday. The preparations, however, began weeks in advance. In each village in Northern Belize, the maestro who was often at times the village school-teacher or at least someone held in high regard in the community, would begin preparations at least one month in advance. He brought together his dancers who often represented a cross-section of the local society since they were chosen neither on the basis of age nor sex but simply on their desire to form part of the dance troupe.

In the afternoons or early evenings, after classes were over, practice sessions would be held. This was a convenient time since by now the men would have already come home from the milpa and children and teacher would be free. The maestro would assign a particular verse or portion of a specific song to different individuals. Longer or more complex verses were assigned to those villagers considered brighter. To be able to sing a significant share of a song was a mark of distinction – even now, old heads recall with pride the major role they played in a comparsa[1]. Along with the verses came the dance steps. Usually, everyone would be required to dance in a circle and then perform their dance steps while singing their assigned verse(s) in the center of the circle. This would be rehearsed together and alone whenever the dancers had the opportunity to do so.

At the same time that the dance troupe was practicing, other preparations were also underway. For instance, if la Cinta would be danced, a post of about fifteen feet long with different colored ribbons attached at one end would have to be made or if el Torito was planned, a papier-mache bull which a man could fit around himself had to be constructed. Often these were already made and preserved from previous years, but the important thing to note was that they were all locally made from readily available materials.

The dancers' costumes were not really costumes in the ordinary sense but really good Sunday clothes. The women pre-

ferred shiny satiny skirts topped by white blouses richly embroidered and bedecked with ribbons. They wore a lot of rouge and lipstick and took out their jewelry for the occasion. The men dressed in the standard white outfit – white trousers, white long-sleeved shrits, and a neckerchief preferably red. Some wore rouge and/or outlined their moustaches with charcoal, others dressed as women, demons, priests, bulls, etc., depending on what their role called for. Of course, the ubiquitous sombrero had to be there and it was worn by both men and women, with the women often tying them to their heads with scarves or kerchiefs.

Celebrating Carnival

As stated earlier, Carnival season traditionally began about a month before Ash Wednesday. It was ushered in by the dance "los Masgarados"[2], a dance introduced by the Spaniards and with its origins probably in the Basque country. This dance was more like a procession: a group of men in different disguises would march through the streets of the community at night dragging chains behind them. They were dressed like old men and women, witches, ghosts, demons, etc. Some were also dressed as priests with black cassocks and one man impersonated the devil. This last character played an important role in the dance. He would go about teasing people, especially little children, and only the priest could chase him away. If one recognized him, one was expected to laugh in his face. The purpose of this event was mainly to have some good natured fun, usually at the expense of the terrified children. Parents often demanded good behaviour from their children by threatening them with los Mascarados and the terrified kids readily complied, at least until they learned who the Mascarados really were.

During the other days of Carnival, other comparsas would begin to be performed. These would start about a week before the climax of the season, but they were usually the minor dances or new local productions. On "los dias de Carnival," i.e. the last three days of Carnival, the festival would explode and the dance troupe would take out its productions en masse. Starting on Sunday, the troupe would go through the streets of the community and perform comparsas at individual homes where they would be offered refreshments and, depending on what dance and how many were performed, the maestro would be paid a fee.

The list of the dances performed is endless and I can only give an indication of their number and variety: la Estudiantina[3], Juan Carnaval[4], la Mariposa[5], la Rumba[6], la Samba[7], los Negritos[8], el Torito, Basilio Capa Mojada[9], la

Guaranducha, la Cinta[10], los Chicleros[11], las Pelonas[12], las tres Hermanitas[13], etc. Most of them were Spanish in origin but with native adaptations. La Cinta, for instance, combines Spanish with Maya verses. El Torito, which means "Little Bull," was an acting out of a bullfight with a man representing a bull and playing at bullfight with his companions who would take out their handkerchiefs and tease him (the bull). La Estuddantina relates the story of a band of students travelling from the Spanish town of Farela and trying to make some extra money by performing Carnival dances. Not all were standard dances, however; some were composed locally such as las Pelonas, a locally produced comparsa created to ridicule the short hair style then in vogue in Orange Walk.

At the same time that the Carnival dances were being held, children who were not performing in them were having a different kind of fun. Boys banded together and roamed the streets trying to catch any girl in order to "paint" her. Their arsenal of weapons was diversified and included among other things talcum powder, shoe polish, eggs and flour. The girls also banded together both for protection and revenge, often catching an unwary boy and administering a dose of their medicine. They also were armed, but with sticks to fend off the boys' attacks. Although some nasty little scrapes often broke out, this painting and smearing was generally taken as fun on both sides.

On the last day of Carnival, the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, "el baile de Juan Carnaval" was held. Juan Carnaval, or Juancito as he was fondly called, was the character representing Carnival. He was made by stuffing a pair of trousers and shirt with dry banana leaves. His head was an empty calabash with his eyes, nose and ears painted on. With a sombrero on his head, he was intended to resemble a man. At dusk, around six p.m. everyone who partook in some way or the other in the Carnival celebrations would set off in procession form to an open spot where Juancito was to be burned. Everyone was expected to attend, for it was said that only so could one be cleansed of one's Carnival "sins." On the way, the group would stop at street corners to read Juancito's last will and testament. This was usually made up of the community's wealthy members' goods and they were shared out to the local poor. Accompanying Juan Carnaval was "la viuda," his widow, played by a man dressed in black as a woman. She was usually pregnant and kept up an incessant wailing and bawling on behalf of her husband. When the group finally reached the pyre two hours later, Juan Carnaval would be burnt while all the people danced around the bonfire singing the song of Juan Carnaval. With the burning of Juan Carnaval, Carnival officially came to an end and the people then went home.

## Carnival's Functions in Northern Belize

So far we have discussed the origins, preparations and celebration of Carnival. In doing so we have touched lightly on the role Carnival played in Belizean Mestizo society. It is time now for us to examine more deeply the functions of Carnival as a social institution. Basically, it was a recreational event but its other functions were important enough that they merit individual attention.

Carnival, as one should have surmised from the preceding, was a time of fun and enjoyment. It was the last fling before Lent, a period of forty days during which no form of entertainment could be held and which in those days was religiously observed. Consequently, people put in all their efforts at making Carnival a truly enjoyable period which is attested to by the many dances, fiestas, parties, etc., held at this time.

People did not celebrate Carnival simply to have fun (a reason that should suffice for most people) but also to keep alive their culture and maintain a sense of continuity with the past. Individuals have always been anxious to retain some sort of link with their forefathers; Carnival provided this link. Moreover, since Carnival involved the entire community in a communal festival, it helped keep alive a spirit of oneness, of togetherness in the community and in Northern Belize as a whole. This was achieved through the socializing, dancing, partying, etc., that took place during the festival. Since the justification of Carnival was partly religious, Carnival inevitably also had a religious overtone. By making people observe common traditions of the Catholic Church, it strengthened the Church's hold on the locals. Besides religion, Carnival also involved economics. Dance troupes all collected money for dancing at particular homes. This money was used to provide a party for the performers and the remainder was shared among the performers according to the contribution made by each. As a result, dancers made a little extra cash.

The last function of Carnival we shall deal with is very interesting. More than a recreational, cultural, religious and economic event, Carnival was also a kind of vehicle of social protest. In redistributing the wealth of rich individuals to the poor as part of Juan Carnaval's inheritance, people were simply expressing their views of how things should be. In composing new presentations, the songs sung very often ridiculed and admonished a person or group for breaking local customs. The dance las Pelonas, in which the then in vogue style of short hair for women is ridiculed, is typical of this. The transgression: having short hair; long hair was and continues to be treasured in Mestizo society. Unmarried women who had the misfortune of getting pregnant were also the butt of Carnival

jokes, with young boys often dressing up to resemble them and songs composed to ridicule their story. In this manner, the community protested any action that it found unfavourable or distasteful.

Decline (and Resurgence?) of Carnival

Carnival as a major component of Mestizo life in Northern Belize has long declined and has now been banished to cultural limbo. Most people are aware of what Carnival is, yet few make efforts to revive it. How did this come about, how was a once dynamic social institution transformed into a museum piece? The answer can be delivered in one word – modernization.

With modernization came the relaxation of religious restrictions. Lent was no longer strictly observed. Parties, dances and fiestas could now be and were now being held during Lent. As a result, there was no urgent need to have a last fling before Lent. With modernization also came the sugar industry and prosperity. The sugar industry required different working hours. Carnival falls during the cane season, a period of intense activity that leaves one no time to spend in the preparation and celebration of the festival. The sugar industry also generated money that opened new avenues of recreation to the populace. Cinemas, restaurants, clubs, dance halls, discos, etc., were opened to entertain Northern Belize. Readily available vehicles quickly transported one to Belize City or Chetumal. Thus, with its main function usurped by other activities and with most people busy at work, Carnival simply wilted away, disappearing almost entirely from Northern Belize and existing here and there only in small isolated villages.

While Carnival has ceased to be a recreational high-light of the year, there remains one of its functions that needs to be urgently satisfied – the need to preserve a sense of continuity with one's forefathers, or, to put it another way, cultural identification. With the waning of Carnival, Mestizo culture in Northern Belize has lost much of its color and vivacity. As a result, children are growing up without an appreciation of their cultural uniqueness and of the contribution they should be making to our national culture. This is a pressing need that ought to be met as quickly as possible. There are signs, however, that people are becoming aware of this problem and are trying to find ways to solve it. Recently, in both Corozal and Orange Walk, efforts were made to stage some of the Carnival dances. While the end result fell far from what Carnival was in its heyday, at leastthere is something to show for a start.

What both districts need, however is a committee of concerned and able citizens to be set up to direct cultural affairs in general with Carnival as one of its chief targets for resuscitation. This committee would be in charge of organizing and staging Carnival festivals. Presently, there are still alive many people who remember the dances, songs, and how the festival was celebrated. Thus, the committee should find a plethora of information on the subject. Funding could come from both the public and private sectors or the committee could undertake to raise its own funds. On a more basic level, people should be made more aware of their culture. The committee should be a prime mover behind this effort, but schools should also play a major part. Both primary and secondary schools should include the teaching of culture as a part of their curricula and organize cultural activities. Only when people are fully informed and completely involved will Carnival make a comeback in Northern Belize and only when this happens can we proceed to the more difficult task of forging a national culture.

## Glossary

1. comparsa — chorus, and by extension the entire act.
2. los Mascarados — the masked ones.
3. la Estudiantina — the group of students.
4. Juan Carnaval — literally, John Carnival; the straw man who represented Carnival and whose burning signified the end of Carnival.
5. la Mariposa — the butterfly.
6. la Rumba — the Rumba.
7. la Samba — the Samba.
8. los Negritos — the little black ones.
9. Basilio Capa Mojada — a name.
10. la Cinta — literally, the ribbon; but more accurately the Maypole.
11. los chicleros — the chicleros.
12. las Pelonas — the short-haired or bald ones.
13. las tres hermanitas — the three little sisters.

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# Excavations at Cuello, 1980: A summary

The third and final season of the Cuello Project from January-March 1980 was again funded principally by the National Geographic Society, with additional generous assistance from the British Museum and Rutgers University, and with unstinted logistic support from the Cuello Brothers and B.S.I.

Although excavation covered a much smaller area than the 3000m$^2$ opened up in 1978-79, a settlement pattern survey and test excavations broadened our view beyond the limits of Platform 34, where most work has until now been concentrated. Three small excavations were carried out to clear up minor points remaining from 1979, and two major areas each of 100m$^2$ were excavated by area-stripping without balks.

The three minor probes were: (1) the removal of a burial (Feature 110), dug through the old land surface into bedrock, lying partly in grid 35/35 and partly in 40/35. A supine mature female inhumation without grave goods, sealed by the early Swasey phase plaster surface (199), the burial is currently the earliest known at Cuello.

(2) The completion of work on Feature 87, a stone-lined shaft surrounded by a catchment floor, identified by E. Wyllys Andrews V in 1979 as a Puuc-type cistern chultun. Excavation showed that the shaft led to a double chamber originally designed for food storage, with sills to prevent water from entering, and later converted to a cistern. An adjacent chultun was linked by a hole through one chamber wall. The fill of the chambers, dating to the final third of the Late Formative,

ca. A.D. 100, was rich in animal and plant remains, the latter including complete cacao beans, cotton, and many corn kernels and cob fragments. Debris from a potter's workshop was also recovered, including levigated unfired clay, burnt clay, and a molde for shaping the bases of large vessels; innovative ceramics included part of a trichrome vase fired in red, brown and black. The problem of what was stored in chultunes has been much discussed: we have begun a year's experiment (to be completed in February 1981) with root, tree and seed crops, including ramon and smoked maize, to see what would have best survived at Cuello.

(3) Completion of work on the center trench in the Pyramid, Structure 35. The 1979 excavation by Carl Beetz had left open the possibility of a burial under the stair of the Terminal Formative building: the layers in question were found to be fill overlying demolished earlier frontages, a pattern of "cut-and-fill" common at Cuello. At the rear of the pyramid the fan-shapped terrances of the Terminal Formative building were found to have been ripped out, and the overall pattern of deliberate damage to the structure was ascertained. The final structural additions to the pyramid's Early Calssic phase were established (with advice from David M. Pendergast) as dating to ca. A.D. 600-700, and the final observed event in its history remains the deposition of a Postclassic effigy incensario ca. A.D. 1300.

Area Excavations

The two 100m$^2$ areas excavated lay north and south of the single 100m 2 dug in 1976 and 1979. By the end of the 1980 season the south area was dug to the old land surface and in part to bedrock, the north only to the base of the Late Formative deposits, ca. 400 B.C., because of the plethora of buildings and burials encountered there.

North Area (Supervised by Michael Davenport). Just below the surface the remains of an apsidal single-course wall were found; the apse pointed south, and within, on its axis, was a crypt with a crouched burial. The accompanying basal-flange bowl dated to the Terminal Formative or initial Early Classic. The building lay parallel to and just east of the similar Feature 19 excavated in 1978, which had a grave contining a Terminal Formative 'chocolate pot.' The northern ends of both buildings had been eroded away.

North and east of the apsidal building a thick layer of laminated marl fill included a number of pits lined with sherds, often several layers thick, with marks of burning. Adjacent to one was a burnt slab protected by two vertical

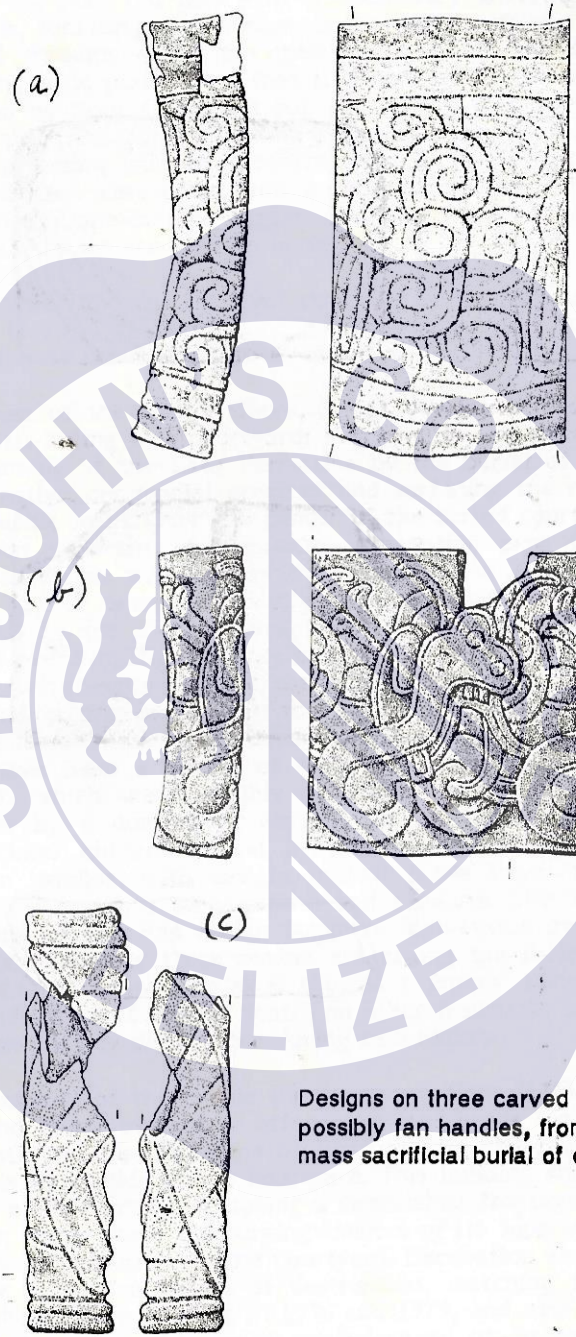
slabs from the prevailing southeasterly wind. The precise function, culinary or ceremonial, of these "firepits" remains unknown, but they are presumably related to the similar pits with clay, stone and pottery vessel linings found elsewhere at Cuello from Early Formative times onwards.

Lower in the marl, in a band across the north part of the area, was a series of cylindrical pits containing seated burials. Some skeletons, covered by large vessels, were in good condition, and one had an unhealed puncture through the skull behind the right ear. One burial was double, another kneeling: all were of Late Formative date. A report on the individuals, one of the largest groups of Formative period Maya remains known, is being prepared by Professor Frank P. Saul and associates.

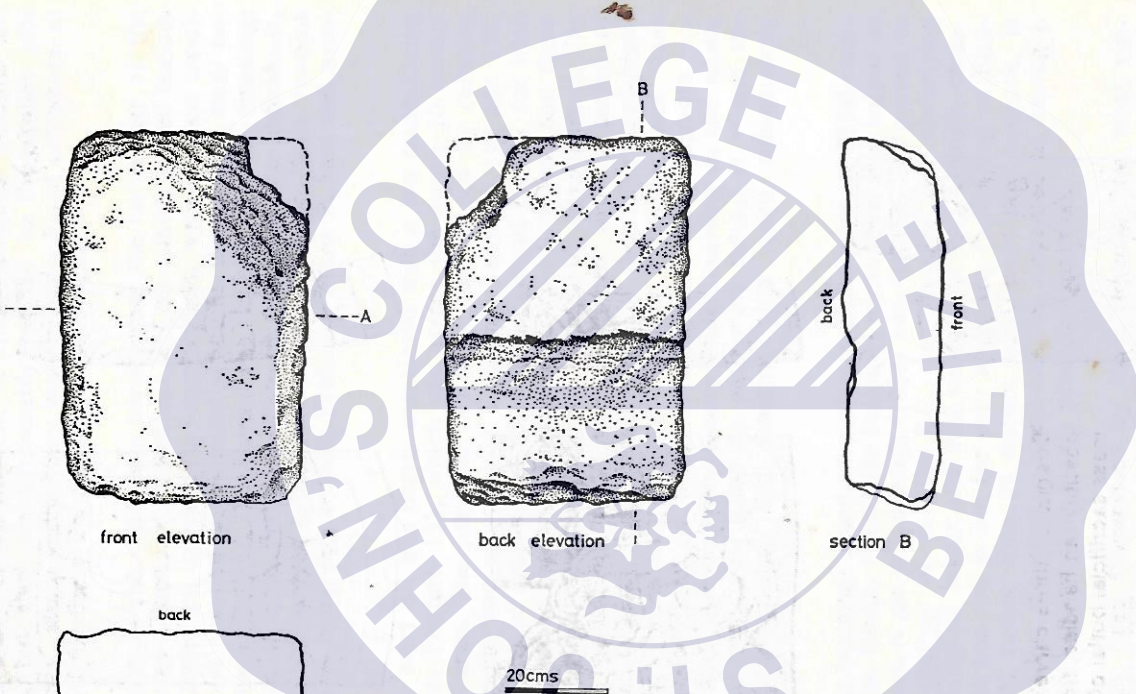
The marl fill was partly associated with a low south-facing platform Feature 151, which ran across the entire 10 meters of the area. The platform had been constructed by refacing and linking two sub-circular buildings, Features 149 and 150, at the end of a long and complex structural history for both which spanned the Late Formative. Each of the two had three major periods of rebuilding, not necessarily simultaneous. The earliest period of F.150 was associated with a series of extended burials lying parallel and in the same semi-prone position. The stratigraphy of F.150 in particular was made more complicated by the contrasting underlying deposits – a buried Middle Formative masonry walled building on the south, and the open area filled up with marl behind it – and the differential filling and flooring that were subsequently necessary.

Both buildings stood on a plaster floor (context 1888) overlying the Middle Formative building: excavation was halted at this level. A pit dug through (1888) was cleared, and proved to be a chultun of ca. 400 B.C. dug through the underlying archaeological levels and into bedrock. It had a single chamber, and was not in use for very long; why it was dug on Platform 34, rather than 20 meters west direct into bedrock, is unknown but the chultun itself must be suspected of having a ceremonial rather than purely practical function.

South Area (Supervised by Mark Horton). The final surviving floor of the Terminal Formative, floor (5), was cleared, together with the southern half of the small platform Feature 4, demolished at the end of the Formative. Several successive floors (1137, 1130, 5) were associated with F.4; projecting through the earlier two, but covered by (5), was a battered rock situated by the southsest angle of F.4. Excavation showed it to be a slumped stela, datable on stratigraphic




Designs on three carved bones, possibly fan handles, from the mass sacrificial burial of ca. 400 B.C.




Stela 1, Cuello: elevations and profiles. ca. A.D. 100.

grounds to ca. A.D. 100 and with a dedicatory offering of three vessels, including a trichrome and a parrot effigy. The floor (1152) through which the stela pit was cut and that (1140) sealing it in place show that it antedates F.4 by some time. Sealed by floor (1139) but cut into (1140), thus slightly later than the stela but preceeding F.4, was a double burial F.128. Two skeletons lounged in conical pits, facing west; over the thighs of each were bones from another dismembered individual. A fine plano-convex dagger and long obsidian blade were associated with the eastern burial.

At the lower and earlier level than the stela, associated with floor (1179), an offering of deer jawbones was found (F.140), similar to one found just to the north in 1979.

The lowest of the plaster floors, (1316), overlay a massive rubble deposit filling in a courtyard: Platform 34 was created at the beginning of the Late Formative by the burial of the Middle Formative ceremonial precinct and surfacing the ruins and their rubble infill. Over the center of the buried court, in the northeast quadrant of the south excavation area (grid 25/35), a depression was left in the rubble, some 6 meters across and half a meter deep. Although the skeletal remains are shattered by the unequal movement of the rubble and the pressure of overlying floors, we can say with some certainty that more than twenty persons are represented. Some were buried entire, sitting or lying in the depression, while others were dismembered and pieces deposited. One group of bones seems to have been a bundle of excarnate limb bones. The mass burial, which was probably sacrificial in nature, was accompanied by a number of vessels, all of a transitional Mamon-Chicanel character, and by six carved bone tubes, perhaps fan handles, with designs including the Maya "Pop" interlaced mat motif, a serpentiform and a volute. The 'lordship' meaning of the Pop design suggests high-status owners for the tubes; whether those owners are among the skeletons found we do not know. One skull showed a frontal unhealed puncture indicative of violent death; no other traumatic injuries were immediately discernable during excavation.

After removal of the rubble the courtyard floor (175) was exposed, and found to have an offering of jade beads set into it, apparently on the centerline of Feature 200, the building flanking the south side of the courtyard. This building showed clear signs of destruction, including a demolished frontage and long scorch marks shere the burning timbers of its superstructure had fallen forward into the courtyard. Excavation showed two Middle Formative phases of destruction, matching those noted on the western building in 1976 and 1979, and also that F.200 had used as a core the truncated stump of an earlier

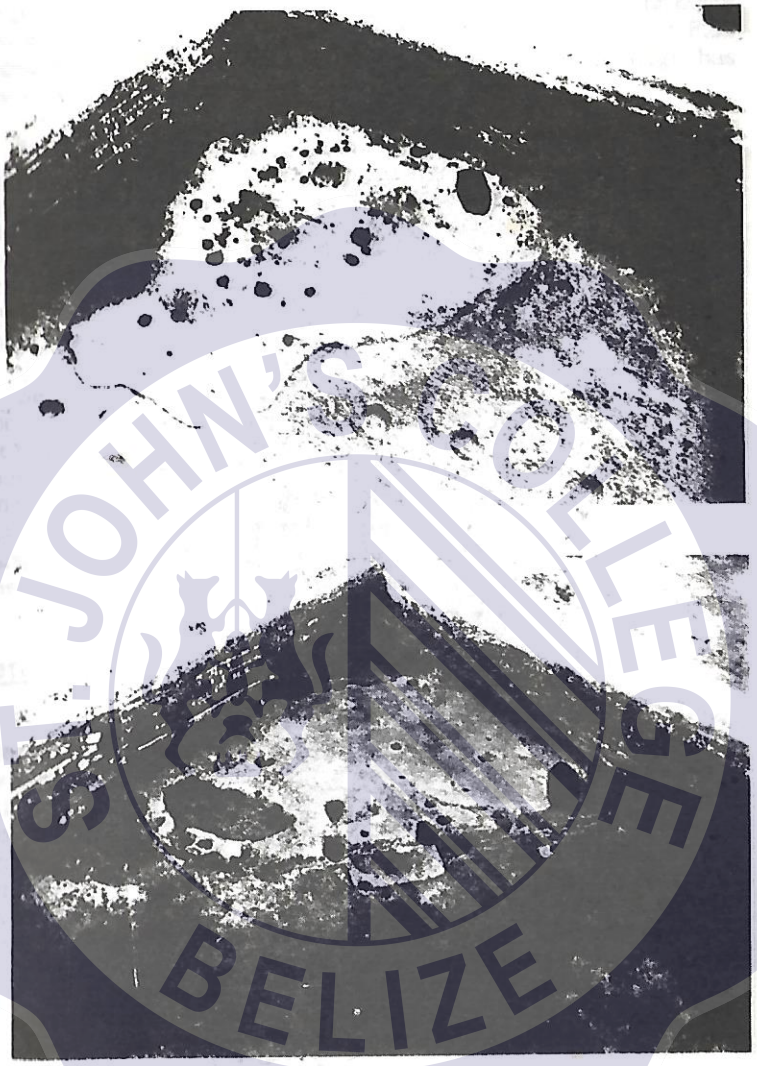
building, Feature 220. The front of F.220 had stood further north, and in enlarging the courtyard southwards it had been demolished and the floor extended over its destruction surface. The stump had then been refaced to create F.200. A burial truncated by the demolition attested to this; its terminal Early Formative vessel gave a terminus ante quem for the building of F.220 and a terminus post quem for that of F.200. It also contained a small blue pendant of possible Olmec area origin; the date, ca. 1000 B.C., is compatible with this.

A slightly earlier grave also dug into F.220, and also damaged by its demolition, contained a blue jade bead, four vessels of late Swasey complex date (Tiger Buff Group) and a whistle made of the same fabric and with similar decoration. It was in the form of a bird and had four stops, producing the first five notes of the tonic scale, do-re-mi-fa-so.

Enough remained of the base of the frontage of F.220 for its dimensions to be reconstructed as 11.5m long, at least 6m wide and 1m high. Each of the six successive internal refloorings was penetrated by post holes, but no plan could be inferred from the fragmentary floor area remaining.

Burried by F.220 was the slightly smaller F.250, an oval ended structure 0.30m high on almost the same alignment and centerline as F.220. All but the tips of the apsidal ends were in the excavated area, and the major postholes showed a superstructure following the line of the substructure in plan, as with modern Yucatecan houses. Three or perhaps four phases of entrace were detected, the last being a peculiar T-shaped ramp sloping slightly down into the building. The building itself, with four periods of alteration, measured 8m by 4m in plan and is one of the most complete Early Formative buildings so far known. Together with the coeval structure on the west side of the courtyard, and the presumed northern structure (the front removed in the Middle Formative, the remainder awaiting excavation in grid 40/35), this is the earliest courtyard layout known at Cuello. The eastern side of the courtyard lies outside the area of past or potential future excavation, and the existence of structures there must remain moot.

Partly below F.250 was the earliest construction so far found at Cuello, Feature 262, a subcircular plaster floor set on the old land surface, penetrated by several phases of post holes and with an inset basin lined with burnt clay. Abutting F.262 to the north was the much eroded south end of Feature 82, which at its northern end (excavated in 1976 and 1979) had a semicircular end and several lines of post holes. Whether a small circular structure stood there, or whether there was a



(Top): Feature 262, a building of ca. 1800 B.C.
(Bottom): Feature 250, a building of ca. 1600 B.C. overlying F.262.

Reconstruction of the Late Formative building Feature 149, showing three phases spanning the period ca. 200 B.C. – A.D. 200.

larger building whose southern post holes have curiously eroded or escaped notice, is uncertain. Whether F.262 and F.82 faced east on to a courtyard is also unknown: not enough has been excavated.

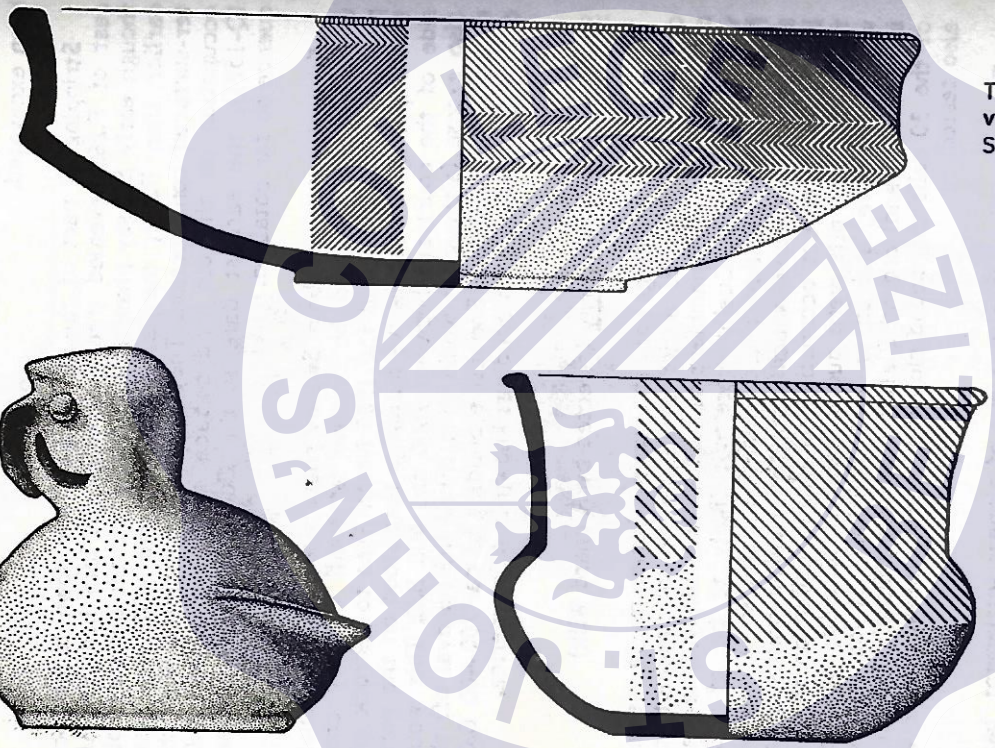
Stripping of part of the old land surface down to bedrock east of F.262 revealed three postholes cut into bedrock. Although early Swasey phase in date, they are not demonstrably earlier than F.262; they are not associated with any plaster-surfaced construction. They could be associated with the occupation on the old land surface dated to 1950-65 B.C. (Q-1571), the earliest date in the Cuello stratigraphic sequence so far obtained.

Several questions about Swasey phase site planning remain unresolved: many could be resolved at small cost by completing the excavation of the 1980 North Area to bedrock and thus exposing the successive buildings that stood on the north side of the courtyard between 1800 and 400 B.C. This would also expose (although it would then entail the removal of) the masonry-walled Middle Formative building of ca. 700-400 B.C., one of the earliest such buildings known in Mesoamerica.

Settlement Pattern Survey (directed by Richard Wilk)

Since the buildings of and under Platform 34 seemed clearly to be part of a Formative ceremonial precinct, the existence of a circumambient settlement was likely. The many visible mounds at Cuello were not likely to be of Early Formative, or possibly even Formative date, so a sampling strategy was evolved which examined random points in the landscape to detect occupation no longer visible on the surface. Two test pits were dug in each of 30 cells; each cell was 50m square, and an area of 0.908km$^2$ (1 km without inaccessible land) around Platform 34 was thus divided. In 21 of the 30 cells the mound closest to the northeast corner was also tested.

The controlling model was one of pioneer settlement, based by Wilk on his fieldwork among the Kekchi in southern Belize: although buildings are perishable and the chances of hitting architectural remains are low, the "toss zone" of trash around each house makes the chance of detecting occupation material much higher, and statistically predictable. Thus, if the Swasey Phase community consisted of 25 households within the designated area, the chances of hitting refuse were .4875; if 50 households, .739; any erosion and recycling of deposits in later fill would of course modify these figures.



Three Late Formative vessels from the Stela 1 cache.

Overall results showed that mounds, the result of later building, occupied preferred locations where a high proportion of Swasey Phase trash was encountered; that population had remained fairly stable, in the order of 55-60 households, through the Early and Middle Formative, and had risen rapidly in the Late Formative. This accords with the increase in constructional activity on Platform 34, with the pattern of settlement and site growth elsewhere in northern Belize, and with a general increase in population size, community size and social complexity in the Maya Lowlands at this time.

Ecological Sampling (directed by Charles Miksicek)

The flotation program continued in 1980: the early and late Late Formative chultunes formed excellent sealed short-term units of trash giving a range of plants in use coevally; the identification of cacao (as complete beans) and cotton were especially important, and there was a welcome increase in the sample of corn cob and kernel fragments for this period. A paper on the corn was due for publication in Nature in late 1980, and another on the environmental archaeology program at Cuello has been submitted to the Journal of Field Archaeology.

Publication

A summary of the 1980 season, serving as an interim report, has been published in Antiquity, 54, 176-190, and an article is in press with National Geographic Magazine. A symposium was held at the Society for American Archaeology Annual Meeting in Philadelphia at the end of April 1980 when preliminary papers on the 1980 excavations were presented.

**

The authors of this brief preliminary report, the senior field staff of the 1980 Cuello Project, would like to acknowledge the help and hard work of the others - the laboratory staff, the students and the volunteers. Crew members came from Belize, Japan, France, New Zealand and Britain as well as the USA, and universities involved included Rutgers, Cambridge, San Francisco State, Arizona, Texas, California-Berkeley, California-Santa Cruz, and the York Archaeological Trust.

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Copies of the Cuello Project 1978 Interim Report (100pp, plus

54pp illustrations) are still available at $6.00 from the Archaeology Program, Douglass College, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ 08903, USA.

JON SCHACKT

# A Kekchi Account of an Encounter with the Chol Indians

Among the original, but now extinct, inhabitants of Belize were the Chol Indians. By the time of the conquest they inhabited an area roughly the same as that earlier covered by the so-called "Old Maya Empire," that is, the area where Maya civilization came into its fullest bloom in the Classic Period (ca. 400 A.D. - 800 A.D.). This fact has led to the belief (suggested by Thompson and others) that the Chol might have been direct descendants of the people that once built Tikal, Altun Ha, Lubaantun and other ceremonial centers of the area.

In early colonial times, Southern Belize and adjacent parts of Guatemala were inhabited by the people who came to be known as the Manche Chol. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Chol remained unconquered and resisted attempts made by the Spanish to subdue them to their rule and taxation. Dominican friars tried several times, especially in the seventeenth century, to gather the Chols in towns where they could be converted to Christianity. The reluctant Chols would burn their towns and retreat into the forest. During that century the onset of smallpox and other diseases brought by the white man probably killed off a greater part of the original population. Those that survived were rounded up in 1697 when the Spanish authorities sent an army to subdue the until-then independent Itzas of Lake Peten. The Chols were then transported to the Guatemalan highlands and to the area around Palenque in Mexico, where a

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smaller Chol-speaking population still lives.

The Maya Indians living in Southern Belize today are either of Mopan or Kekchi stock. These groups settled in the region during the latter part of the nineteenth century and the Kekchi have continually been drifting in from Guatemala during the present century. From their original homeland around Coban in Alta Verapaz, the Kekchi have expanded considerably in post-conquest times. According to Sapper and Thompson, it is probable that the Kekchi intermingled and mixed with the Chol in the regions of Lanquin and Cahabon during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. At least some trade-relationships existed and Chol Indians used to visit Cahabon for the fiestas [Sapper 1897; Thompson 1938]. Some words now incorporated in the Kekchi language are surely of Chol origin [Thompson 1938]. The notion of "the Chol Cuink" (i.e., the Chol man) as we meet him in Kekchi folklore was most surely formed by the nature of the relationship established between the two ethnic groups in the Cahabon region in those days.

The Chol have gone, but the memory about them lingers on in Kekchi folklore. Only a few years back the traditional "Chol Cuink"-dance was performed in Crique Sarco and stories about the "Chol Cuink" will still be told during long watch-nights or on other occasions. In myth the Chols have acquired their distinct characteristic qualities, probably more or less based on some historical truths [see Thompson, 1938]. They are generally believed to be rather "savage," being referred to by some even as animals. They are of small stature and will most often appear naked. They are usually hostile, and they have a considerable taste for human flesh. They are clever magicians and master a number of magical practices. At will they can transform themselves into jaguars, birds or other animals. Their ways of living are said to be rather meagre, but they are thought of as being rich in cacao.

They are further associated with the Maya ruins and any old potsherd or other old artifact found. Most often they will then naturally be thought of as to have been living in a distant past, but sometimes they are said to still be living in distant parts of the forests or in caves in the hills. As narrated in the story below, their ways and appearance are generally of a strange or alien kind, but as the narrator of the story explicitly states, "In some respects they made their living just as the Kekchis do today." Mr Santiago Ikal of Dolores village was kind to let me record the following story.

The Visit to the village of the "Chol Cuink"

Long time ago, the Chol Cuink (the Chol people) were

living just as we live now. They were living in the hills. They made their milpas the same way we make our milpas today. That is how one man saw them when he visited their village long time ago.

The man was led there by a crowd of birds he found close to his milpa. When he saw those birds, he decided that he wanted to catch them. He went after them, but could not catch any. The birds flew far off into the deep forest and the man followed. He did not realise how far he was going. Suddenly he came upon a little village. "Where am I now," he asked himself as he saw it was not his own village. There was one house with a lot of cacao-trees around it. He did not know the place, but decided to go up to the house. "Good evening," he called out. "Come in and have a seat," the owner of the house replied. "Thank you," the man said. The owner of the house asked him where he came from and what he wanted. "I only came here because I got lost," the man said. The owner of the house wanted to know who had brought him there. "Nobody, only a crowd of birds brought me here. I went after them," the man answered. "Oh, were those the ones that made you come," the owner said. He continued: "Well, you can stay here and spend the night in my house. You must not go with those others, because they will kill you, cook you with hot peppers and eat you. But in our family we never do such things." The Chol Cuink hated each other and could not cooperate among themselves – just as is the matter with us here today.

The man asked the owner if it really was true that the other people in that village were wicked. "Yes, I am telling you the truth," the other man assured him. He gave him food and roasted him one green ear of corn to eat. The corn of the Chol Cuink was very small, but they urged him to eat the green corn. The man accepted what he was offered.

The Chol Cuink did not have any clothes. They were almost naked. They only had one small piece of cloth to cover themselves. That was the only clothing they had and they were surrounded by flies that followed them wherever they walked. All this made the man feel uneasy. He asked himself: "How come this should happen to me?"

Next morning the Chol Cuink asked him if he wanted to go back home again. The man said that he wanted to go. The other man warned him again: "The only thing I want to tell you is that you must not go with those other people. They will cook you with hot peppers and eat you. They are grinding pepper in the next house and they have started to make corn cakes. They were glad when they saw they could make you

come after them.

A little child came over from the next house and said: "My father would like to see you in our house." The man told the little boy that he would come, but the owner of the house told him again not to go, because they would surely eat him. He told him that he should rather send his little son along with him so that the boy could show him the road back where he came from. So the man decided that it would be best for him to come home. The owner of the house told his son to go along with him and show him the way. He told the boy to take the man as far as the high forest. The little boy said "Yes," and went along with the man.

When they reached the high forest, the little boy told the man that he could not take him further. There was a big hollow tree-trunk. The boy told the man to walk all the way through that trunk till he reached the other end. The man said "Yes," went through the trunk and came out on the opposite end. Then he saw that he was back in his own village again.

This is how that man came to see that the Chol Cuink made their living in the same way as we do today. So I heard this story from my old grandfather, and I am telling it the same way he told me.

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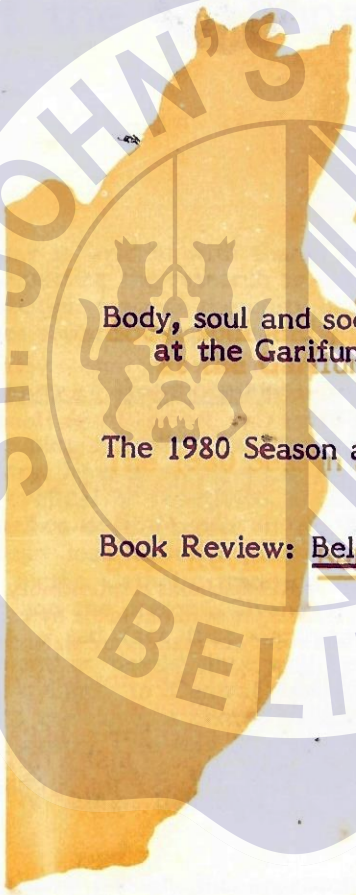

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BYRON FOSTER

# Body, soul and social structure at the Garifuna dugu

This essay is written with thanks to the Belizean government for permitting the research to take place and is intended as a contribution towards the unity of the Belizean people as Belize moves towards independence.[1]

## Dugu: A History of Misconceptions

Many peoples of the world place great significance upon their ancestry. Time is perceived in various ways and where it is seen as cyclical or repetitive, ancestors may be felt to be the very source of the power of the living. Some peoples of the Caribbean look towards their African ancestors in this way whilst in the Catholic tradition Jesus is at once present in the past and the present. Given this unity of religious ideology, it is a sad fact that Garifuna ancestors have been termed 'demons' or 'devils' since well before the transportation of the Black Carib to Central America in 1797. The references are to the dugu, a central feature of the Garifuna approach to ancestry. One way of trying to place dugu in proper perspective is to place the ceremony within the range of experience of other Belizeans by viewing it as 'thanksgiving'.[2]

While laudable enough, this approach leaves the complexity of the symbolic form and content of dugu unexplained, and thus a mystery open to further misrepresentation. Moreover,

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while the job of an anthropologist is to explain, the work of ethnographers concerning Garinagou has tended to be merely descriptive (e.g., Taylor 1951, Conzemius 1928) or the explanation has been naively functionalist (e.g., Kerns 1976). In another instance an ethnographer has unjustifiably transposed conclusions deriving from an alien mode of production onto the Garifuna social formation (Solien 1959). All in all, then, anthropologists have done little to stem the tide of prejudice, for as yet we have no real analysis of the dugu nor of other important aspects of Garifuna culture such as the bathing ceremony (amuyadahani, which concerns the defilement of the body in the grave) or the couvade (which concerns the generative power of males in the process of reproduction).

My purpose here, then, is to give a brief account of the meaning of the dugu as this crystallized through analysis of its structure (i.e., primarily its spatial-cosmological organization) and analogical modes (i.e., action upon objects whose meaning derives from a perceived similarity with other objects) in combination with the exegesis of specialists and of the priestesses (buiainu) themselves.

## The Composition of Body and Soul

An ancestor becomes an ancestor at death. If he is a Garifuna, his body is generally committed to the earth – from which, as Garinagou state, it derives – by a priest of the Catholic faith. By the grave, the priest may stress two points: first, the body is returning to the earth from which it was made; second, that Christ will raise up that body: '. . we commit his body to the earth from which it was made. Christ was the first to rise from the dead, and we know that he will raise up our mortal bodies to be like his in glory.' [3] Attitudes to the dead body are ambivalent. Experience tells us that the body will decay in the ground and belief (Garifuna among many other systems) asserts that soul/spirit is associated with the ethereal sectors of the universe – air or sky. But ritual practice treats the physical and spiritual needs of the dead as inseperable. For while it is the departed soul which requires purification at the bathing ceremony which precedes dugu in the ritual sequence for the dead, the rite focusses on the physical requirements of the dead: the white liquid cassava used in the bathing represents our flesh.

## The Treatment of Body and Soul at Dugu

The precise relation between body and soul, then, is debatable according to context. By contrast, rituals make assertions and effect transformations: rituals 'change the world.' Dugu is no exception: it effects a transfer of the ancestors from their

dangerous association with the earth and the grave to the proper spirit-milieu – the air.

The first point to note here is that, in the context of dugu, the Garifuna language has two words for the ancestral dead: ahari and gubida.

Garinagou say, and anthropologists have mistakenly followed the ideology unquestioningly here, that the two words represent the same concept. It is clear, however, from differing actual usages and from the following structural analysis, that very different associations adhere to one or other of these terms but not to both.

The ahari is the ancestral soul in the form of a bird or butterfly: that is, the ahari is associated with creatures of the air, and may protect a living descendent. Gubida, by contrast, has negative connotations: as gubida, the ancestors are explicitly associated with the earth and death itself.

Now, the essential link between the gubida, the grave and the dugu ceremony is the mud floor of the ancestor-house in which the dugu is performed. The mud formerly contained the 'heart' of the dugu[4]: the key to understanding the dugu is the fact, as the old people remember, that the heart was made of mud, located in the centre of the ancestor-house, and shaped like a coffin (kai tigaburi gahun).

The main dugu dance – the mali – still focusses on the centre of the hall as if it still contained the 'heart,' or model coffin (while the heart is now in the priestess's sanctuary). Once this is realized, the meaning of dugu emerges: the actions of the priestess and the drummers at the centre of the hall during the mali dance transfer the ancestors from below ground to above ground. The dangerous association between the ancestors as gubida and the grave is neutralized.

The action is as follows: as the gubida are cooled by the dancers' fans waved close to the ground, the priestess's rattles and the heart-drum are lowered to the ground at the centre of the ancestor-house and then quickly raised. This action is explicitly intended to raise the gubida from the earth which, as we have seen, is associated with the corruption of the grave. The gubida are thus raised to the realm of the ahari above ground.

The meaning begins, then, with the analogy between the mud floor of the ancestor-house and the grave, just as a model grave is dug at the bathing ceremony and a model coffin constructed to drive away the spirit-double at the

ninth-night wake. The notion of analogical action in ritual has been current at least since Mauss (1972:21). The priestess's use of the rattles may also be understood in this way, for the rattle is itself an alalogue for the human body, with the calabash as the head. Hence the priestess may throw the rattle such that it stands, head upright, in order to evoke a similar response from a woman too heavily entranced and fallen in the death direction (head to the west/sunset)[5]. The rattles draw the gubida from the ground. Drumming explicitly represents life and, through the term 'heart-drum,' the heart-beat itself. Co-ordinated with the movement of the rattles, the drumming is a signal intended to separate the gubida from the fate of the flesh in the grave.

This is not necromancy or obeah, for the dead are not utilized as a means of harming the living: quite the opposite, for the whole point of dugu is to placate the ancestors, who are jealous of the living, in order to enable the living to exist in peace, unmolested by the dead. As I have suggested above, dugu has distinct similarities with the Catholic burial rite, first because as the priest recites the passage quoted ('he will raise up our mortal bodies') he gestures upwards with his hand, an action parallel to that performed by the priestess with her rattles. Secondly, the idea of cycling through the earth is central to both systems: if the earth, containing the mortal remains of our ancestors, is the stuff from which our bodies are made, then we are all in this sense composed of ancestral material.

So far, then, we have concentrated on the vertical plane: the movement of the spirit-body from below to above ground. To conclude the comments concerning vertical movements, we should note that the priestess's spirit-helpers are also present at mali in order for the priestess to effect the transfer of the gubida from the ground: the spirit-helpers descend into the ancestor-house. The priestess mediates, therefore, between the ascending gubida and the descending spirit-helpers.

Moving on now to the horizontal plane: as at a feast for the living, so those ancestors being placated at dugu also invite their friends and relatives. In the journey of these latter ancestors (along the horizontal plane) history and myth become merged. Historically, Garifuna ancestors travelled from St Vincent – i.e., from the east – to Central America. Mythically (the spatial relation between this world and Sairi, the afterworld) the ancestors dwell in the west, the land of the setting sun.

Dealing with the mythological cosmos first: the main axis is the transition from life-death as represented by the journey

of the sun from east-west. Life is associated with the rising sun, for Garinagou sleep with heads to the east. Death is associated with the setting sun, for the dead are buried with the head towards the west. Hence the priestess's pronunciation of impending death is 'tidiba uweraduguba luma ineweyu': 'She'll be going along with the sun.' Likewise, accounts of dreams locate Sairi, the afterworld, to the west.

Now, those ancestors invited to dugu are drawn into the mali dance through the doors of the ancestor-house. Since in myth the afterworld is to the west, one would expect the ancestors to arrive from the west. In fact, as the speeches of those entranced and the words of numerous dugu songs indicate, the ancestors arrive at dugu from the east in dories: that is, they arrive as did the ancestral Garinagou in 1797, from St Vincent/the east. While the priestesses indicate that these ancestors travel around from the west to arrive from the east, it seems to me that myth and history are merged here. The structure of dugu exhibits both aspects simultaneously: offerings are made to the west, while the ancestors arrive by sea from the east. The circular organization of the mali dance encompasses both aspects and also the idea of a continual cycle between death and life.

## Ritual Kinship at Dugu

The social aspects of dugu require discussion not only because they, too, have been misunderstood, but also because these aspects are of real practical value in a society in which the ideal of bilateral descent is continually dislocated. This value is not merely one of the maintenance of ethnic identity, but also of the creation and extension of co-operative obligations, most notably amongst women.

Garinagou have what Scheffler [6] has termed an ideology of (bilateral) descent, that is, of links of serial filiation between the generations. This does not mean that Garifuna social organization comprises descent groups, contrary to Solien's misplaced assumption[7]. Solien mistakes social structure (ideology) for social organization (concrete reality)[8]: she further assumes, without presenting evidence, that nonunilineal descent group organization is reinforced by the ancestor-cult (op. cit.). The following points show quite clearly that the preparations for dugu and the dugu itself comprise units other than the mythical nonunilineal descent group:

a) The basic co-operating unit of production for dugu is generally the personal kindred of the subject or the subject's mother (often with a local core and including affines).
b) Most of the basic preparations – unless a new an-

cestor-house is built – are performed by women.

c) Many of those persons attending dugu meet relatives there who were previously unknown to them, whom they then ideally take to be kin.

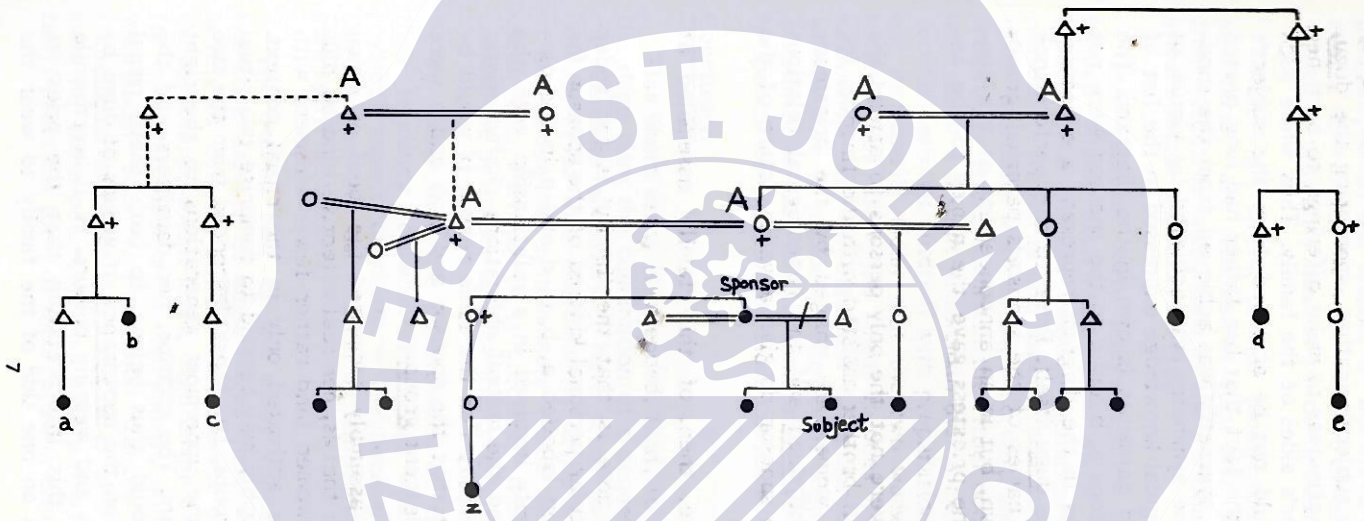
d) The priestess's knowledge of genealogical links is wider than that of most Garinagou: hence the list of afunahautiya (the women to bring offerings and to dance in red who form the core of most dugu) given to her by her spirit-helpers invariably brings together persons between whom genealogical relations were previously unknown and who could therefore hardly be said to be part of the same 'group' in any context but that of the rite itself.

e) There is usually a tie of marriage amongst the ancestors being placated such that the assembly at dugu comprises affines as well as kin (i.e., amongst the descendents of those married ancestors).

f) The build-up to dugu usually involves ancestors communicating to their descendents through dreams or trance. The messages passed in this way are usually intended to bring into the dugu relatives whose relations with the sponsor are weak and whose participation at dugu could not otherwise be ensured.

The basic principle of the social and spatial organization of dugu is that of symmetry. The necessity of symmetry is expressed by the concept of 'pairing' (gauba gauba, lit. "side by side"). Hence each mali dance is said to be two, and no ancestor can therefore receive an odd number of mali. There are always two lines of cassava bread in the hall, and two lines of persons in the procession to the beach and at the agudahani (burnt rum) section of the ceremony. This dual organization arises from the fact that two sides (auba) of the 'family' perform the rite. At dawn on the first day, the women of one side of the family wear a particular colour headscarf and sit on one side of the hall facing the women of the other side who wear different colours. But at the final awangalahani dance the two sides merge into one family. The circle of offerings known as the 'heart' in the priestess's sanctuary is always divided into two sides, one for each side of the family, while the subject and her mother (and others in structurally the same position) set down offerings on both sides – one for the mother's side and one for the father's side – being at the intersection of the two sides of the family. The whole idea of the necessity of symmetry derives from the notion of envy (gimagau) which would ensue if, for example, a male ancestor were to receive offerings while his wife did not.

If all this seems rather complex, it is actually expressed very simply, as I have illustrated in a typical genealogy for one dugu on the following page.




A ..... ancestors receiving mali

● ..... áfunahautiña (women to dance in red)

o..... woman  Δ..... man

The subject (the woman sick with ancestors) had hardly known her father. The subject's mother, sponsoring the dugu, was instructed by the priestess to make offerings to both her mother's and her father's sides of the family. Thus while such bilateral symmetry could not be achieved from the subject's point of view, due to the fact that her father had long parted with her mother, such symmetry was achieved from the sponsor's point of view. The symmetry was achieved by virtue of the priestess's genealogical knowledge expressed in the list of women to dance in red garments (shown in the diagram). The exact relations of persons a, b and c to the sponsor were not known: the scored lines in the diagram represent a consensus which arose during the dugu itself. Prior to the performance of the rite, even the names of the sponsor's paternal grandparents were not known, but in an announcement at the conclusion of the rite, the priestess gave the names to the assembly.

The afunahautiya were not the only persons to attend the rite – the sponsor's half-brother assisted with the finance, for example – but these women are obliged by the priestess's decree[9] to attend the dugu and the genealogical relations between them and the sponsor do give a valid picture of the range of the assembly.

What is the nature, then, of this 'family' assembled at dugu?

The first point to note is that the 'family' is far wider than the effective, secular personal kindred of the sponsor (or the subject): the women labelled a, b, c, d and e in the diagram were not ordinarily involved in a relationship with the sponsor which comprised the mutual obligations characteristic of the personal kindred[10]. For the same reason it would be meaningless to suggest that the sponsor and a, b and c were members of the same descent group.

I suggest that the assembly comprised the ideal or ritual kindred of the sponsor: that is, her real effective kindred plus a wider range of kinswomen (and rather fewer kinsmen) with whom kin ties become activated only in the ritual context. Alternatively, the assembly may be said to comprise two ritual nonunilineal descent groups, i.e., those descended from the two pairs of brothers in the uppermost generations to the right and left of the diagram. The sponsor, her daughters and the woman labelled 'z' would thus belong to both these ritual categories which take on the appearance of groups at dugu by virtue of being named and wearing colours. It is worthwhile noting in support of this interpretation that the priestess often directs a woman on one side of the family to wear the

coloured headscarf of the opposing side, as happened in this instance, when the number of women to dance in red was unevenly distributed between the two sides: what matters is the aspect of symmetry desired by the ancestors.

What I am saying is that ideal/ritual categories – social structure – are manifest at dugu and must be differentiated from effective units, such as the personal kindred, which constitute social organization [11].

The question then becomes: does dugu create a ritual kinship which afterwards takes on a reciprocal, effective aspect? The intense emotion generated at dugu, of which possession trance is one aspect, may mean that this is sometimes the case. More often, field data show that the resulting reciprocity itself occurs in the ritual context. Hence a woman may assist a distant kinswoman (not a member of her effective secular personal kindred) with preparations for dugu. This does not necessarily mean that the two women take on effective kindred ties after the dugu: it does mean that the distant kinswoman will be expected to reciprocate should the first woman have to perform a rite, be it dugu, mass or burial, etc.; assistance of this kind is sometimes given explicitly to ensure reciprocal cooperation in these contexts.

## Conclusion

This short essay is intended, first, to elicit the meaning of the dugu rite; the culmination of a sequence of rites concerning Garifuna ancestors. I have tried to show that dugu has nothing to do with necromancy, devils or obeah: dugu is part of a cosmological system more subtle and more complex than obeah etc. Perhaps it is precisely this subtlety which has caused the prejudice against the ceremony?

We found that the malevolance of the dead, manifest in their tendency to harm the living, was associated with the physical aspect of death – the decomposition of the body. Dugu severs this association by transforming the ancestors to pure spirit in the air.

The second half of the essay concerned the social and economic aspects of dugu. Here, then, we were not speaking merely of culture, but of vital aspects of social cohesion. At this practical, social level, dugu is the expression of the need for cooperation amongst kinswomen, and from kinsmen, in a 'matrifocal' society. Possession trance, as I showed, is the verbal expression of this need. It is also the physical expression, for those possessed may drag a relative into the dance; a fairly practical form of incorporation into the kinship network.

While the encroachment of international capitalist forms into Garifuna society threatens to dislocate the kinship system, dugu operates in the reverse direction by enforcing reciprocity amongst kinswomen over a wider range than that of the effective personal kindred.

## NOTES

1. Field research was conducted in Stann Creek District, Belize from August 1977 – August 1979, financed by the Social Science Research Council, London. The material included here derives from a Ph.D. thesis to be presented at King's College, Cambridge, U.K.
2. 'The Garifuna Thanksgiving,' C. L. Macklin. Belizean Studies, Vol. 4, No. 6, 1976.
3. 'Liturgy of the Catholic Burial Rite and Mass of Requiem,' The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota.
4. Conzemius (1928:203) refers to the 'heart of the dugu' being in the centre of the hall, but fails to note its explicit association with the coffin.
5. As explained later in the text, the dead are buried towards the west while the living sleep towards the east. To fall possessed towards the west means then that trance may be so deep that the person may 'cross over' (die).
6. Scheffler, H. W., 'Ancestor worship in anthropology: or, observations on descent and descent groups,' Current Anthropology, December 1966.
7. Solien, N. L., 'The Nonunilineal Descent Group in the Caribbean and Central America,' American Anthropologist, 61, 1959.
8. This idea is developed in the text and derives from Bloch, M., 'The Past and the Present in the Present,' Man, Vol. 12, No. 2, 1977.
9. In the great majority of cases, the women on the priestess's list do attend and bring the requisite fowl, rum, sugar, etc. Not all dugu involve afunahautiya but most do.
10. Davenport (1968) stresses the aspect of mutual obligations in the lower-class Jamaican kindred, which incidentally bears strong resemblance to the Garifuna variety, while making no assertions about the existence of descent groups.
11. See note 8.

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# The 1980 Season at Colha

The 1980 season at the ancient Maya site of Colha, Belize [Fig. 1], was the second in a series of intensive investigations undertaken by the University of Texas at San Antonio, the Centro Studi e Ricerche Ligabue (Venice) and Texas A&M University. As in the 1979 season (see Hester et al. 1979), the research was administered by Hester; other project directors included Dott. Giancarlo Ligabue (Centro Studi e Ricerche Ligabue, Venice), Dr. Harry J. Shafer (Texas A&M University), Jack D. Eaton (The University of Texas at San Antonio) and Dr. R. E. W. Adams (The University of Texas at San Antonio).

The members of the Colha Project staff in 1980 included (in addition to the directors noted above): Mario Sartor (Centro Studi e Ricerche Ligabue), Janet Stock (laboratory director), Debra Selsor (assistant laboratory director), Thomas C. Kelly (in charge of the regional survey), Kathy Bareiss (project artist), Dr. Colin Busby (surveyor), and the following students and staff from the University of Texas at San Antonio and Texas A&M University: James Caldwell (paleobotany), Mary Frances Chadderdon, D. William Day, James T. Escobedo, Jr., Jane Laurens, Fred Oglesby, Dan Potter, Erwin Roemer, Anna J. Taylor, and Michael Woerner.

## Research Objectives for the 1980 Season

Prior to initiating the 1980 field work, a plan of research was drawn up and copies submitted to the Archaeological Commissioner. The 1980 season was planned to expand upon the knowledge gained in 1979. From the first season's test excavations in lithic workshops, a house mound, a plazuela group, and a structure in the monumental center, we began to

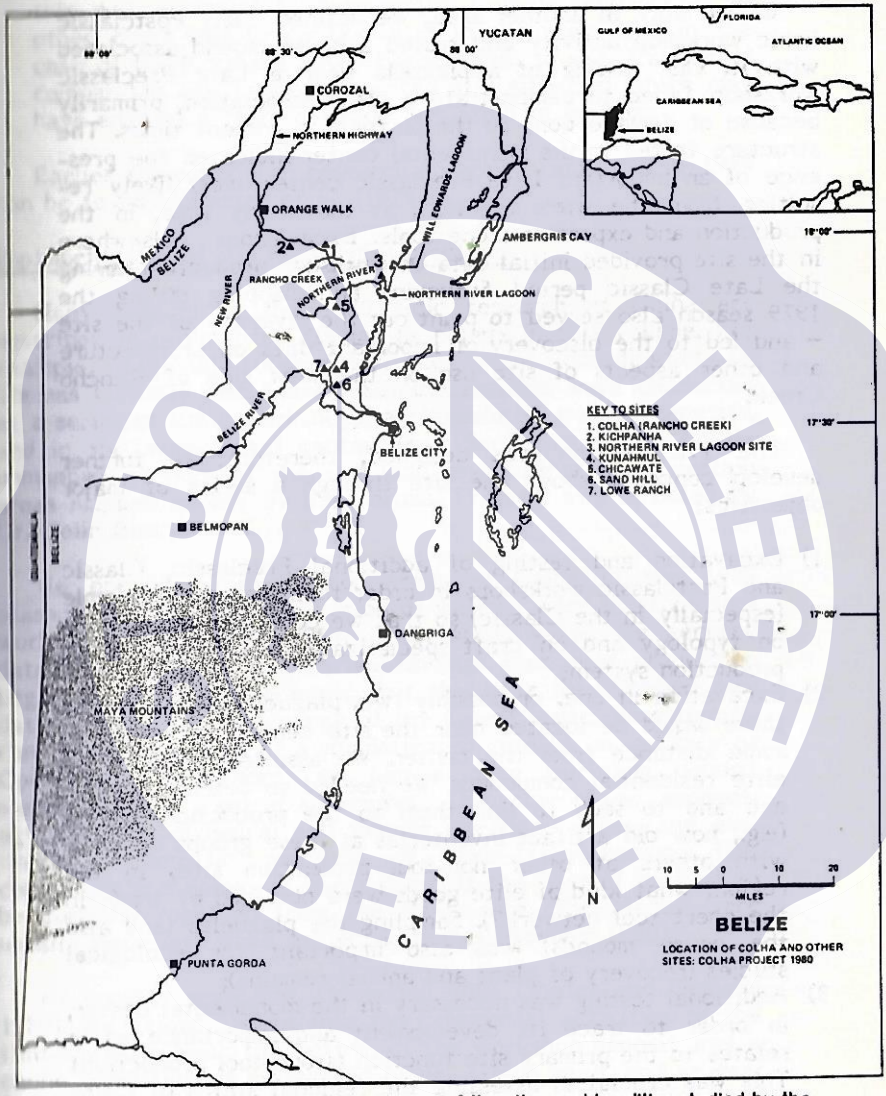


FIGURE 1. Northern Belize. Seven of the sites and localities studied by the Colha Project in 1980 are shown.

obtain an idea of the diversity of the site. First, we established the presence of stone tool mass-production workshops. We also established that intensive production of this sort began in Late Preclassic times or earlier.

In our work in another area, we defined Early Postclassic lithic workshop activity and tested a house mound associated with it. Our testing of a plazuela near a Late Preclassic workshop failed to demonstrate a clear association, primarily because of damage done to the plazuela in ancient times. The structure tested in the monumental center indicated the presence of an important Late Preclassic center, most likely resulting from the site's function, at that early time, in the production and export of stone tools. Excavations elsewhere in the site provided initial data on workshop production during the Late Classic period. Surveying and mapping during the 1979 season also served to point out the diversity of the site – and led to the discovery of important data on architecture and other aspects of site use on the west side of Rancho Creek.

The 1980 season was designed, therefore, to further develop concepts about the site through a series of major objectives:

1) Excavation and testing of additional Preclassic, Classic and Postclassic workshops in order to increase our sample (especially in the Classic) so that we could refine our data on typology and on craft specialization within the lithic production system;
2) Excavation in one, or possibly two, plazuela areas. One of these would be located near the site center, the other at some distance from the center. We assumed these to be elite residential compounds. We needed to determine their age and to seek to link them to the production system (e.g., how did artifact inventories at these groups compare with others at other non-tool production sites in the region; what kind of elite goods were obtained by trade in the chert tool network?). Sampling the plazuelas (and also the house mounds) was also important for ecological studies (recovery of plant and animal remains);
3) Additional testing was necessary in the monumental center, in order to trace its development and importance as it relates to the primary site function (stone tool production). This was crucial in assessing the regional status of Colha at different periods of time;
4) Survey and limited testing was needed on the west side of Rancho Creek (the 3000 and 4000 quadrants; see Stock 1980). There appeared to be important time-and-function differences between this area and other parts of the site

(e.g., few lithic workshops);

5) Field surveys and limited testing were required in the Northern River Lagoon area, the Maskall and Bomba area, the Canton Farm area, the lithic workshops area near Altun Ha and the Kate's Lagoon (Kichpanha) area [Fig. 1]; this was essential in determining Colha's relationship to other chert tool production sites in the area; and, in the case of the Northern River Lagoon site, to see if a site of comparable age to Colha existed in a situation which may have enabled a "port of trade" situation to develop.

Earlier statements on research objectives at Colha in 1979 can be found in Hester et al. (1979:3).

Implementation of the Research Objectives

Many aspects of the 1980 field research at Colha are described in preliminary fashion by papers in this volume. For example, regional survey activities were coordinated by Thomas C. Kelly (see Kelly 1980). Excavations were conducted at a series of lithic workshops, a plazuela, in midden deposits, and in the monumental center area. Surveying of previously unmapped portions of the site (and re-examination of certain areas mapped earlier by the Corozal Project) was directed by Dr. Colin Busby.

We opened 13 excavation areas at Colha in the 1980 season. Four of these excavation operations were at stone tool workshops (Operations 2007, 3017, 4001, 4026). We secured data that confirmed our earlier findings that mass production began in the Late Preclassic, but this year we obtained new data on the lithic technology of the Late Classic. Most significant was the finding of a sophisticated core-blade industry at Operation 2007. There, we had a deep workshop deposit associated with a set of structures. The core-blade technology utilized polyhedral and tabular one-sided cores, and evidenced systematic methods of core rejuvenation. This core-blade technology in chert (flint) is the first of its kind to be formally reported from the Maya area. The blades were usually made into small projectile points (Roemer 1980).

At another workshop, Operation 4001 (Shafer and Oglesby 1980), we gained insight into the ceremonial activities of the flint-workers. Near the bottom of the workshop deposit was a cache consisting of a stemmed blade, a jade bead, and several fragmented pottery vessels. In addition to increasing our knowledge of the systematics of the lithic production technology and the craft specialization involved, we now have a hint as to the kind of ritual behavior that may have also been a part of stone tool making at Colha.

In an effort to learn more about the people who occupied the site, excavations were conducted of a Late Classic house associated with a house mound (plazuela) group, designated Operation 2008 (Escobedo 1980). The surviving cut-stone architecture allowed us to outline the house plan, to find and define a ramp-like feature, a small passageway between this building and another, several burials, and a great number of domestic tools. These tools will permit us to see how some of the tools made in the workshops were being used locally.

In another occupation area, near the monumental center, we excavated Operation 2010, which was an Early Postclassic refuse accumulation. This was rich in lithics, animal bones, shell, and charred plant remains. From this excavation alone is a remarkable wealth of data on the human ecology of that period (Taylor 1980).

The work begun by Jack Eaton last year at Operation 2003 was completed in 1980 (Day and Laurens 1980). The entire top of the structure was exposed and recorded. New graffiti were found inscribed on the surface. A large unit (Subop 22) was excavated in the center of the structure, revealing a complex stratigraphy of construction phases. The building seems to have been constructed at the end of the Late Preclassic. Some interesting features were found within the structure, including the burial of an infant (accompanied by a thin-walled chalice-like vessel) placed under a plaster capping.

Limited testing was also done at the ball court (Operation 2009; Eaton and Kuntsler 1980). Trenching across the court revealed the edges of the court and playing field. The playing area was only 3.7 meters wide and about 14 meters long. The existing ball court structures appear to date from the Late Classic, but probably began in earlier times. A cache of eight jade beads was found in a pit in the center of the court.

A large unit (Operation 2015) was excavated into the base of the pyramid or main datum mound. This exposed the exterior construction of the pyramid, as well as a series of construction phases that went on in the plaza on the south side of the pyramid. One of the construction phases, probably in the Late Classic, was massive. Over one meter of rock fill was laid down and then capped with more than 50 cm of marl and plaster.

We conducted extensive excavations on one side of a residential mound in the main plaza of the monumental center. This was our Operation 2011 (Eaton 1980). First, we dug several subops in the plaza, thinking we would find a series of plaza floors. The plaza floorings were not well preserved, but

there was a stratified sequence of midden deposits – Late Classic, Late Preclassic, Middle Preclassic, and a thin Early Preclassic deposit. There are many structural remains of these early periods in the plaza, and with large-area excavations they could be more fully exposed.

In the terraced elite structure on the south side of the plaza, we did some trenching, discovering very well preserved stone and marl block walls. The remains of a wide, monumental staircase were also found. While trenching to find the west corner of the staircase, Feature 1, the "skull pit" (Steele, Eaton and Taylor 1980) was found. The pit was rather shallow, and into it 28 skulls had been stacked in two layers. Most skulls were encased in vessels or parts of vessels. Some had the cervical (neck) vertebrae in place, indicating the heads had been place in the pit immediately after decapitation. Males, females and children were present. A number had decorated or notched teeth, indicating they were of the elite class.

The ceramics indicate a Terminal Classic date for the feature. It appears to be a unique discovery for the Maya Lowlands area (cf. Moser 1973). And it may be one which, along with other data from the site, will shed new light on the collapse of the Classic Maya civilization. In another excavation at Operation 2012 nearby, more human remains were found in a less formal burial area, including skulls and parts of the skeletons. At least 11 and perhaps 20 individuals were present. Again, there was the same type of Terminal Classic pottery. This points, we believe, to rather extensive executions, perhaps of the ruling families at the site.

Operation 2012 (Potter 1980) consisted of two major excavation units in a platform associated with a small pyramid. We suspected, because of the platform's peculiar orientation, that this area might be quite early; it did not conform to the orientation of the main part of the monumental center. This platform had very deep archaeological deposits, going to a depth of 3.75 meters below the surface. It was beautifully stratified with a series of nicely surfaced plaster floors. At the top was a thick deposit of Late Classic ceramics, in which the many skeletons noted above were found. There was also evidence of an obsidian workshop of Late Classic date (Woerner 1980).

In a $3m^2$ subop (Subop 3) at Operation 2012, a very nice sequence was revealed, going from Late Classic to Late Preclassic, Middle Preclassic, and a probable Early Preclassic deposit. In the Late Preclassic deposits, we apparently hit the edge of an area of Late Preclassic tombs. Because of the

great depth, and because it was late in the season, we were able to uncover just two burials. One of these had several Chicanel vessels placed with it (Potter 1980).

However, at the bottom of this unit, we discovered the presence of a probable Early Preclassic occupation. There is abundant pottery of this earliest period, including Swasey types found by Hammond at Cuello. At the very bottom of the subop, sterile clay was found. Intruding into the clay was a cooking pit filled with fish and animal bone, charred plant remains, charcoal, flints, and pottery fragments. This pottery is entirely Swasey. A radiocarbon date of 810 ± 100 B.C. was obtained (see Hester 1980).

Our objective of obtaining new information on subsistence and paleoenvironment was successfully met, in terms of data collection. Analyses are, of course, still underway. The animal bone recovery was much more extensive than last season's (Scott 1980). It is one of the largest animal bone samples in the Maya Lowlands and will provide significant new insights into the dietary and food practices of the Maya peoples at Colha. Not only do we have food remains from the Early Postclassic, as last year, but also going back well into the Preclassic.

The project paleobotanist, James Caldwell (1980), stayed with us the entire season. He built an entire flotation system for thorough and rapid recovery. As a result, a great many samples were processed. Caldwell is working on the identification of seeds, charred plant remains, and plant identification from charcoal analysis.

Janet Stock and Debbie Selsor again did a fine job of laboratory processing. It is estimated that 100,000-125,000 items passed through the laboratory this season. By the end of the season all had been catalogued, many of the important finds drawn, and large numbers of the sherds and lithics analyzed. The numbers above do not count all of the animal bone, special soil and plaster samples, and the large number of shell remains. Because of the system developed by our malacological consultant, Dr. L. H. Feldman, last year, thousands of shells were processed as they came in from the field. Only a type collection and artifacts of shell had to be retained.

Thomas C. Kelly and assistants conducted boat and land surveys of many areas in the Colha region. There had been no systematic surveys in most of this area before. We knew that chert (flint) was exposed in this area [Fig. 2] and we wanted to determine if sites similar to Colha were present. As a result of the survey, it seems safe to say that Colha is indeed

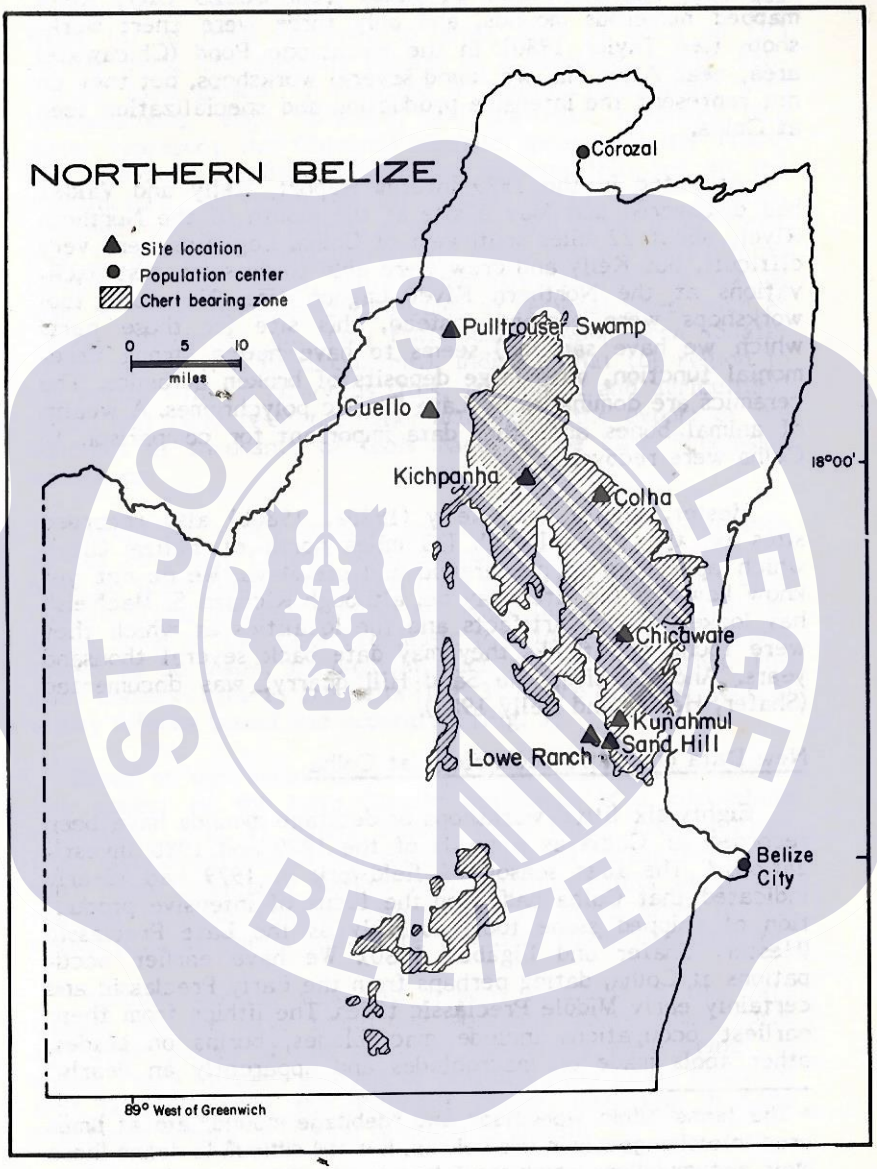


FIGURE 2: The Chert-Bearing Zone of Northern Belize. Shown here in the form of hachured areas is the extent of chert outcrops in northern Belize, based on the studies and maps of Wright et al. (1959). Sites and localities mentioned in the text are indicated.

unique. Some other workshop sites were found, but they do not approach the magnitude of Colha. For example, at the site of Kunahmul (Canton Farm) 21 miles from Belize City, Kelly mapped numerous mounds, and only three were chert workshops (see Taylor 1980). In the Rockstone Pond (Chicawate) area, near Altun Ha, we found several workshops, but they do not represent the intensive production and specialization seen at Colha.

As noted in the 1979 Interim Report, Kelly and Valdez had discovered last May a site at the mouth of the Northern River, about 22 miles southwest of Colha. Logistics were very difficult, but Kelly and crew were able to do some test excavations at the Northern River Lagoon site. No stone tool workshops were present. Instead, this site (or those parts which we have sampled) seems to have had a strong ceremonial function, with large deposits of broken ceramics. The ceramics are dominated by Late Classic polychromes. A wealth of animal bones and other data important for comparison to Colha were recovered.

Hester, Shafer and Kelly (1980a, 1980b) also recorded sites on the Lowe Ranch (20 miles north of Belize City), which appear to be preceramic and pre-Maya. We do not yet know how old the sites may be, although Richard S. MacNeish has looked at the artifacts and the localities at which they were found and thinks they may date back several thousand years. Another site, the Sand Hill quarry, was documented (Shafer, Hester and Kelly 1980).

## New Data on Lithic Technology at Colha

Eighty-six lithic workshops or debitage mounds have been recorded at Colha as a result of the 1979 and 1980 investigations.* The first season of fieldwork in 1979 had clearly indicated that Colha had been the focus of intensive production of chipped stone tools as early as the Late Preclassic (Hester, Shafer and Ligabue 1980). We have earlier occupations at Colha, dating perhaps from the Early Preclassic and certainly early Middle Preclassic times. The lithics from these earliest occupations include macroblades, burins on blades, other tools made on macroblades and apparently an "early"

* The terms "lithic workshop" and "debitage mound" are at times used interchangeably in this volume. It is still difficult to define those lithic accumulations which result from in situ lithic production activities (i.e., "workshops") and those that may have accumulated from secondary deposition (either as refuse mounds or dumps utilized by the tool-makers or as construction fill by later occupants of the site).

adze form [Fig. 3], but we have not found any workshops from these periods. However, with the Late Preclassic, large accumulations of debitage indicative of workshop areas are found (31 of these recorded to date), some as much as 1.75 meters thick. The deposits consist of a debitage matrix, containing tools broken or rejected in manufacture, along with hammerstones, edge abraders, and scattered ceramics (the latter represent the Chicanel ceramic sphere). Shafer (1979) has analyzed the lithic production systems that led to the manufacture of tranchet bit adzes, large oval bifaces, stemmed macroblade points, eccentrics and other lithic forms [Fig. 3]. Intensive production of the adzes and the oval bifaces (which are tool blanks, many apparently destined for use as axes or celts) is recognized. Studies at regional sites, such as Cuello (Shafer et al., ms.), Pulltrouser Swamp area (Shafer 1980), and Cerros (Mitchum, ms.), indicate that the region to the north, with its numerous sites, settlement and agricultural areas, may have been the major market for the export of the hundreds of thousands of tools made in the Late Preclassic workshops.

Except for a few ceramic specimens, there is no evidence as yet for Early Classic occupations at Colha; and, thus we have no identifiable workshops from that period. For the Late Classic (Tepu ceramic sphere) we know of at least 15 workshops. Some of the Late Preclassic tool forms may have continued to be made, although in much smaller quantities. The most common bifaces are celts [Fig. 3]. There are also general utility bifaces (axes) and eccentrics [Fig. 3].

Based on our excavations in the 1980 season, the distinctive aspect of the Late Classic workshops is a core-blade technology [Fig. 3]. Chert blades were being manufactured from conical polyhedral and tabular unifacial cores; the blades were then unifacially worked into projecile points which are common in Late Classic assemblages at other sites in the region (e.g., at Cuello and at the Northern River Lagoon site).

Obsidian working was also present at Colha in the Late Classic and we have found one workshop where small cores and other pieces of this imported commodity were being reduced. Trace element analysis of obsidian from Colha indicates that Ixtepeque was the dominant source, beginning in Late Preclassic times; El Chayal obsidian is absent.

Early Postclassic lithic workshops (at least 12 are known) are found exclusively in the area of the monumental center, which, as Eaton (1979, 1980) has noted, is the result of Preclassic and Late Classic constructions. There are "early" and "late" facets in Early Postclassic lithic production [Fig. 3] and

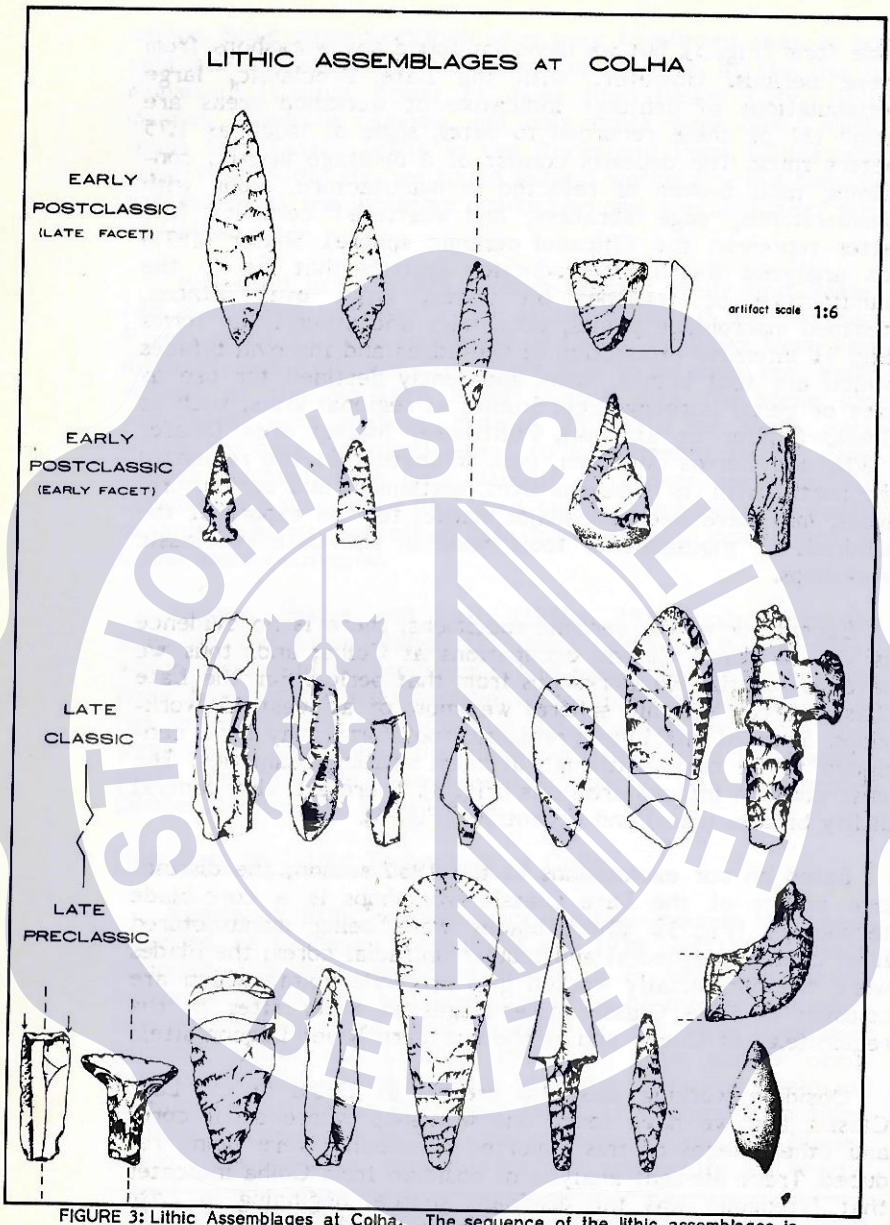


FIGURE 3: Lithic Assemblages at Colha. The sequence of the lithic assemblages is shown here by period. The forms shown are described as follows, beginning with the bottom row, and moving from left to right:

Lower left: burins on blade and "early" form adze (Middle Preclassic and probably Early Preclassic);

Late Preclassic: tranchet bit adze and tranchet flake; macroblade; large oval biface; stemmed blade; stemmed biface; eccentric fragment (upper); hammerstone (lower);

Late Classic: polyhedral chert blade core; unifacial (tabular) chert blade core; blade; stemmed blade; celt; general utility biface; eccentric;

Early Postclassic (early facet): stemmed point; triangular point (preform?); tapered biface; antler percussor (both of the latter continue into the late facet);

Early Postclassic (late facet): lenticular biface, large form; lonzenge biface; lenticular biface, small form; triangular adze.

as in earlier workshops, the Early Postclassic knappers appear to have been producing more implements than could have been used locally. Although the local Colha cherts remain predominant for tool-making, chalcedony is also imported (source unknown) into the site during this period. In the early facet, the dominant lithics are side notched dart (?) points and the triangular preforms on which they were made. The "late" facet is typified by lenticular and lozenge-shaped bifaces, both large and small forms, and triangular adze-like tools. A tapered biface form is found in both the early and late facets, as are antler flaking tools [Fig. 3]. While we know of a limited number of Late Preclassic and Late Classic workshops at sites in the chert-bearing zone shown in Fig. 2, we know of no other Early Postclassic lithic workshops.

This lithic sequence, and the attendant data on craft specialization, intensive or mass production, export of the lithics, and where and why the lithics went where they did, are all problems with which we are continuing to work.

The many interesting questions raised by the focus on lithic production at Colha, such as craft specialization, modes and direction of export, tool function, and the like, will continue to orient much of our research time. However, we have made substantial progress in terms of identifying chronologically distinctive lithic assemblages and the sequence at Colha is shown in Fig. 3. It is applicable both to this site and most others in northern Belize for which we have comparable lithic data.

## Concluding Remarks

Much work remains to be done at Colha. There is still a great deal to be learned about the lithic workshops, especially in the realm of estimating the volume of lithic tool production (see Shafer and Hester ms.) and in studying the nature of the accretions of debitage. The discovery of a probable Early Preclassic component further extends the temporal range of the site. We need to know more about the character of that occupation and to better determine the associated lithic, architectural and settlement attributes of that period and the Middle Preclassic.

The extraordinary lithic production of the Late Preclassic must correlate technologically with intensive forms of agriculture (and related forest clearage) in the northern part of Belize. But were all the tools exported to the north? Or, were many utilized in intensive agricultural pursuits, such as ridged fields, in the immediate area? To answer this question we have to examine the swampy areas to the north of the monu-

mental center and to further explore the apparent agricultural areas in the 3000 quadrant of the site. Additional research involving excavation in plazuela groups must be undertaken, as we have yet to resolve the relationship of these groups to nearby house mounds and lithic workshops. Were the plazuelas the residences of elite families associated with, and presumably controlling, lithic craft specialist family units?

These and other questions are being formulated as a result of the 1979 and 1980 seasons and of the work of many of our consultants. The 1981 field season will provide new and important data – and will likely generate many new archaeological problems.

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# Book Review: Belize

BELIZE, by Ralph Lee Woodward, Jr. (Clio Press, Oxford, England; 1980. xxii + 229 pp.)

A problem in the past for both the serious student of Belize and the casual reader has been not knowing what, if any, good material on the country has been published or what material is available.

Ralph Lee Woodward, Jr., of Tulane University, has done much to overcome this problem. His work, Belize, volume 21 in the "World Bibliographical Series," is a comprehensive and detailed bibliography of the more significant material published on Belize. He treats topics as diverse as foreign relations and marine life, as obscure as marble games and their relation to Belizean life, and as talked about as the Anglo-Guatemalan Dispute over Belize. Very little escapes the attention of this valuable reference source on Belize.

Woodward's fine work is enhanced by two helpful inclusions: brief but useful summaries of most of the material included in the bibliography and a complete index of all of the bibliography's contents. His brief historical sketch at the beginning of the book is adequate but misleading in parts. To talk of the country's "appalling poverty and widespread educational deficiencies" (p. xvi), for example, is, at the very least, exaggerated.

Woodward's work reveals that, contrary to what he writes in his introduction, there has been no scarcity of material

published on our country. The problem has been, and remains, that much of the material published on Belize has received little or no publicity in Belize itself. Many of the works on Belize remain unavailable to Belizeans either because these books are now out of print or are prohibitively expensive.

The book, Belize, is helpful in that it at least informs interested individuals of the books and articles that have been published on Belize. It contains a wealth of information that should be accessible to all students in this country and members of the general public at large.

-- James S. Murphy, S.J.

[Mr. Murphy has taught social science at St. John's College for the past three years, and has just returned to graduate studies in Political Science at St. Louis University in the U.S.A.]

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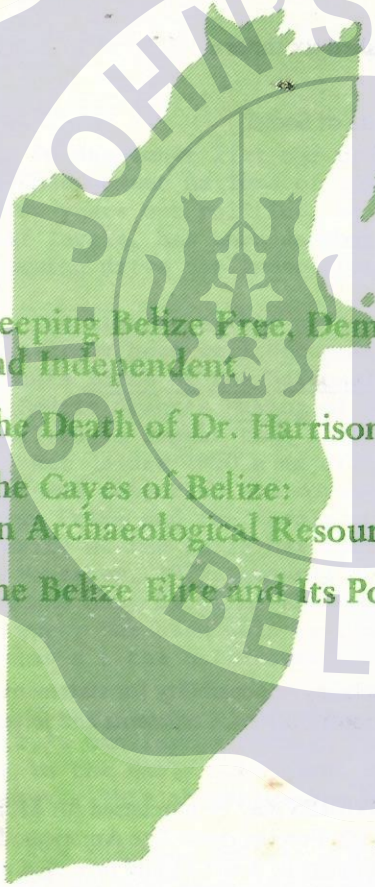

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GUEST EDITORIAL:

# KEEPING BELIZE FREE, DEMOCRATIC AND INDEPENDENT

JAMES S. MURPHY, S.J.

On September 21st our country took its place among the independent nations of the world. For the past thirty years our politics, at both the national and local levels, has been dominated by this single all-consuming drive for independence.

The history of the nationalistic movement in Belize has already been well documented in such works as Assad Shoman's Birth of the Nationalistic Movement in Belize and Cedric Grant's Making of Modern Belize, making it pointless to repeat that history here. Suffice it to say that since 1950 a majority of the citizens of Belize have supported the movement for independence led by George Price and the People's United Party. The party's majority at the polls has not always been large--- in the November, 1979, general election, for example, it captured only 51.8% of the popular vote; nonetheless, the party has been able to claim more-or-less consistent success a t the polls over the thirty year period.

There can be no denying that the cornerstone of the P.U.P.'s manifestos through the years has been the commitment to the early attainment of independence for the country. This objective has been achieved.

The question now is: what lies ahead in terms of the future political development of the country? Given the increasingly complex nature of Belizean society and the capacity of free human beings to act in unpredictable ways, it is risky trying to predict the course of our future political development. The independent Belize

~~will almost~~ certainly come under greater influence from forces operative in our region--in Central America and the Caribbean--and not all these influences appear to be in our best interests. At this point it is not clear how these influences are going to affect our future political development. The growing influx of Latin American refugees, for example, for whom the Westminister model of government is an alien system, may, in time, significantly alter our whole system of government.

Present indications suggest that we are off to a good start as a nation. Our new Constitution roots us in the democratic tradition, a tradition that respects the concept of majority rule and minority rights. All the freedoms normally associated with free and democratic states: freedom of speech, press, religion, etc., are protected. All adults are entitled to vote in free and competitive elections at reasonably frequent intervals; the right to vote implies free elections in which adults can participate in the political process in a variety of ways, including seeking political office.

Hopefully, the post-independence years will usher in a period of greater cooperation and trust among our political leaders. Perhaps, with independence itself an accomplished fact (and therefore removed from the "political football field"), our leaders, in both parties, will be able to turn their attentions to the pressing economic and social problems facing us as a nation. Even allowing that many of these problems are the result of external political and economic forces beyond our control, we can help to put "our house in order" only with a greater willingness to trust one another and to work together for the good of all.

The source of our political disunity is too complex to go into here, but the root of the disunity centers on the Anglo-Guatemalan Dispute over Belize and the alleged association between Prime Minister George Price and officials of the Guatemalan Government during the early years of the nationalist struggle. While a majority of the citizens have remained loyal to Mr. Price and his often stated goal of the complete political independence of Belize, a significant minority have always remained suspicious of his true motives.[1]

Today, the reality is that George Price has led us to full independence, but the responsibility for keeping Belize a free, democratic and independent nation rests with all of us. A starting point, in the creation of a new environment of trust and working together for the good of the nation, might be for the supporters of

the Government party to acknowledge the right of the Opposition to exist as a viable political entity and alternative to the Government. Similarly, the supporters of the Opposition party must acknowledge the right of the Government to rule in accordance with constitutional principles and its own political manifesto. For either group to attempt to deny the other the free exercise of these basic functions is to jeopardize the very democratic foundation upon which our system is based.

Democratic government, to remain in good health, must be allowed the power to govern, to do the job it was elected to perform. History is replete with examples of what happens in countries saddled with weak governments. The inability of the post-World War I German Government to deal vigorously with the economic and social problems facing that country led to the enthusiastic acceptance of Hitler, who offered stability and the ability to act firmly and decisively. Italy, in 1921, turned to Mussolini as the only hope in the face of widespread strikes, violence and general indecisiveness on the part of the Italian Government. The point is that power, far from being an evil, is an essential ingredient of responsible, effective government.

On the other hand, the capacity of political leaders to abuse the exercise of their political power is well established, resulting in the need for a viable system of "checks." In western democracies, the two dominant systems of government are the Republican model (as in the United States) and the parliamentary or Westminster system (as in the United Kingdom.) Most democracies follow variations of one or the other of these two systems.

The Republican system provides for a complete separation between three equal branches of government--the Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches, and attempts to establish a "system of checks' whereby the branches serve as "checks" on each other, thereby preventing an abuse of power by any one of the branches. Thus, when Richard Nixon's various attempts at establishing an "imperial presidency" culminated in the Watergate disaster, the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives drew up articles of impeachment for a trial with the Senate sitting as jury under the Chief-Justice. The constitutional "checks" of the system served to make sure that Nixon (the Executive branch) did not operate above the law.

In the Westminster model, the separation between the branches is less complete for the simple reason that, in this system, the members of the Executive branch, the prime minister and Cabinet members, are selected from among the members of the Legislative branch, the Parliament, or in our case, the National Assembly. Note that

although less separate, the branches of the government are still technically able to function as "checks" on each other. The Judiciary retains its independence and the size of the Legislative branch enables it, in theory, to "check" the powers of the prime minister and Cabinet ministers.

In Britain, with a House of Commons of over six hundred members, the party in Government always controls over three hundred seats. Of this number, the ministers with Cabinet status usually total around twenty-five: a significant majority of the House members from the party in Government are not in the Cabinet. These so-called "back benchers" from the ranks of the party in Government, together with the members of the House of Commons from the opposition parties, serve as an effective "check" on the powers of the prime minister and members of the Cabinet.

In Belize we are faced with a country of 150,000 citizens and consequently a very small Legislative branch Added to this is our history of a single party's domination of the eighteen-seat House of Representatives, a situation, incidentally, not unique to our Country.[2] The People's United Party has always controlled two-thirds or more of the seats of the House of Representatives. A majority of the Government members of the House have been given Cabinet portfolios, and in the past decade, only one Government member, the person elected to the post of Deputy Speaker of the House, has not been elevated to the Cabinet. While perhaps necessary for the effective governance of the country, the point is that the House, or Legislative branch,[3] has been heavily dominated by the Executive appointments thereby weakening or even eliminating any effective Legislative "check" of the workings of the Executive branch.

Under these circumstances, which are not likely to change even with the constitutional provision for the enlargement of the House to twenty-nine seats, the role of a responsible Opposition becomes crucial. The Opposition is positioned to monitor Government policies and actions. The Opposition has the responsibility of offering constructive criticisms of Government actions and viable alternatives to Government policies. In the interest of the future good health of our democratic system it is important that the position of the Opposition be firmly established and respected. It is no less important that the Opposition take seriously its role and perform its functions responsibly.

Ultimately, of course, there is no way of establishing written laws guaranteeing the permanent health and

vitality of democratic Belize. The best-laid plans and most democratic of Constitutions will falter if confronted with a bold enough tyrant and sufficiently apathetic electorate. The ability of our democratic institutions to function smoothly in the years ahead will rest on the commitment of our political leaders, in all parties, to democratic ideals, the rule of law, and the service of the poeple. An informed, concerned and vigilant citizenry is probably the only guarantee we have to insure that our leaders are men and women committed to such ideals.

1 See Journal of Belizean Affairs, #2 (December, 1973), "The Birth of the Nationalistic Movement in Belize, 1950-1954," by Assad Shoman, pp. 23ff (Article reprinted in BISRA Occasional Publication #7, 1979)

2 In Barbados, Tom Adams and his Barbados Labour Party controlled 17 of the 27 seats in the House of Assembly during the 1976-1981 term of office. Prior to this, Errol Barrow and the Democratic Labour Party enjoyed a two-thirds majority in the Assembly. In Jamaica, Edward Seaga and the Jamaica Labour Party presently control more than two-thirds of the seats of the Jamaican Parliament; in the previous Michael Manley Government, the People's National Party controlled 47 of the 60 seats in the Parliament. Trinidadian politics has been completely dominated by the late Dr. Eric Williams and his P.N.M. for the past twenty-five years.

3 The position of the Senate has been eliminated from consideration for the obvious reason that the Senate, being an appointed body, will always be controlled by whichever party is in Government.

# ORAL HISTORY VIGNETTE:
# THE DEATH OF DR. HARRISON IN 1916

DR. ELEANOR K. HERRMANN

This manuscript is the product of a tape-recorded interview conducted in Belize City in July, 1973 with Nurse Amy Cadle Sheran, since deceased. Eleanor K.Herrmann a nurse historian and Associate Professor at Yale University School of Nursing, recorded and transcribed the tape and edited the transcript.

Nurse Sheran was born in Belize City on September 22, 1895. When she was only eighteen and half years old, she commenced work at the Belize City Hospital - first as a helper, then as a probationer, pupil nurse, and finally a staff nurse - to pursue a career in nursing that intermittently spanned more than half a century. In 1916, while she was working at the Belize City Hospital, she observed an incident which shocked the country. Here it is poignantly recalled in her own words.

Readers of this oral history should bear in mind that it is a transcript of the spoken word. The informal, conversational style has been preserved for its inherent historical value.

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Q: Would you tell us about the incident when the mental patient killed one of the doctors and also described how the hospital compound appeared then?

A: Oh, Dr. Harrison[1] . . . The mental hospital which was known as lunatic asylum, was right in the hospital compound too. You know that they had a big, high block fence separate the hospital yard from the yard where they (lunatics) was in. That's known (now) as the, I think, nurses' quarters or recreation room. You see, over there was where the lunatics was. And that was transferred to the Newtown Barracks 1912.

Q. That's where Seaview (Hospital) is right now?
A: Right there, that was transferred there in 1912. At that time they had 85 patients.[2]
Dr. Harrison, he was killed the 25th of April, 1916. He was killed by a lunatic (Nini Lopez). But that man really wasn't crazy.

Q: How did the lunatic get to the hospital? Was he sent to clean or cut grass or something?
A: Yes, the lunatics at that time used to go and chop wood. You know, they used to use wood - wood fire - in the kitchen, you see, and they used to clean the grounds. And he (Lopez), I don't know, he had it in for Dr. Harrison because white sugar was very scarce at the time and everybody - yes, everybody - had to use brown sugar, and he wanted white sugar. He asked Dr. Harrison for white sugar and Dr. Harrison said he hadn't any.
Where was he (Lopez) going to get it from? Oh, he knew that Dr. Harrison had white sugar but he didn't want to give him any. And he had it in for him.
On that particular day, Dr. Harrison was lying on his bed reading. It was like a twin house. The steps came up this way (indicating the center) and then it go in the steps to Dr. Harrison's bedroom and through there you go into the parlor and another bedroom over that side.
Dr. Harrison was lying on his bed reading. Mr. Starkey and Dr. Winter was in the parlor reading also but they was sitting in rocking chair reading.
And then he (Lopez) went right up the back steps there. Dr. Harrison had cabinet with instruments, you see, in there. He (Lopez) opened the cabinet and took out one of the amputation knives and he went right into Dr. Harrison's room and he plunged it in his liver and then he shook it. And it cut him across the arm. When Dr. Harrison shouted, Mr. Starkey rushed in and Dr. Winter. and he (Lopez) cut Dr. Starkey two places and then Mr. Starkey cut him two places in the back, and Dr. Winter grabbed his hand and he pulled the knife through Dr. Winter's hand and cut him . . Oh, that was a bad day!

Q. You were on duty?
A: I was doing night duty and when I heard Dr. Harrison shouting, shouting out, I said to myself, "Gosh, Dr. Harrison, you make me work all night and people can't even sleep in peace." Then I heard, "Murder! Murder! Help! Wolunteers! He couldn't use a W nor a V. He said, "Send for the Wolunteers!= Send for the Wolunteers!" I (Amy Cadle Sheran) said, "Nurse (Maud C.) Sheran" - she was in the next room to me, the Head nurse then - I said, "Nurse Sheran, come, something is happening to Dr. Harrison. That is not just ordinary fun, that is a commission." And I opened the door between the rooms, you see, and the man (Lopez) came and handed me the knife and I took it out and put it in the window sill and I put it right down on the floor. He didn't even know what happened, you know.

And in two shakes of a duck's tail, the yard was crowded. We had the Second Contingents upstairs and when was said "Send for the Volunteers," it was the Contingency men, you see - the boys getting ready to go to the front - and they, some of them rushed down, policemen rushed in - then the yard was full of people.

. . . And there was poor Dr. Harrison . . .

Q: And then what?
A: When I went up on night duty at 8 o'clock, I went over to see. We had to give him hot fomentations every hour. We had to walk up and down the stairs to the sanitation room.

He said to me, "Cadle. my child," - that's how he used to call me except in the ward he said "Nurse," otherwise he said,,"Cadle, my child." - "Sit down on the bed with doctor." I said, "Doctor, I can't." "Are you afraid of me, my child?" I said, "No doctor, I'm not afraid of you but remember you used to tell us that a nurse must never sit on a patient's bed?" "I'm not like those patients. I'm different." . . . "Cadle, my child, I'm going to die." I said, "Doctor, please don't say that." He said, "Whenever a knife enters a person's liver two inches you can never live. And that beast shook the knife when he got it in . . . so I can't live".. And you know how you can feel standing there and feeling those words. . . And Dr. Harrison was conscious almost up to the last. He sent for lawyer Frankel and told him to take down all he wants to send his wife - different things he had in the house, you know - and other things to be sold and the money was to go to his wife. . .

... He spoke almost up to the last before he gave out- that is about ten minutes after two, Easter Monday, and he died about the same time Tuesday.[3]

1 Dr. James Hubert Hugh Harrison was the Principal Medical Officer for British Honduras. (EKH)

2 The lunatic asylum was a set of masonry buildings with concrete walls and stood at the entrance to Newtown Barracks. It was capable of accomodating up to 85 individuals. (EKH)

3 On April 25, 1916, the British Honduras Gazette Extraordinary (p. 145) announced that the funeral for Dr. Harrison would take place on Wednesday, April 26, 1916 at 7:00 am. (EJH)

# THE CAYES OF BELIZE:

## AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

DR. MICHAEL ESTER

It is only natural that the archaeology of Belize calls to mind such sites as Altun Ha, Lamani, Lubaantun, and Xunantunich. The monumental construction and rich artifact inventory from these splendid Maya centers have justly captured professional and public attention. There is, however, a family of sites which is not well recognized, the sites which dot the cays of Belize (Figure 1). That these archaeological resources should remain dormant is hardly surprising; remains are often less than a hectare in area, and at theis most elaborate, entail a few mounds one to two meters in height. Considering the decidedly unspectacular proportions of the cays, what can archaeologists hope to le arn from such deposits? They derive their significance from two prime attractions which lured pre-columbian peoples away from the mainland - long distance trade and procurment of marine resources. The potential of the cays to contribute important, perhaps unique, information on fundamental aspects of the Maya economy, makes it worth taking a closer look at these modest sites.

At the time of Spanish contact, there was a brisk maritime trade along both coasts of the Yucatan peninsula. There is the famous account by Columbus (Sauer 1966:28), who encountered a galley-sized canoe, laden with cargo and a crew of twenty-five. In the course of his expeditions, Cortez (1971: 339-40, 361) reported sea-faring merchants familiar with the coastline from Tabasco, around the north ern tip of Yucatan, and down to the shores of Honduras. Commodities such as cargo, salt,

maize, precious a nd utilitarian stone, textiles, and copper were transported by sea (Pina Chan 1978:40-42, Thompson 1970:138-56).

But aside from historical fragments, we know little of how such commerce operated. Archaeological information comes largely from the suggestive distribution of sites along the coastal fringe. Moreover, most of this equivocal information pertains to Postclassic settlement (an exception is Friedel's 1978 and 1979 work at Cerros, Belize). We know almost nothing about the relationship between maritime trade and Maya prehistory: What are the roots of the well-developed coastal traffic in the Postclassic? What role did maritime trade play in shaping the trajectory of the Maya Prec lassic and Classic? How was exploitation of coastal sea lanes synchronized with cultural proc esses of Maya development? Perhaps most interesting, how does maritime trade figure in the enigmatic period of the ninth century A.D., a period which saw the collapse of Lowland Maya civilization, the intrusion of Highland Mexican influence, and the geographic shift of political power in Yucatan from south to north. Recent discussion (Andrews 1980) suggests that Lowland centers were already importing thousands of tons of salt from the north by 600 A.D., a bulk cargo that almost surely came by sea. There is a sound argument to be made, that the growing mercantile skills of northern merchants gradually enclosed, and then eclipsed the major, Classic polities of the Peten.

The cays off the Belize coast are a particularly opportune setting for the study of maritime trade. This string of off-shore islands is the only such formation in the Maya area, and would have offered ideal transhipment points for ocean-going canoes. Disembarked goods could have gone to nearby inland centers (Hammond 1976) or followed the many river systems which flow from the Maya heartland and resource rich Guatemalan Highlands. The cays also offer a number of tactical advantages over larger, mainland centers. Since we cannot readily identify structural remains of trade activity (wharves, warehouses, etc.), identifying a mainland port is very problematic. Also, there is always the uncertainty of whether goods came by sea or overland routes. Further, how can we know whether foreign goods were destined for exchange or whether they were brought in for local use and consumption? The cay context narrows the range of interpretation. In the case of transport, this context is decisive; cultural material on the cays had to be ferried by sea. The small size and limited subsistance capabilities of the islands likewise furnishes an effective argument: quantities of exotic prestige items makes little sense apart from maritime trade.

One glimpse into the archaeology of the cays shows that commercial use of cays is not merely conjecture. Less than 4 km. off the coast, northeast of Punta Gorda, Wild Cane Cay is small (335 x 110 m.) and mostly flat. Yet the surface of the island is littered with potsherds, and Hammond's (1975: 277=82) examination of museum and surface collections from Wild Cane Cay, revealed ceramic styles of wide geographic origin - Tohil Plumbate, Tulum Red, and Late Classic polychromes. Jade and copper similarly attest to the distant contacts of this cay. Although the presence of lithics is not in itself surprising, the occurrence of fine obsidian cores weighing over a pound, suggest the transport of this material rather than its local use. Trace element analysis of 23 blades from Wild Cane Cay (Stross et. al. 1978) indicate import from both Ixtepeque, El Salvador and El Chayal, near modern Guatemala City.

Similar evidence of long distance trade comes from Moho Cay in northern Belize (Healy and McKillop 1980, McKillop 1981). Moho Cay also implies that, in some cases at least, coastal trade may have gone in tandem with another notable activity on the cays, the pursuit of aquatic resources. As s hown from Maya art and excavated remains, a variety of marine products penetrated deep into the Maya Lowlands. Inland communities enjoyed prestige/ceremonial goods such as shell, sting-ray spines, and shark's teeth, as well as staples like fish, mollusks, and manatee. While exploitation of the sea was probably already commonplace by 3300 B.C. (MacNeish et. al. 1980), there is no evidence how this activity was organized or how the produce was distributed. Data from Lubaantun (Wing 1975: Appendix 6) suggest that not even centers located near the sea obtained marine products directly. Remains of reef dwelling parrot fish and deep water frigate mackerel found at this site, would have required special fishing parties or the services of groups already on the sea. Intact oyster shells (Spondylus americanus) found at Lubaantun and Altun Ha (Pendergast 1969: 39-40) come from 4-5 fathoms, points to a similar arrangement. The abundance of manatee bones and shell found at Cay sites (Craig 1966:29-31), as well as fish bones and fishing gear (McKillop 1981: 226-32), demonstrate that occupants were actively engaged in extracting marine products, and may well have exported these commodities to the mainland.

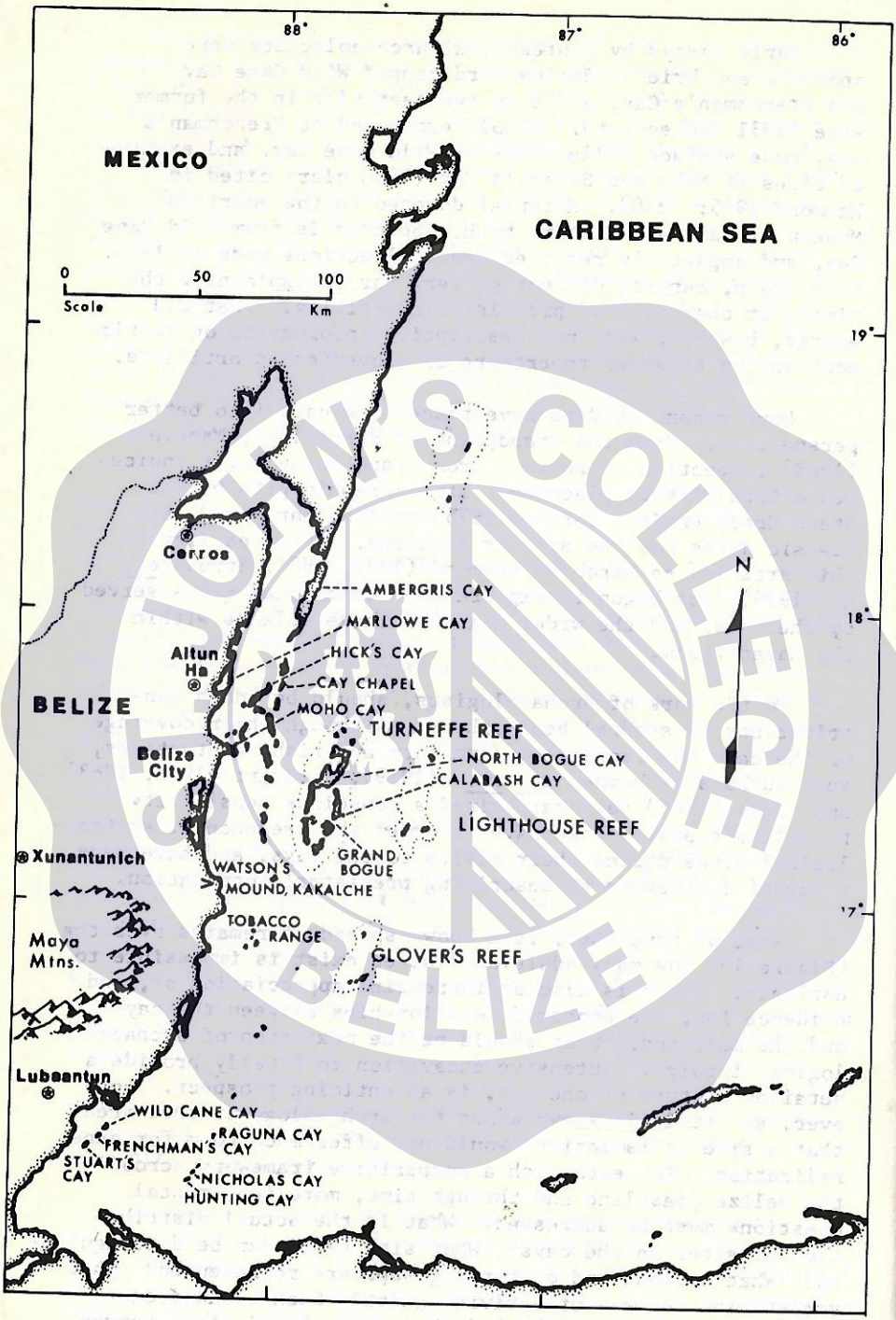
Previous research on the cays has been limited but not entirely abs ent. The amateur archaeologist, Thomas Gann, surveyed and e xcavated at several islands, notably Wild Cane Cay, Moho Cay, and Ambergris Cay (1917 in Hammond 1975: 280-82, 1918, 1926, 1927). Gann's sometime co-explorer, F.A. Mitchell-Hedges, excavated at Wild Cane Cay and visited Tobacco Range (1931: 17, 21). By contemporary

Early forays by professional archaeologists were sporadic and brief. Junius Bird mapped Wild Cane Cay and Frenchman's Cay, and sunk two test pits in the former site (1931 manuscript). Ekholm excavated at Frenchman's cay, made surface collections of Wild Cane Cay, and examined sites at Moho and Stuart's Cay (1950 diary cited in Hammond 1975: 278). Material donated to the American Museum of Natural History by H. Spinden is from Wild Cane Cay, and apparently resulted from collections made in 1914. Here again, reports did not go very far in explaining the timing or character of preshistoric activity. What did emerge, however, was new descriptive information on settlement and an expanded repertoire of provenienced artifacts.

More recent studies have placed the cays into better perspective. From the standpoint of chronology, MacKie's (1963) inspection of pottery from Grand Bogue Point indicated a Late Classic placement; stratigraphic pits by the Stann Creek Project (Graham 1975) yielded Early and Late Classic dates for the site of Kakalche. Cited earlier in this article, research by Hammond (1975, 1976, Stross et. al. 1978), has begun to explore the functional roles served by the cays, and the wider place of these islands within the Mayan realm.

To the work of archaeologists, should be added contributions by several geographers. Although their coverage of the cays has focused on land form and fishing practices, such authors as Romney et. al. (1959), Stoddart (1962, 1963) and Craig (1966) have maintained a conscious sensitivity to Belize's past. They have recorded the presence of archaeological sites during their visits to the cays, and have made thoughtful attempts at describing prehistoric occupation.

What we have then, is a known spread of remains over the (Figure 1); how many additional sites exist is impossible to estimate. There is also an increasing appreciation of, and evidence for, the economic relationships between the cays and the mainland. What should be the next step of archaeological inquiry? Intensive excavation to finally provide a detailed picture of one cay, is an enticing prospect. However, so little is known about the archaeology of this area, that a site in isolation would not offer much room for generalization. To establish a comparitive framework across the Belize coastline and through time, more fundamental questions must be addressed: What is the actual distribution of sites on the cays? What site types can be distinguished? What periods and cultural groups are represented? What variety and degrees of activity exist? Such broadly cast issues can best be approached through archaeological survey of the cays. A uniformly applied program of surface collection, mapping, test excavation, and limited underwater re-



connaissance, should yield sufficient evidence on material remains and existing structures to take stock of the archaeological resources on the cays. The Belize Cays Project, planned for field seasons in 1982-84, hopes to achieve precisely this objective.

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Figure Caption: Figure 1 The Cays of Belize. Names cays on the map have produced archaeological remains. (adapted from Craig 1966: Map 6)

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# Comparison of Belize Creole Speech with other Afro-American Speech Communities

Dr. Robert French

In this article, the ethnographic description of Belize Creole speech usage is palced in the context of comparison with speech use in other Afro-American speech communities. The aim of this study is to demonstrate the common cultural patterning of speech use in the different speech communities considered. Abrahams[1] (1970:163) has observed:

> There is an attitude toward words and word-usage in the performance context common to Negro communities in the United States and the West Indies; this attitude shows up in a common pattern of performance.

The first section spells out some of the correspondences between speech use in the Belize Creole speech community and other Afro-Caribbean speech communities. The second section outlines some of the parallels between the use of speech in the Belize Creole and the American Black speech communities. In the final section, attention is turned to the idea of common cultural history, which was presumably instrumental in establishing some of these shared speech patterns.

At the outset, it may be said that reference to the questions having to do with origins are tangential to

consideration of continuity in form and function of Afro-American speech. As Mintz[2] writes

(1970: 11):

> . . . quite aside from the question of historical origins, the cultural resources of Afro-Americans and of Afro-American cultures are by no means limited to those elements or complexes that are probably African historically; such origins are far less significant than the continuing creative employment of forms, whatever their origins, and the symbolic usages imparted to them.

Regardless of the question of origins of Afro-American patterns of speech use, their continuing importance can be readily demonstrated.

## I. Comparison with Speech Use in British West Indian Speech Communities

a. General and introductory. The comparison of Belize Creole speech usage with speech use in other Afro-Caribbean communities is suggested by the historical and cultural affiliations of these communities. Many of the slaves in the Honduras settlement were introduced from Jamaica. Although the slave traffic between Jamaica and the Honduras settlement was declared illegal in 1814, the export of slaves between Jamaica and Honduras was carried on until the abolition of slavery in 1833 (Dobson[3] 1973: 146-147). Groups from the West Indian islands of Jamaica and Barbados have settled in Belize--the largest number (about 1200) arriving between 1880 and 1890 (Dobson 1973: 250)[4]. It may be assumed that the influx of West Indians brought a reinforcement of West Indian practices to the Belize Creole community.

Belize Creole is closely realted to other Caribbean Creoles and plays a similar role in the folk culture. Allsopp writes[5] (1965: 55):

> . . . The total vocabulary, structuring and the whole character of British Honduras Creole, the survival of similar Africanisms, an identity of proverbs, the introduction and termination signals and the content and linguistic character of Anancy stories all demonstrate overwhelmingly the immediate kinship of British Honduras Creole with all other English Caribbean Creoles.

Charactersitic of British West Indian speech communities. there is in the Belize Creole speech community a diglossic relationship between English and Creole.

b. Verbality. In a series of articles on the British West Indies,[6] Abrahams (e.g., 1968; 1970d; 1972) describes the importance of speech there, reflected in belief in the powers of speech, in the rich inventories of terms about talk, and in the prevalence of the verbal contest. In describing speech behavior of Afro-American peasants of the British West Indian island of St. Vincent, Abrahams and Bauman [7] (1971: 762) identify talking as a "cultural focus," saying "speech behavior is unquestionably a principal focus of attention for the Vincentians themselves, and the amount of talk one hears about talk on the island is truly striking."

Many writers have characterized the West Indian as gregarious and loquacious. Abrahams notes[8] (1972: 221) that considerable emphasis is put on "keeping company" and that "social pressure is often brought on the shy (West Indian 'selfish') person and the loner (West Indian 'garden man'), who are distrusted because of their lack of sociability." This distrust of unsociable persons is reminiscent of Belize Creole valuations on sociability and talkativeness.

The Belize Creole tradition of leisure-time talk has parallels throughout the Caribbean. In 1907, Jekyll wrote on the Jamaicans (1907: 157)[9]:

> The Negroes when they get together never stop chattering and laughing. They have a keen sense of the ludicrous, and give a funny turn to their stories as they relate the common incidents of daily life. The doings of their neighbors form the chief topic of conversation here as in most places, and any local event of special importance is told over and over.

Henriques (1968: 86) describes conversation as "the major, delight of all Jamaicans."[10]

> There is always time for the Jamaican to enjoy conversation no matter what hour of the day or night it may be. He has learned through experience that the greatest amusement comes from the discussion of everything under the sun. In the evenings little knots of people will be seen throughout the town busily discussing not only issues of government and rent, but also more profound metaphysical problems.

This topical range of leisure-time conversation characterizes Belize Creole leisure-time conversation as well.

c. Verbal contest. Verbal contest is quite prevalent in the British West Indies as well as in the Belize Creole community. In particular, there are close West Indian analoques for Belize Creole jinxing. Abrahams and Bauman[11] (1971: 767) describe the Vincentian speech event "giving fatigue" (also called "making mock" or "giving rang" as

> a licentious kind of word play that generally, but not always, takes place in an all male group. and often at the rum shop where such groups are likely to gather. Giving fatigue involves ridicule, the use of insulting names, and the jocular insinuation of accusation of certain kinds of deviant or tabooed behavior.

While this description is almost exactly similar to Belize Creole jinxing, there are some differences in topical constraints between jinxing and Vincentian giving fatigue. Abrahams and Bauman write (1971: 767):[12]

> Almost any kind of frowned-upon behavior may be called up in giving fatigue, but never attributions of incest, sodomy, bestiality, inducing abortion, or blatant adultery. These are simply not joking matters.

On the other hand. these are acceptable topics in Belize Creole jinxing.

In describing the verbal-contest traditions in the West Indies, Abrahams (1968: 1970c; 1972) reports on "rhyming," a type of verbal dueling in which participants very often make insulting references to an opponent's mother. In the Belize Creole community, however, any negative reference to someone's mother is regarded as outside the pale of jinxing. In Panama, we find a West Indian people practicing the same rule against insulting someone's mother in the context of verbal dueling (Abrahams 1972: 222).[14]

The total pattern of topical constraints on Afro-American verbal dueling is not well understood and merits further study.

Belize Creole jinxing and verbal dueling in other Afro-Caribbean communities are quite similar in purpose as well as in form and content. In general, Afro-Caribbean verbal contests, though chiefly recreational, are functional as well. Verbal dueling is one of the main

modes in which people in these communities compete for social status in their peer group. People who are especially skilled in such verbal sparring are recognized by the local community on the basis of their verbal abilities.

Verbal dueling on a serious plane is also an important component of West Indian cultural life. Many writers (e.g., Pullen-Burry 1903:[15] 2, 118) have mentioned the pervasiveness of argument in Jamaican interaction. As described by Kerr[16] (1952: 171; cf. Reisman 1964: 220 221), "It is the type of arguing where you win your point by verbal agility rather than the rightness of your case." Such Afro-Caribbean facility in playing with words is exemplified in the response of a Jamaican who, roused from sleep by the question, "You no hear Massa call you?" replied, "Sleep hab no Massa" and went back to sleep (Edwards 1801: Vol. II, 101; cited in Braithwaite 1971: 238). The story is also found in Belize (Gibbs 1883: 172).[18]

Reisman (1964: 234) characterizes "courting" on Antigua as a kind of "argument." Similarly, Belize Creole "courting" frequently develops into a type of verbal contest in which the man and the woman trade quick, sharp, often humorous remarks, as in the following literary example in which the narrator is a young woman:

> A talk wid one fella weh di paint di house cross di street from where I work. One bregging piece a ting, Say how denh call hin di Cheetah because hin so fast and speedy. A mek 'e know 'e wan brakes when 'e get da Car'line. Di joke sweet an, he laugh ("Caroline," Amandala (May 24,1974) p. 3)[20]

In this example, the bearer cites his name in self-praise, but is made the butt of Caroline's play on the nickname.

d. Artistic verbal performance. Story-telling, riddle-asking, and singing are common occurrences in Afro-Caribbean social gatherings. Comparison of folklore collections from the British West Indies with verbal forms of folklore in the Belize Creole community indicate that the basic corpus of Belize folklore was borrowed from the West Indian repertoire.

Belize Creoles and West Indians have not just the same speech forms and comparable repertoires of Anansi stories, riddles, and proverbs; they also have similar performance aesthetics. Writing on Jamaican folk stories

and songs, Jekyll says[21] (1907:238), "The Black man is such an accomplished actor that he can assume any character." Jekyll (1907: 174) remarks on Jamaican expertise in copying the cries and sounds of animals. He also mentions of gesture in performance[23] (1907: 192): "The negro is a born actor, and to give emphasis to his words by appropriate gestures comes naturally to him." Like Belize Creole story-tellers, Jamaican story-tellers enact their stories instead of just telling them. Backwith[24] (1969: 220) writes on Jamaican story-telling:

> The rendering of such stories is exceedingly dramatic and lively. Stories as taken down from dictation are only a conventionalized record of what really happens when a clown-like lad stands in the midst of the circle at night after the work of the day is ended, and with pantomine and change of intonation proceeds to act out rather than narrate the witty happenings of the story in a dialect completely unintelligible to the stranger.[2]

The Afro-American facility with characterization may be observed in "mocking"-- called "marking" in American Black English (Mitchell[25] - Kernan 1972)-- as well as in story-telling. In 1843, Phillippo (1843: 200)[26] noted with regard to the Jamaican Negro:

> The faculties of wit and imitation in the negro race are . . . remarkable. Scarcely any foible or peculiarity of gesture of accent is discoverable, in a stranger especially, but it is mimicked to the life, often to the no small amusement of groups of spectators.

Like American Black marking (Mitchell-Kernan 1972:176)[27] Afro Caribbean mocking may involve caricature as well as pure imitation. The use of parody may be observed in the following example from another nineteenth century account on Jamaica:

> An overseer was lately reading one of the Governor's admirable addresses to the negroes, in which the obligation of industry was enforced by the observation that every one was obliged to work for his bread, some with their hands, and others with their heads. When the overseer was done, one of the negro-drivers said to his comrade, "Heerie him well, and be sure to work; good Gubernor says ebery body work, some with their hands--dese are de trong men what dif de cane-holes--some with their heads--dese are de piccanini moders, who carry de pots and pitchers

on their heads every day to de field--ebery g[illegible] de neger woman work hard with him head--ya heeri[illegible], Gubernor." (Madden 1970: Vol. II, 107; cf. V[illegible] 107)

Belize Creoles and West Indians not only have [illegible]milar performance techniques, but also share the cultural [illegible]ar tude toward all speech as performance. This distin[illegible]tive cultural orientation is described by Abrahams (197[illegible]293)[illegible]28 in his discussion of Vincentian gossip as performan[illegible]e:

> Everyday communicative behaviour is judged on [illegible]he same terms as more stylized performances. Lit[illegible]le distinction is made between those formally and [illegible]uch obviously structured expressive performances, [illegible]k- as singing a song, or dancing, or telling a fo[illegible]us tale, and ordinary expressive interactions. T[illegible]of while there would be no confusion in the minds [illegible] the community between a carnival song and an [illegible]re- everyday argument, both would be recognized as [illegible]es lated to each other and evaluated as performan[illegible] of varying appropriateness and effectiveness.

e. Indirection. As suggested, Belize Creole and W[illegible]st In Indian speech display the same aesthetic dimensions[illegible] particular, indirection is a valued feature of Afro[illegible] Caribbean speech behavior. In his collection of Jamaican folk stories and songs, Jekyll (1907: 53)[illegible]29 wrote that Jamaicans "delight in . . . enigmatic language."

> Straightforwardness is a quality which the Negro absolutely lacks . . . Language with him is truly, as the cynic said, the art of disguising thought.

The Belize Creole category of "throwing a phras[illegible]e, is clearly related to the Jamaican speech act "throw[illegible] sarcasm," which has been defined as "to relieve one' emotions by speaking out (to no one in particular) [illegible]er" one's dislike for or sense of grievance against anot[illegible]es, (Cassidy and Le Page 1967: 442)[illegible]30. In throwing phra a Belize Creole speaker may come out on her verandah[illegible]rly and make complaints of a general nature that are c[illegible]lear applicable to a neighbor within earshot. The Jamaic[illegible]ion "throwing words at the moon" is an interesting varia of this. It has been described as a

> practice still in vogue in Jamaica, whereby you may tell the moon the most insulting things about a party within his hearing without being[illegible]d liable for libel. Thus you in turn may be call[illegible]

"a tief" or "a **liar** fee true," every word reaching you and those who are standing about, and yet if you ask the filifier what he is saying, the answer will be: "Not you, sah, Him moom talk" (Rev. Powell, Manchester, MS, 1934; quoted in Cassidy and Le Page 1967: 442).

These occasions of use of indirect reference, incidentally, point up that patterns of verbal behavior labelled as "talking to oneself," in Schegloff's words[31] (1972:372) "are best understood not as exceptions to the minimal two-party character of conversation but as special ways of talking to others while not addressing them . . . "

Belize Creoles may throw phrases through the image in a story. The concluding formula by which Jamaican Creole stories were traditionally ended testifies that story-telling there may be used to comment obliquely on a member of the audience. Traditionally, story-tellers ended their stories with "Jack Mandora, me no choose none" or similar stylized forms. In 1907, Jekyll[32] (1907: 10) wrote of Jamaican story-telling:

> All Annancy stories end with these or similar words, The Jack is member of the company to whom the story is told, perhaps its principal member; and the narrator addresses him, and says: "I do not pick you out, Jack, or any of your companions, to be flogged as Tiger and Annancy were by the monkeys." Among the African tribes stories we know are often told with an object. The Negro is quick to seize a parable, and the point of a cunningly constructed story directed at an individual obnoxious to the reciter would not miss. So when the stories were merely told for diversion, it may have been thought good manners to say: "This story of mine is not aimed at any one."

Caribbean Creoles have historically used indirect modes of expression to deceive authorities. A traditional interactional strategy for dealing with authorities is summed up in "Play fool to catch wise," a proverb found in Jamaica (Patterson 1971:[33] 218) and Belize. On the Jamaican slave use of practiced ignorance when dealing with whites, we have evidence like that of Phillippo. Five years after the emancipation of the slaves, he wrote[34] (1843: 250), "even parents educated their children in all the arts of dissimulation, fraud, and perfidy." He narrates a remarkable account of a parent punishing her child for disclosing where another slave had hidden to escape punishment.

> "Which way did Fox run?" said an overseer to a negro boy, when in pursuit of a slave who had escaped from punishment. The boy pointed to a thicket in which the fugitive had eluded the grasp of his pursuer. On returning home the overseer was attracted by the shrieks of a child under severe punishment, and which proceeded from the negro village. Curiosity urged him to the spot, and on looking through the crevices of a negro hut, he saw the boy to whom he had just addressed himself suspended by his heels, writhing and moaning beneath the heavy chastisement inflicted on him by his mother, who repeated, during the intervals of the strokes, "Next time buckra ax you which side neger run, you tell him me no know, massa." The overseer is said to have repeatedly put the boy to the test afterwards, but could never get the truth from him again.

Phillippo cites this story with disapproval, failing to appreciate it as necessary instruction in survival. The techniques of deception were (and continue to be) techniques of survival.

As playing the fool continues to be a part of Belize Creole cultural life today, it may be assumed that this survival technique is still practiced by lower-class Creoles in other Afro-Caribbean communities.

A full discussion of the parallels between Belize Creole and British West Indian speech behavior would require a much more lengthy treatment. The foregoing, however, is sufficient to show that the correspondences between Belize Creole and West Indian speech use are extensive and transparent. The significance of speech in Belize Creole social life is characteristic of the role and meaning of speech in other Afro-Caribbean communities These communities not only show the same cultural concern with speech; there are striking correspondences as to what performance techniques and stylistic dimensions characterize effective speech.

f. Commentary. It may be said here that the ethnographi description of speech use in Caribbean Creole communities is only beginning. In recent years, the linguistic varieties in use in Caribbean Creole communities have become of considerable interest to linguists working at both descriptive and theoretical levels. On the other hand, questions on speech usage (e.g., attitudes toward speaking, values for the use of speech situations) have received less attention. Jamaica is a case in point.

While sustained empirical work has been done on the liguistic features of Jamaican Creole and the conceptualization of the extensive liguistic variation that characterizes the Jamaican linguistic situation,[3] there is little documentation on speech as interaction beyond the collection of folklore texts. While many questions of Caribbean Creole speech behavior remain to be analyzed, the evidence available makes it clear that the roles and meaning of speech are strikingly similar throughout the Caribbean.

Notes

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# THE BELIZE ELITE AND ITS POWER BASE: LAND LABOUR AND COMMERCE CIRCA 1890

(TAKEN FROM THE LARGER WORK: RACE, CLASS AND THE UNOFFICIAL MAJORITY IN BRITISH HONDURAS 1890-1949)

DR. PETER ASHDOWN



In 1890 British Honduras had a population of about 30,000 of which some 12,000 persons resided in Belize and the Belize District. The remaining 18,000 comprised three main racial-cultural groups located in fairly distinct geographical regions throughout the towns and villages of the other districts of the Colony. (See figure 2).

Of this district population the largest group. some 10,000 people, were the Spanish speaking Mestizos of the north. They were fairly recent arrivals in the Colony having entered as refugees fleeing from the 'Guerra de las Castas' in Yucatan during and after 1847. They had

settled in the Northern District and founded the town of Corozal and several large villages in an area virtually uninhabited prior to their arrival.[2] Next in numerical importance were the 4,000 indigenous Kekchi and Maya Amerindians who to be found all along the Colony's western and northern borders but who were located mainly in the interior villages of the Toledo District. Finally there were the 3,000 Black Caribs (Garifuna) who inhabited the southern coastal towns of St ann Creek and Punta Gorda. Like the Mestizos these people were immigrants who had entered the Colony from Honduras after 1800 where they had settled after being deported by the British from St. Vincent in 1797.[3]

While, in total, these groups were numerically dominant their economic importance as producers was limited to the small internal market. The Mestizos, for instance, had brought with them sugar making skills which they utilised on arrival by setting up family 'rancheros' on rented land. During the short period when the Colony was a sugar exporter (between 1860 and 1890) their raw muscavado had contributed to those exports[4] but by 1894 it was all consumed internally as were their surpluses of corn and vegetables. The Amerindians too were traditionally 'milpa' agriculturalists growing corn and beans; their only contribution to the national market being hogs fattened for sale in Belize. The Carib input was even smaller as the Garifuna women grew ground food only sufficient to feed their families, the protein supplement being obtained by the men's traditional skill at fishing. A few Carib farmers grew bananas for export in the Stann Creek valley but on a limited scale as a cash crop.

The contribution of these three groups to the Colony's supply of labour was scarcely more significant. As all three were traditionally agriculturalists their representatives were only occasionally to be found as workers in the Colony's main economic activity of forestry. The Amerindians were sought after for bush clearance; the Caribs could be found as seamen on coastal craft and as hired hands in the southern banana plantations; the Mestizos were skilled in cane cutting, but such wage labour as the menfolk undertook was generally temporary.[5] It was a last resort when subsistence activities failed or when cash was required for a specific purpose. The 1881 census indicated that, apart from the Creole woodcutters, the Colony's labour pool consisted of 650 "Caribs and Walkas" (the latter being Indians from the Mosquito Coast of Honduras and Nicaragua). 350 East Indian "coolie" agriculturalists (who had been imported to work on the southern sugar estates in the 1860s and 1870s) and 3,000

Amerindian "farmers and labourers".[6] The Mestizo element did not appear and the Carib-Amerindian force would have been fluctuating and unreliable.[7]

The most important contribution of these groups to the colonial economy appears to have been that of consumers. When sales of sugar, hogs, bananas or subsistence surpluses allowed the cash obtained was used to purchase food, hardware and luxuries from the local or Belize merchants. Milk, salt meat, flour, guns, machetes and clothing were all imported and were as much a necessity to the subsistence farmer as they were to the residents of the capital, the distinction being solely in the purchasing power of the two groups.

If the contribution to the colonial economy of these minority racial-cultural complexes was minimal their political and social contribution was non-existent. Their isolation in the districts and the attitude of the capital's dominant racial-cultural group towards them had turned them into a self-sufficient, self-interested, racially exclusive peasantry who were, in the words of Cedric Grant "in the colonial society but not of it".[8] That status did not change until the 1930s when individual Mestizos came to the fore but even the number of those men in the colonial hierarchy was very small and that position was conditional on their acceptance of the Anglo-Saxon values of the establishment. Such acceptance explains the prominence of Jose Maria Rosado, a leading businessman and a member of the Legislative and Executive councils between 1896 and 1931, in the hierarchy in the early period for, as a man of substance, he had more in common with the elite than with the group from which he had originally sprung. For the Caribs and Amerindians total acceptance and participation was longer in coming as in 1932 they were still very much regarded as part of a 'native problem'.[9] No Garifuna spokesman appeared until C. J. Benguche became a member of Council in 1949 while the Amerindians continue to remain largely unrepresented down to the present day.

For the purposes of most of the period covered by this study, the district racial-cultural minorities, apart from a few unrepresentative individuals, can be largely discounted. They were nothing more than passive, uninvolved elements in the community, possessed of little economic and no political importance. The economically, socially and politically significant members of the society, until 1950, were the various inhabitants of Belize and its immediate hinterland. To all intents and purposes 'the capital was the Colony'[10] not only because

it was the major port and the administrative and commercial headquarters but because its inhabitants were the source of British Honduras' overseas earnings, and a privileged group of them made up its 'society' and dominated its primitive political activity.

Ninety-five percent of Belize's population of some 12,000 persons constituted the fourth and dominant indigenous racial-cultural group of the society. These were the Creoles who had their origins in the Anglo-Saxon foundation of the Honduras Settlement. Most, especially those who comprised the forest labour force, were the direct descendants of the Settlement's original slave population but a considerable section of the group, particularly some branches of those families making up its social apex, boasted caucasian as well as negroid genes. Co-habitation between the white Baymen, (the original British settlers) and their slaves had resulted in a widespread and complicated miscegenation during and after slavery, the mechanics of which have yet to be unravelled. The process of creolisation was, however, well advanced and still continuing, it being noted in 1896 by the Times of Central America that the "constant stream of young Europeans fall to Creole ladies"[11] and that "the varying shades of black and white do not count for much even in marriage contracts."[12]

Those contracts, and the many unions unsanctified by the church, had produced, by 1890, a Creole group which varied in colour from the majority which were totally black and who retained their negroid physiognomy to those persons who could pass for white and European outside of the Colony. What linked Creoles of all colours and classes together was the belief that they were the real inhabitants of the colony. The justification for this assumption was the 'British connection' and the Anglo-Saxon contribution to their origins. Historically it was their forefathers, both white and black, who had founded the Settlement and defeated the Spanish at the Battle of St. George's Caye in 1798; economically it was this group which by its exertions had laid the foundations of the Colony's wealth; culturally it was the Creoles who maintained the English language and Anglo-Saxon values and politically it was their group which was most associated with the Colony's rulers and the world's master race.[13] By a feat of psychology (for those, at least, without notable European features or colour) they considered themselves a cadet branch of that race and, in consequence, tended to look down on the Colony's Mestizos as immigrants of an alien and inferior culture and on the Caribs and Amerindians as near savage 'natives' not strictly deserving of British citizenship.[14]

and the Gabourel, Usher and Bowen families still held a substantial share of the Colony's alienated land while the doyen of the Creole elite, Benjamin Fairweather M.L.C., was a master boat builder and cabinet maker.

Moreover the economic standing of this Creole aristocracy belied its political and social significance. In the words of the Times -"...in the political, as well as the social life of this colony caste does not depend altogether upon the colour of the skin".[21] As employers of labour the interests of this group coincided with those of the Colony's expatriate community while its members social acceptability was enhanced by their European style of living and their glorification of all things British. They sent their sons to be educated in the mother country or sought their advancement in its public service and they hungered after its decoration or merit and looked uponit astheir spiritual home.[22] On a less idealistic level, as the fount of Creole opinions, they acted as the interpreters of the voice of labour - a role not available to the colonial government or the expatriate community. Benjamin Fairweather, in fact held his seat on the Council supposedly as labour's representative[23] although, in practice, his class interests always overrode his racial-cultural allegiances when the vote was taken. This was a phenomenon common to the whole of the Creole elite for, in the final analysis, their interests as employers mirrored those of the white expatriates with whom they controlled the Colony's economy and with whom they made up its 'society'.

In 1890 it was this expatriate community, a dominant racial and social minority of some 400 persons[24], which formed the tiny apex of the social pyramid and which, when wedded to the Creole aristocracy, made up the colonial elite. The expatriates as a group were colonists of relatively recent origin having no connection with the old settler families as its members had individually taken up residence in the Colony after 1850 as they obtained, or sought shares in, its land or commerce. In several cases they were participants in both activities but, as each had his major interest in one or the other business, and, as it is necessary to outline the history of the growth of both activities in the Colony in order to investigate the origins and nature of the group's economic dominance, it will be convenient to divide them into a commercial elite and one based on landownership. Until the 1920s that division is somewhat artificial in that the interests of the two groups were complementary and their membership collateral - it was only after 1925 that a serious split developed between the resident commercial interests and the landowners who had become largely absentee.

The lands to which these expatriate owners were the heirs were considerable, stretching from the Hondo frontier in the north to the Sibun river in the south and they comprised the most productive lands in the Colony, being the accessible repositories of its major mahogany forests. They had been alienated between 1765 and 1817 when the Baymen settlers found it necessary to demarcate their individual holdings as mahogany exploitation superseded that of the original staple, logwood, which had been the source of the Settlement's importance since 1670. That dywood[25] grew in small stands in the many estaurine creeks and swamps and, as it was plentiful and the woodcutters relatively few, in the first century of the Settlement's history the question of territorial division did not arise. By the middle of the eighteenth century, however, the price of logwood had made its extraction only marginally profitable and it was beginning to give way to mahogany which was in demand in Europe for quality furniture construction. Mahogany,[26] unlike logwood, did not grow in stand but was scattered through the bush making it necessary for the cutters to roam extensively in search of suitable trees. In consequence some division of cutting areas became imperative and in 1765-66 a series of resolutions passed by the Public Meeting, a legislature of the settlers' own creation, laid down that a prospective cutter could claim a 'location' or 'work'[27] by building a riverside hut which then gave him a claim to a 2,000 yard frontage along that river. The 1765-66 resolutions were primarily designed to delineate logwood locations but as that staple was by this time no longer particularly lucrative a further resolution was promulgated in 1787 which was specific to the newly profitable mahogany. The resolution of the Public Meeting of that year defined a mahogany work as being a three mile riverside frontage which would stretch back either to the first navigable creek or, if no such waterway existed, a distance of eight miles. These two sets of resolutions, passed by the settlers in the Public Meeting, came to be known as the 'Location laws' and provided a semi-legal basis for the division, into cutting areas, of the northern lands of the Settlement which took place between 1765 and 1817.

The area of the Settlement capable of such division had been previously outlined by the titular landlord. Until 1763 Spain had ignored the presence of British interlopers on her territory but in that year by Article 17 of the Treaty of Paris His Most Catholic Majesty recognised the settlers' right 'of cutting, loading and carrying away logwood'[28] in the Bay of Honduras. Twenty years later, by Article 6 of the Treaty of Versailles, the area over which this logwood

could be cut was defined as that 'between the River Walliz or Bellese and River Hondo, taking the courses of the said two rivers to be unalterable boundaries."[29] This limit was extended three years later, in the Convention of London, to include the area between the Belize River and the Sibun River and mahogany was added to the list of extractable woods, both concessions being a more realistic expression of the status quo.

These limits, and the purely usufructuary rights so conceded within them, were from the outset ignored and abused by the settlers who treated the land as if it were their freehold property. Not only did they frustrate attempts by the home government to enforce the Spanish treaty terms but, having acquired the land through grants from an organisation of their own making, they successfully resisted the belated efforts of successive superintendents, particularly Colonel Arthur, to have their dubious titles investigated. Arthur actually recommended in 1820 that the settlers be deprived of their locations and the powers of land alienation be invested in his office but, although Spanish sensibilities were no longer important after that date, the Imperial government failed to act on his advice.[30] In consequence although the powers of the superintendency had been strengthened by the 1840s, so that in 1854 Superintendent Stevenson was able to dissolve the Public Meeting and replace it with a House of Assembly, the first act of that body was to legislate to validate all land titles previously acquired. That legislation, the Laws in Force Act of 1855, the Act for Quieting Title of 1857 and the Land Titles Act of 1861 confirmed title by location and finally legitimised the ad hoc division of the Settlement's timber lands that had taken place prior to 1817.[31]

The ownership and organisation of these lands had changed however in the interim; the old settler families having given way to the representatives of metropolitan interests. The original logwood cutters had been, by all accounts,[32] a relatively large group of white families but with the shift to mahogany in the 1770s their numbers had been concentrated and their individual locations consolidated. Mahogany exploitation, by its very nature, necessitated a greater concentration of capital and land than most logwood cutters could individually muster. Some were forced to sell out while others merged with rivals. Further concentration and consolidation of more and more land in fewer and fewer hands had then taken place in the 1820s with the advent of the Central American entrepot trade to Belize.[33] Metropolitan business houses, eager to obtain a share of that commerce,

bought in with the more successful of the old families and in the mahogany boom of 1820-50 the Settlement's trade and land became monopolised by a small number of these local-metropolitan partnerships, The sudden end to the boom in mid-century and the loss of the Central American market to the Republics themselves[34] forced a number of these partnerships out of business. Only those possessed of sufficient capital and thus capable of sustaining themselves in times of depression stayed solvent. Those companies and private individuals, particularly the metropolitan element, increased their share of the Settlement's total land and trade by buying up their insolvent rivals.

By 1870 the Colony's lands were largely in the hands of four great landowners. Young, Toledo and Company, founded in 1839, had 76 works and nearly a million acres. Sheldon Byass and Company owned 50,000 acres; John Carmichael about 25,000 acres (including Corozal Town) and the British Honduras Company (B.H.C.) about a million acres and nearly 100 works. The B.H.C., in fact, well exemplified the changes that had taken place since 1765. It was the heir to the original lands of James Hyde who was named by Superintendent Despard in 1787 as one of the twelve men who owned four-fifths of the land. Hyde's descendants appear to have increased their acreage in the early nineteenth century when the family, probably by marriage, merged with that of the Bartletts. His successor, John Bartlett Hyde, ran the firm of 'James Hyde and Company' which, in the 1820s, obtained a partner and metropolitan agent in the person of John H odge, a London merchant. Hodge and Hyde traded under the old name and increased their land holdings by purchase. In 1859 they took advantage of the Joint Stock Companies Act to reconstitute their business as the British Honduras Company which, in 1875, became the Belize Estate and Produce Company (B.E.C.) when it passed into the hands of the Hoare Banking family.[35]

The B.E.C. further intensified its holdings in 1880 when it acquired some of the land of its rival, Young, Toledo and Company, which went into liquidation in that year. The rest of Young, Toledo and Company's holdings were brought up by other metropolitan capitalists so that by 1890 Bernard Cramer and Mutrie, Arthur and Currie were, with Byass and the B.E.C., the Colony's major landowners. In each instance the individual or corporate owners had their headquarters in Britain but their interests were protected locally by a representative or partner who, in the case of Cramer's and Currie's, doubled as a merchant in Belize.

Table 1 below shows the major landowners in 1886, 1890 and 1902. Table 2 the ownership of land both nationally and b y district in 1896. Table 3 the major landowners and their holdings by district in 1896. Table 4 shows the major landowners in two key districts - the Northern District (the 'old' limits of 1783) and the Belize District (the 'new' limits of 1786). Figure 4 provides a diagrammatic representation of the information contained in Table 2.

MAJOR PRIVATE LANDOWNERS IN MILES OF RIVERINE FRONTAGE FOR 1886,1890, AND 1892

| LANDOWNER | 1886 | 1890 | 1892 |
|---|---|---|---|
| B.E.C. | 270 | 275 | 278 |
| Bernard Cramer | 66 | 48 | 85 |
| R. Byass | 57 | 52 | 57 |
| Mutrie, Arthur and Currie | 22 | 30 | 33 |
| A. Williamson | 19 | 16 | 27 |
| William Burn | 23 | 23 | 23 |
| Chaning Ellery | 18 | 21 | 21 |
| Delrot Brothers | 45 | 44 | -- |
| J.H. Phillips | 27 | 17 | -- |
| Grant's | | 15 | -- |
| Southern Estates | | | 31 |
| J.A.B. Beattie | | | 21 |
| Harvery Bros. | | | 18 |
| Sally Wolffsohn | | | 15 |
| P. Leckie | | | 15 |

Sources: (1) CO 123/194, Goldsworthy to Knutsford 23 April 1890
(2) Report of the Land Tax Commission 1902, p. 39

## Notes

1 "... Most scientific observers realise that any single definition of such a key term as "elite" is inadequate. Too many objectives of science and policy are at stake. The scholars obligation is discharged when he gives his definition in general terms and show by specific indices what is intended in concrete situations." H.D. Lasswell and D. Lerner, ed., World Revolutionary Elites. Studies in Coercive Ideological Movements(Cam., Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1965), p.4. In 'general terms' the definition used here follows that outlined in the quotations of the epigraph from Meisel and Friedrich.

2 J.A. Burdon, ed., Archives of British Honduras (London:Sifton Praed, 1931-1935), III, 128; A.R. Gibbs, British Honduras:An Historical and Descriptive Account of the Colony from its Settlement, 1670(London:Sampson Low, 1883), p.107; O.N. Bolland, The Formation of a Colonial Society; Belize from Conquest to Crown Colony, pp.143-144.

3 Burdon, II, p.60; C.J.M. Gullick, Exiled from St. Vincent(Malta:Progress Press, 1976), p.6 and Gibbs, pp.166-168.

4 Bolland, pp.144-145.

5 Gibbs, p.168. See also Colonial Office, Agriculture in the West Indies (London:H.M.S.O., 1941), pp.242-244.

6 Extracts from the 1881 census in L.W. Bristowe and P.B. Wright, Handbook of British Honduras 1889 (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1889), pp.210-215.

7 D.Morris, The Colony of British Honduras (London: Stanford, 1883), pp.117-121.

8 C.H. Grant, The Making of Modern Belize, p.19. Grant, pp.8-25, postulated a Creole-Mestizo, Anglo-Saxon-Latin racial-cultural division which has been subject to some criticism especially as he included the Garifuna as part of the Creole complex. For this criticism see R.O. Buhler, rev. of The making of modern Belize, Belizean Studies 5, No. 2(March 1977) 36-40 and that of O.N. Bolland, Journal of Belizean Affairs, No. 6(Jan. 1978), pp.62-65. It is claimed, particularly by Bolland, that Grant's pluralistic view of the society ignores social class which Bolland regards as the primary factor in the alignment of allegiances. This criticism is only partly justified in that Grant tempered his static analysis with one more obviously dynamic in which "Communal and cultural interests vied continuously with economic and occupational interests for the social and political allegiances of these groups.",

p.91. For the cultural-linguistic divisions of the racial groups see S.R.Allsop, "British Honduras - The Linguistic Dilemma," Caribbean Quarterly, 11, No. 3/4 (Sept. - Dec. 1965). 54-61.

9 CO123/337, Kittermaster to Cunliffe-Lister, 28 Oct. 1932.

10 CO123/200, Moloney to Ripon, 5 Oct. 1892. Moloney believed "A general feeling prevails in the districts, and with some justice, that Belize is British Honduras..." The situation was no different in 1948. See H.C.Luke, "New Lease of Life for British Honduras," Crown Colonist, 18, No. 196 (March 1948), 125-227.

11 Times of Central America, 10 April 1896.

12 Times of Central America, 21 Aug. 1896.

13 Bolland, p. 134, appears to deny the existence of European genes in the Creole population in 1850 although he elsewhere indicates, p.92, that miscegenation took place between the Baymen and their slaves. Gibbs, pp.170-173 attempted to distinguish between the 'coloured race' the 'Creole African' and the 'descendants of the Baymen' on the basis of somewhat vague criteria.

14 Colonial Guardian, 3 Oct. 1891 and 25 June 1898.

15 The Creole ethos is difficult to encapsulate concisely but the above analysis is substantiated by Grant p.10, who found it "less problematic to classify the population numerically by cultural affinity rather than by racial origin." This was because "cultural and social distinction was, and still is, perceived primarily by Belizeans not in racial and colour terms of white and black, but those who were British orientated or Creoles and those who were not."

16 Gibbs, p.175. It is argued by Bolland, p.124, and N.Bolland and A. Shoman, Land in Belize(Kingston: I.S.E.R., 1977),p.69, that this belief and the rest of the Creole superiority complex was the result of years of conditioning. They are justly critical of testimonies, such as that of Gibbs, which conclude that the Creole's preferences were inherent.

17 P.D. Ash down, "The Problem of Creole Historiography," Journal of Belizean Affairs, No.7, (Sept.1978) p.40.

18 Bolland, p.92.

19 Clarion, 8 April 1898

20 A terminology often used. See, for instance, the Clarion, 25 March 1898.

21 Times of Central America, 21 Aug. 1896.

22 Ashdown, "The Problem of Creole Historiography," p.40.

23 CO123/198, Moloney to Knutsford, 29 Jan. 1892.

24 Bristowe and Wright, p.215.

25 Hematoxylin campechianum is a smallish tree of brackish water with an average height of 20' and girth of 2". It was used in Europe to produce a mauve-indigo dye until aniline dyes were discovered in 1856.

26 Swietenia, Carapa and Tapirira species. The trees are large with an average height of 60' and girth of 7' for which a growth period of 90 years is required. They will normally float in water. The red-brown hardwood produced has 'good technical properties' besides being esteemed for its natural beauty. In the nineteenth century European and North American demand for it increased as it became widely used as a panelling wood in railway carriages and ships.

27 'Location' was the seventeenth and eighteenth century term used mainly for a logwood holding; 'work' was the nineteenth and twentieth century equivalent used mainly to define a mahogany cutting area. Appendix A shows the distribution of mahogany works along the Belize river circa 1900.

28 R.H. Humphreys. The Diplomatic History of British Honduras 1638 - 1901, p.5.

29 Humphreys, p.5.

30 Bolland and Shoman, pp. 34-42.

31 Bolland and Shoman, pp. 72-77.

32 There is only one and that is qualitative rather than quantitative. See Bolland, pp. 33-35.

33 For Belize as the entrepot of Central America (c.1810-1950) see N.Dobson, A History of Belize, pp.139-140 and Bolland, pp.166-167.

34 For the collapse of the mahogany boom and the end to the entrepot trade see Bolland, pp.174-177; Dobson, p.140, and Gibbs , pp.113-114.

35 This pre-1890 account of the development of a latifundia is based on the pioneering studies of Bolland The Formation of a Colonial Society and Bolland and Shoman, Land in Belize.

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